

**The Republic of Georgia joins the EuFMD Commission as its
37th Member State**

On the 23th of July 2013 the Republic of Georgia entered into membership of the EuFMD Commission as thirty seventh Member State. On this date the instrument of acceptance of the Constitution of the EuFMD was deposited by Dr Kirvalidze-Minister of Agriculture of Georgia- with the Director General of FAO, indicating the Georgia accepts the responsibilities as a member state to control FMD within its territory and to join in the collective action of the Commission in the control of FMD in Europe, alongside the other 36 member states. As the first of the former Soviet Union countries to join (with the exception of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia who joined after independence and following EU membership), this development has an importance for the region, as Georgia has borders with four countries not free of FMD, and faces considerable threats of epidemics affecting its growing livestock sector. Together with Turkey, another member state, these countries will play a role in promoting FMD control in West Eurasia where a 14 country Roadmap has been in place since 2008 to promote progressive FMD control. As a member state, but at risk from the neighbouring region, Georgia will receive assistance to develop the National Risk Based Strategic Plan for FMD control and in capacity development of national staff for planning and monitoring control efforts, and to work with neighbouring countries as part of the regional effort. As a new member state, Georgia staff will be invited to join in training programmes of the EuFMD aimed at developing capacity of risk managers and national team trainers, and will gain from the West Eurasia Information sharing platform developed by EuFMD/FAO for vaccination programme managers. As a member state, Georgia will be involved in the main strategic objective (“Pillar 1”) of the new EC funded programme (2013-15) for improved capacity for emergency management of the member states under the four-year Strategic Plan of the EuFMD (), and under Pillar 2, promotion of progressive control in the European neighbourhood. And as 37 is a prime number, it seems a fitting number – as the Commission has a unity of purpose, the control of FMD in Europe.



Dr U. Herzog, President of the EuFMD Commission and Dr Z. Chekurashvili at the 40th General Session of the EuFMD Commission.