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Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom

Observer

Armenia
Russia
Ukraine

Sections

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Practitioners

EASVO
State Officers

UEVH
Hygienists

EVERI
Veterinarians in
Education, Research
and Industry

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe Strategy 2021 – 2025

“Veterinarians know, care, and contribute”

INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

I'm very pleased to present you the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) Strategy 2021 – 2025, a strategy that is developed under very special, and in the history of FVE unprecedented circumstances. The spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus around the world has greatly impacted our lives. Many things we took for granted are not so obvious any-more. In a very short time, the world where-in we live has changed enormously.

If one thing becomes clear from the ongoing pandemic, it is the importance of One Health: the interconnected health of people, animals and ecosystems. To tackle challenges like the current pandemic effectively, a structural One Health approach, cross-sectoral and trans-disciplinary, is crucial. More than ever, the European veterinary profession needs to look beyond the immediate health of animals and people, and consider the larger picture of the interconnected health of people, animals and ecosystems that lie behind single health issues.

This view and many more are part of FVE's next 5 years strategy for the promotion of our professional values and the achievement of our goals. This strategy will underline the significance of the veterinary profession and its continuous contribution to the health and well-being of animals and people. Veterinary Medicine in all its diversity is a part of the solution to many of the issues our world faces today.

I thank everyone, within and outside FVE, who has contributed to the development of this Strategy, and I trust we can also rely on you for the delivery of our goals.

Wishing you inspiring and motivating reading,

Rens van Dobbenburgh
FVE President

Brussels, 6 November 2020

President

Rens van Dobbenburgh

Vice-Presidents

Thierry Chambon
Siegfried Moder
Torill Moseng
Stanislaw Winiarczyk

WHAT IS DONE

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) Strategy 2015 – 2020 is coming to its conclusion. As a Federation, we can look back to five busy and productive years. Together with our national member organisations and Sections we achieved most of the goals we set 5 years ago. We were actively involved in the ongoing EU veterinary legislation, in particular the revision of the Animal Health Law, the Official Controls Regulation and the Veterinary Medicines Regulation, where we saw most of our key objectives being achieved. We surveyed the demography of the European veterinary profession in 2015 and 2019 and we initiated the European VetFutures project. We contributed to and promoted the accreditation of the European veterinary schools, we renewed our website, etc. We also welcomed veterinary associations of Russia and Armenia as an observer. The Albanian Veterinary Chamber, being an observer already, became a full member.

... excellent progress has been made. We can be proud on our successes,....

In summary, excellent progress has been made towards the main targets identified 5 years ago: Improving the Veterinary Profession, Promoting the Role of Veterinarians, Extending our Network, Promoting Veterinary Interests, and Strengthening our Organisation. We can be proud on our successes, great and small.

OUR PROFILE

To prepare this new strategy, interviews were anonymously taken¹ by an external company from several members and external stakeholders. The feedback about FVE's performance was remarkably positive. FVE has strengthened its position as "the voice of the European veterinary profession". Members perceive FVE as an effective organisation, making their voice heard at the European stage. External stakeholders

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find FVE a credible and reliable organisation to collaborate with.

FVE's communication was also seen as effective and is considered as a vital source of information relevant to the profession on a

European level. The recently renewed FVE website is well appreciated, with the suggestion made to FVE to strengthen its presence on social media.

FVE is seen as an effective link between veterinarians, and essential for their daily work. In terms of lobbying, some members and stakeholders suggest FVE to be more pro-active, providing more leadership and taking a stronger stance on various issues.

¹ These interviews were taken in the last quarter of 2019 from 10 Member organisations and 10 external stakeholders.

OUR CHANGING ENVIRONMENT / VISION

The first decades of the 21st century have been dynamic ones. Important socio-economic, cultural and political changes occurred and all signals indicate that this trend will continue and almost certainly accelerate. At the global level, we see the ever-growing population, increasing urbanisation, growing demand for food, globalisation of markets and trade, climate change, etc. They all come with major challenges, which have led the United Nations to the development of its Sustainable Development Goals² (SDGs), several of which are directly linked to the health and welfare of people, animals and the ecosystems, interconnected as One Health.

At the time of writing this strategy, our world is facing a very special One Health challenge, the Covid-19 outbreak. Very soon after its discovery, the virus had spread all over the world, producing a pandemic that causes many patients and massive material and immaterial losses. Although the virus originates from animals, as the majority of the (re-)emerging infectious diseases in people do, there is no indication that animals play a significant role in the further spread of the virus. Several species of companion animals (cats and dogs) fur animals (mink) and zoo animals (lions and tigers) can be infected by people, but there is no sign that these animals are a serious risk for people.

This does however not mean that there is no connection between pandemics like the current one and the way people and animals live together. Bushmeat, wet markets, long-distance transport of living animals, areas densely populated with people and livestock, encroachment of human populations into wildlife ecosystems, massive international movements of people, etc. are factors that increase the risk for the emergence and spread of novel diseases, as we have already seen with i.a. influenza virus strains, Ebola, SARS-CoV, and MERS-CoV.

Controlling single One Health issues as a disease outbreak or antimicrobial resistance is not enough. Also, we have to consider the interconnection between the health of

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people, animals and ecosystems in a systemic way. What are structural imbalances in natural and social systems that lead to the conditions that allow pathogens and diseases to emerge and spread? What are the drivers behind changes in the eco-system and what impact do such changes have on agriculture and vice versa?

For the first time in the history of the EU and after years of constantly growing numbers of Member States, one of the larger countries now decided to leave the Union, which will change the political balance within the EU. Undoubtedly this will affect the outcome of political negotiations, including those on

² <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

veterinary important topics, such as the future of the Common Agricultural Policy, an important tool for the promotion of good agriculture practices.

With the proposed Green Deal for the Union and its citizens the EU Commission's resets its commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges. This new strategy aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society; a resource-efficient and competitive economy where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. The transformation of the food system is planned to take shape following the EU Farm to Fork strategy. Among its goals are a circular food economy, reduced environmental impact, better information to consumers to make healthy and sustainable choices and a further reduction of antimicrobial usage.

Veterinarians are very well placed to contribute to several aspects of the strategy; not only directly to animal health and welfare and public health but also to aspects as biodiversity, environmental sustainability whilst feeding a growing population.

Closer to our day-to-day activities, we see developments like digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and telemedicine. In several countries, veterinary corporates grow rapidly and business models change. Where the veterinary core activity remains the assurance of animal health, animal welfare and public health, the question remains how to deliver these in the best possible way.

Within the profession, a decreasing number of young veterinarians is attracted to work in large animal practice and food hygiene, which makes it difficult to maintain proper veterinary coverage, especially in rural and remote areas. The profession also faces mental health and well-being issues, finding it hard to combine work and private life. Valuable and respected colleagues leave the profession at an early stage.

... difficult to maintain veterinary coverage in rural areas.

Such matters come on top of other, already longer existing but still very critical ones, such as the need for continued attention for animal welfare, the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance, quality pre and postgraduate education, etc.

To keep fulfilling our mission in this ever-changing world, we as FVE need to continuously revise and update the Federation's strategy and priority goals. We need to be a flexible and resilient profession. As a responsible profession, we aim to be part of the solution, both at local, national as well as at international level.

OUR MISSION

The mission of FVE is:

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe enhances animal health, animal welfare, public health and the protection of the environment by promoting the veterinary profession.

Together with its members, FVE supports veterinarians in delivering their professional responsibilities to the best possible standard and ensures that veterinary expertise is recognised and valued by society.

In other words, FVE, in close collaboration with the FVE member organisations, promotes and supports the veterinary profession. This support is aimed at helping veterinarians to optimize their contributions to animal health, animal welfare, public health and the protection of the environment. FVE's activities primarily focus on the collective needs of the veterinary profession, needs that cannot be fulfilled at the individual, local or national level and that benefit from a European approach. It should be realised that most veterinary legislation is EU legislation, meaning that by the time it reaches the individual countries little can be changed. Effective communication with the EU institutions, Commission, Parliament and Council on a almost day by day base, together with awareness and advocacy campaigns is our mode of action. Examples of topics we are working on are an effective EU legislative framework including the regulation of the profession itself, the availability of veterinary medicinal products, and the recognition of qualifications.

Being a liberal profession³ veterinary medicine is based on a professional qualification. Veterinarians are educated to deliver science-based opinions and high-quality services. They take into consideration the interests of the animal, their clients (mostly the owner of the animal) and the society at large: different interests that can be conflicting. FVE carefully follows the on-going development of societal concerns and expectations, and when faced with technical or ethical dilemmas, the interests of the animals, the animal owners, the environment and society at large are considered and carefully balanced. FVE aims to assure that every veterinarian can deliver his/her professional responsibility in an independent capacity, without any undue pressure.

... when faced with ethical dilemmas, the interests of the animals, the animal owners and society at large are carefully balanced.

³ Liberal professions are practised on the basis of relevant professional qualifications in a personal, responsible and professionally independent capacity by those providing intellectual and conceptual services in the interest of the client and the public.(EU Directive 2005/36/EC, recital 43)

OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS

FVE will continue to devote much of its capacity and energy on its core-activities, described in the mission: enhancing animal health, animal welfare, public health and the protection of the environment by promoting the veterinary profession. The existing Working Groups (Animal Welfare, Medicines, Food Safety and Sustainability, Veterinary Statutory Bodies) will be maintained, whereas their composition and Terms of reference will be regularly updated. Collaboration with other organisations and networks will be prolonged.

In addition special attention will go to the following priorities:

- **ONE-HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY**

A top priority for FVE is the promotion of One Health, on the interconnection between the health of animals, people and the ecosystems. One Health covers animals and people and the eco-system. Since veterinarians have a lot to contribute to many One Health topics, we wish to take leadership and strengthen our collaboration on such matters with other relevant professions and disciplines.

Objectives

- FVE will further strengthen its collaboration with other One Health actors and promote interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral activities, including One Health education for veterinary and medical students together;
- A One Health approach will be taken for all FVE initiatives or feedback on EU legislation, in particular in the further development and implementation of the EU Farm to Fork strategy. Special attention will be given to the value of good food from quality sources, reducing food waste and paying fair prices throughout the chain;
- FVE will develop an Animal Welfare Strategy to promote animal welfare contributing to sustainable animal production and responsible ownership for all animals. This includes for livestock improved animal husbandry systems and breeding programmes directed towards more resilient animals. FVE will give priority to the development of husbandry systems that meet the needs of the animals (including less animal transport). This includes for companion animals and exotic animals, promoting responsible breeding, trade and ownership, including issues around identification and registration, pet passports and fighting illegal trade.

... priority to husbandry systems that meet the needs of the animals ...

- FVE will strengthen its efforts towards disease prevention (such as through better rearing conditions, regular animal health visits) and continue the promotion of responsible use of medicines (including antimicrobials);
- FVE will promote a reduced environmental impact, more sustainable farming solutions and better information to consumers.

- **ONE VETERINARY COMMUNITY**

Being a relatively small profession it is vital for FVE and its member organisations to create as much as possible synergy in their activities. The better FVE and the members can support each other, the more we will be able to be influential and to make a difference.

Objectives:

- FVE will encourage veterinarians working in different fields (clinical practice, research, policy making, food hygiene, education, industry, etc.) to build multilateral networks and work in synergy;
- FVE will continue to support the member organisations to promote veterinary interests at the European and national levels;
- FVE will work together with the Veterinary Statutory Bodies to promote the importance of ethics in veterinary medicine and to keep the European Veterinary Code of Conduct up to date;
- FVE and the 4 sections will review the relationship between the Federation and the Sections. Opportunities to strengthen synergy and to boost common actions will be explored. At the same time, in order to ensure a correct balance in the decision making process, FVE will reflect on the needs and demands of the national member organisations;
- FVE will continue to foster its communication with the veterinary corporates and keep veterinary wellbeing high on the agenda of these meetings;
- FVE will continue to work with the International Veterinary Students Association (IVSA) as they are our future. Also the communication and collaboration with other members of the veterinary team, like nurses and technicians, will be promoted.

... keep veterinary wellbeing high on the agenda...

- **BEING RECOGNISED AND INFLUENTIAL**

Both for the individual veterinarian and the veterinary profession, it is essential that veterinarians are recognised and valued for their up to standard contributions to animal health, animal welfare, public health and the protection of the environment. Life Long Learning is a must for every veterinarian. All contributions shall be based on science and technology as well as on careful consideration of the emerging ethical dilemmas. At the European level, FVE shall be valued as the credible and reliable representative of the entire European Veterinary Profession.

... based on science and technology as well as on careful consideration of the emerging ethical dilemmas.

Objectives:

- FVE will continue to work on the visibility of all aspects of veterinary medicine and underline the value of the profession's contribution to society at large;
- FVE will review its Communication Plan' and strengthen its presence on social media. Different audiences require different, targeted approaches;
- FVE will speak up about societal concerns related to veterinary medicine, in particular One Health topics. Within the federation discussions about controversial topics will be encouraged;
- FVE will strengthen its relations with the EU institutions, proactively put forward topics of veterinary interest, advocate veterinary goals and give input to the consultations;
- FVE will reach out to stakeholder organisations and companies, and create alliances where possible.

- **Veterinary Demography and Rewarding Careers**

To fulfil the profession's role and to meet the needs of the animals, their owners and society at large it is vital that sufficient numbers of scholars will choose for careers in all different fields of veterinary medicine, and that they will find attractive and rewarding (financially, socially, mentally...) jobs which will give sufficient energy and satisfaction to stay in the profession.

Given the growing diversity in veterinary tasks, it is essential to attract a broad variety of young people to the profession that will ensure a balanced and flexible workforce.

Diversity in the profession will contribute to the flexibility of the profession and its ability to adapt to new situations. It will strengthen veterinary resilience.

Objectives

- FVE will continue its veterinary demography surveys and closely follow the ongoing developments. FVE will raise awareness about growing shortages in clinical practice in rural and remote areas and explore possibilities to turn this trend e.g. via CAP. Shortages of veterinarians in food hygiene will be addressed in the context of the national situation;
- FVE will foster diversity and inclusiveness in the veterinary profession with equal opportunities for all, regardless socio-economic or cultural background. Our goal is to be a diverse, balanced, inclusive and resilient profession. Barriers to entry to the profession will be addressed and where possible removed, whilst safeguarding the quality of veterinary medicine;
- FVE will strongly advocate equal salaries for equal positions by male and female veterinarians;
- FVE will encourage all veterinarians (in particular women and young graduates) to take a role in working groups, the board and in other leadership positions at local and national level;
- FVE will continue to work on the availability of good quality pre- and post-graduate veterinary training. Collaboration with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) and Veterinary Continuous Education in Europe (VetCEE) will be deepened;
- FVE will promote Life Long Learning , differentiation and specialisation in different fields (e.g. food hygiene, animal welfare, research positions, policy making) and professional matters (personal management, leadership);
- FVE will explore possibilities to establish a WG on the mental wellbeing of veterinarians in diverse roles across the veterinary sector. Topics to be addressed include raising the resilience of individual veterinarians and the profession, the early recognition of mental difficulties and finding timely solutions.

- **Embrace Technology**

New technologies that can support and complement the veterinarian's professional competences, like digitalisation, precision livestock farming, collecting animal based indicators, artificial intelligence, telemedicine, etc. develop rapidly, not only in clinical practice, but also in other areas as veterinary education, veterinary inspection and food safety.

FVE will closely monitor the development of such tools and technologies that can help the veterinarian in the delivery of professional responsibilities. Key factors in the evaluation of such tools are technological progress as well as ethics and deontology including the Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR). Potential risks shall be mitigated proportionally.

... key evaluation factors are technological progress as well as ethics and deontology including the Veterinary Client Patient Relationship .

Objectives:

- FVE will closely monitor technology developments and evaluate the possible impact of these technologies and reflect on policy actions that need to be taken to ensure integrity in veterinary practice and veterinary-client-patient-relationship;
- FVE will be in touch with experts in the field to exchange information and to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration;
- FVE will analyse the impact on the veterinary curriculum and reflect on the necessary competences for the future veterinarians;
- FVE will promote postgraduate education in the relevant fields.

