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COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2026/1966

of 27 August 2026

on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union at the first meeting of the States Parties Committee for the Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 168(5), in conjunction with Article 218(9), thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) The International Health Regulations (2005) (the 'IHR (2005)') entered into force on 15 June 2007. The amendments to the IHR (2005) adopted by the World Health Assembly on 1 June 2024 entered into force on 19 September 2025, except for the States Parties that rejected those amendments.

(2) The Union is not a party to the IHR (2005), as only States can be Parties thereto. All Member States are parties to the IHR (2005).

(3) Council Decision (EU) 2025/1129 ([1]) invited Member States to accept, in the interest of the Union, without reservations, the amendments to the IHR (2005) adopted on 1 June 2024, to the extent that the Union had adopted common rules regarding the matters addressed in those amendments.

(4) Those amendments led, inter alia, to the establishment of the States Parties Committee for the Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) (the 'States Parties Committee'), with the objective of facilitating the effective implementation of the IHR (2005).

(5) The States Parties Committee, at its first meeting starting on 31 August 2026, is scheduled to adopt its terms of reference and the terms of reference for its Subcommittee.

([1]) Council Decision (EU) 2025/1129 of 26 May 2025 inviting Member States to accept, in the interest of the European Union, the amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) contained in the Annex to Resolution WHA77.17 and adopted on 1 June 2024 (OJ L, 2025/1129, 4.6.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/1129/oj).

(6) The envisaged acts of the States Parties Committee will, if adopted, produce legal effects for the Union, as they will determine whether regional economic integration organisations such as the Union can participate as observers in the States Parties Committee and in its Subcommittee. In addition, the envisaged acts will, if adopted, produce legal effects by determining the way in which future decisions of the States Parties Committee and its Subcommittee are taken. Decisions and recommendations of the States Parties Committee and its Subcommittee concerning the application and interpretation of the IHR (2005), in particular of the amended provisions authorised pursuant to Decision (EU) 2025/1129, are capable of decisively influencing the content of Union rules, in particular Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 of the European Parliament and of the Council [2], which provides the framework and mechanisms at Union level for coordinating and strengthening prevention, preparedness and response to serious cross-border threats to health of biological, chemical, environmental and unknown origin.

(7) It is therefore appropriate to establish the position to be taken on the Union's behalf at the first meeting of the States Parties Committee with regard to the terms of reference for that Committee and its Subcommittee.

(8) In the area of shared competences, Member States retain their competence in so far as the IHR (2005) do not affect common rules of Union law or alter their scope.

(9) The Union's position is to be expressed by the Member States that are represented in the States Parties Committee, acting jointly, in the interest of the Union,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The position to be taken on the Union's behalf at the first meeting of the States Parties Committee for the Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) (the 'States Parties Committee') shall be to support the adoption of the terms of reference for that Committee and for its Subcommittee provided that the final texts fulfil the following conditions:

(a) the terms of reference provide for the efficient, cost-effective, transparent and orderly functioning and organisation of meetings of that Committee and its Subcommittee,

(b) the terms of reference allow for the participation of the Union in that Committee and in its Subcommittee as an observer.

Article 2

The position set out in Article 1 shall be expressed by the Member States that are represented in the States Parties Committee, acting jointly, in the interest of the Union.

Article 3

Minor technical changes to the position set out in Article 1 may be agreed upon without a further decision of the Council.

[2] Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on serious cross-border threats to health and repealing Decision No 1082/2013/EU (OJ L 314, 6.12.2022, p. 26, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2371/oj).

Article 4

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, 27 August 2026.

For the Council

The President

T. BYRNE