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Main features, obligations and benefits under the *Constitution of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease*

OVERVIEW

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease affecting livestock. Livestock, such as cattle, swine, sheep and goats, which contract FMD must usually be destroyed and States affected may be subjected to import bans. Controlling FMD is vital to prevent significant economic losses, ensure food security, and maintain stable international trade. Effective measures are essential to protect animal health and the agricultural sector's economic stability.

The [Constitution of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease](#) ("the Constitution") was adopted in 1954. The Commission's mission is to promote national and international action with respect to preventive and control measures against foot-and-mouth disease, through:

- close collaboration with its 40 Members to enhance their preparedness for FMD outbreaks, preventing further spread.
- working beyond its Members, with 20 priority countries neighbouring Europe, supporting sustainable control programmes to curb the risk and impact of the disease.
- promoting a global strategy for progressive control of FMD.

The Constitution has been subject to a number of amendments, including to expand its scope to cover other transboundary animal diseases.

OBJECTIVES

Although the EuFMD's remit has been expanded to cover similar transboundary animal diseases, preventing and controlling FMD remains its core focus. By advising, coordinating, and supporting its Member Nations, the EuFMD contributes to safeguarding Europe's livestock and agricultural sectors.

MAIN OBLIGATIONS FOR MEMBERS

Members of the EuFMD have several key obligations, as outlined in the Constitution:

A. DISEASE CONTROL AND ERADICATION

- Implement Control Measures: Members must control FMD through quarantine, sanitary measures, and eradication policies (Article II, Section 1).
- National Plans: Members not recognized as free from the disease must have a national plan for its progressive control (Article II, Section 1).

B. CONTINGENCY PLANNING/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Develop Contingency Plans: Members must have plans in place for the immediate management of disease incursions (Article II, Section 3).
- Resource Allocation: Members must ensure sufficient financial, human, and technical resources for implementing control policies (Article II, Section 3).



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C. VACCINATION AND ANTIGEN SUPPLY

- Maintain Vaccine Supply: Members adopting vaccination policies must have sufficient vaccine or antigen supplies to ensure protection (Article II, Section 2).
- Collaborate on Vaccine Supply: Members must collaborate with and assist other Members in supplying vaccines or antigens when necessary (Article II, Section 2).

D. REPORTING AND INFORMATION SHARING

- Report Outbreaks: Members must immediately report outbreaks of FMD and similar transboundary animal diseases to the Commission and the WOAH (Article II, Section 6).

E. LABORATORY STANDARDS AND VIRUS TYPING

- Virus Typing: Members must arrange for the typing of viruses from outbreaks and notify the Commission and WOAH of the results (Article II, Section 4).
- Sample Dispatch: Members must rapidly dispatch samples to WOAH/FAO Reference Laboratories for further characterization (Article II, Section 5).
- Biorisk Management: Members must ensure all laboratories handling FMD virus operate according to the Minimum Biorisk Management Standards (Article II, Section 7).

F. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

- Administrative Budget: Members must contribute to the administrative budget based on a scale of contributions adopted by the Commission (Article XIII, Section 1).

POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR PARTIES

On becoming a party to the Constitution and implementing its provisions effectively, a State stands to gain numerous benefits, including:

- Enhanced disease control and eradication: Membership of the EuFMD assists each State to achieve enhanced disease control and eradication through access to technical advice and support, and emergency response mechanisms contributing to global health initiatives.
- International collaboration and information sharing: Members benefit from international collaboration, information sharing, and participation in joint actions and research projects.
- Capacity building: The EuFMD also provides capacity building through training programmes and simulation exercises, support for special projects and emergency actions, and assistance with strategic planning in developing national policies and contingency plans.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the EuFMD, and treaty processes in FAO, please contact: treaties@fao.org



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