



**7th Meeting of the
European Coordination Committee on Veterinary Training**

Tuesday 7 October 2008, 09.00 -15.00h

FVE Office, 1 Rue Defacqz, Brussels

Draft MINUTES

The meeting was attended by:

For **EAEVE**: Marcel Wanner (president), Ljiljana Pinter

For **EBVS**: Stefano Romagnoli (president), Frank Gasthuys

For **FVE**: Walter Winding (president), Karin Östensson, Christophe Buhot
Jan Vaarten (FVE secretariat)

1. Welcome and opening

Walter Winding opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. Ljiljana Pinter arrived a bit later. Apologies were received from Rémi Gellé (FVE). Christophe Buhot replaced him.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Report 6th meeting ECCVT held on Friday 11 April 2008

The minutes were circulated by e-mail and suggestions for amendments were already taken up. They were adopted without further changes. Walter Winding thanked Nancy De Briyne for writing the minutes.

4. Minutes of the annual General Meeting of EBVS

Copies of the minutes were distributed in the meeting. Frank Gasthuys explained the most important topics.

Members

Austria
Belgium
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
FYROM
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Serbia
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
United Kingdom

Observers

Albania
Ukraine

Sections

UEVP
Practitioners

EASVO
State Officers

UEVH
Hygienists

EVERI
Veterinarians in

President

Walter Winding

Vice-Presidents

Ljiljana Markuš
Rainer Schneichel
Stephen Ware
Margareta Widell

- A change in the system and time frame for the full approval of the Colleges;
- A possible differentiation in the voting system between approved and non-approved Colleges.
- Contacts with the American Board for Veterinary Specialisation about the reciprocal recognition of Diplomats.
- Decision that Colleges will only accept graduates from EAEVE/FVE approved schools for specialisation programmes. Walter Winding congratulated EBVS with this decision; it is an important signal and a good step forward.
- Change of composition of the EBVS Board. Stefano Romagnoli became president and Frank Gasthuys past-president. Riitta-Mari Tulamo stepped down. Two persons joined the Board: Neil Forbes and Peter O'Brian

Jan Vaarten asked about the establishment of a new College on Animal Welfare, Science, Ethics and Laws. Procedures were explained to the interested persons. It is up to them to come forward with the required information. At this moment EBVS covers 23 colleges. New colleges should only be established if there is a clear need and enough "critical mass" to survive.

Frank Gasthuys thanked FVE, EAEVE and ECCVT for its support. Stefano Romagnoli invited the presidents of EAEVE and FVE to attend the next meeting of the EBVS General Assembly. Both presidents were pleased to accept the invitation.

Frank Gasthuys drew attention to the European School of Advanced Veterinary Studies (ESAVS). After some discussion it was concluded that it is a private, commercial driven initiative, like there are many more on the market. It seems to aim at the upper part of the market. In general the courses are of high quality, though expensive. It operates under the responsibility of the University of Luxembourg. Since ESAVS decided to stop the use of the title 'Master', there is no reason for action by ECCVT.

Stefano Romagnoli wondered if ECCVT should develop its own logo, etc. Such a logo should be clear about the three organisations represented in ECCVT. Marcel Wanner will develop a compilation of the three logos. Each organisation will make a reference to ECCVT on its web site.

- Marcel Wanner to develop a proposal for an ECCVT logo.

5. Evaluation of the meeting with the European Commission (Directorates General Internal Market and SANCO) on Monday 6 October

Every one agreed that the meeting with T. Wiedmann (DG Internal Market: IM) and L. Kuster (DG Health and Consumer Protection: SANCO) was a good and positive meeting. The preparatory meeting in the morning had been

very helpful for focussing the message we wished to give. Delegates of EAEVE, EBVS and FVE clearly spoke with one voice when they expressed their concerns about the quality of a number of veterinary schools and the weakness of the current evaluation system. A lot of information about possible consequences of the current situation, at national, European and even at global level, was put on the table.

The impression was that the Commission got a much better insight in the issue. However, also in view of the number and position of the two functionaries, it remained to be seen what it would mean for the future. ECCVT must keep the line of communication open and must keep drawing attention to the matter. It was decided that a summary report of the meeting including all main items and conclusions would be sent to the Commission.

- FVE secretariat to draft a summary report of the meeting with the Commission

Marcel Wanner concluded that the reports about the evaluation of schools must be much more precise. On the base of the current reports it is almost impossible for the Commission to take any legal action against one of the Member States. Reports should be clearer about deficiencies and about where and how they are to be considered to infringe EU legislation. For example paragraphs about no access to a slaughterhouse or insufficient numbers of clinical cases should be followed by clear conclusion saying that these situations are in breach of Article 38. 3 (f) respectively (h)

Article 38

3. Training as a veterinary surgeon shall provide an assurance that the person in question has acquired the following knowledge and skills:

(f) adequate knowledge of the hygiene and technology involved in the production, manufacture and putting into circulation of animal foodstuffs or foodstuffs of animal origin intended for human consumption;

(h) adequate clinical and other practical experience under appropriate supervision.

Commission representatives were rather optimistic about an up date of the Annex to the Directive, listing subjects that have to be taught. Although this certainly is important – the current list is more than 30 years old and does not take into account the developments of the last three decades - the question remains in how far this would lead to real improvements, because it would not take away the bottleneck in the implementation of the legislation at national level.

In the discussion with the Commission it was highlighted that the rather vague requirements of the Directive were exactly the reason why it was so difficult to have a clear case of inappropriate implementation by Member States.

It was recommended to see if we could organise meetings at national level in the countries with the largest problems (Italy 9/13 not approved, Spain 6/10 not approved and Portugal 5/6 not approved). These meeting should bring together representatives of ECCVT, the European Commission, and high representatives of their ministries of education and the schools. National organisations should help to put pressure on the national politicians. Other

countries that need attention are Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with respectively 2/2, 1/1, 1/1 and 1/1 not approved).

➤ FVE secretariat to investigate possibilities for meetings at national level.

ECCVT and its three founding organisations should also become much more transparent about the situation. The policy of only mentioning the approved schools and not presenting information about the non-approved ones should be abandoned. Communications should be clear and understandable for the average citizen. Marcel Wanner said that EAEVE was developing a new web site that would be more informative and clearer. He also added that schools should be obliged to place an executive summary of the evaluation and their self-evaluation reports on their web sites.

A suggestion to complain in the media about the role of the Commission was seen as not constructive and not taken over.

The discussion went on about the position of veterinary education in Europe versus other parts of the world. Although the European Standard Operating Procedure is taken over in many parts of the world the European system is not accepted because there is no sanction if a school fails to meet the requirements. This leads to a situation where schools will choose for the American AVMA-system. It was felt that EU was looking too much inwards and that there was a serious risk of isolating itself. The issue will be addressed in the next issue of the FVE Newsletter.

Christophe Buhot explained the situation regarding the questions asked by MEP Neil Parish to the European Commission. Unfortunately the question that was proposed by UEVP was split into two separate questions (see annex)

Marcel Wanner updated ECCVT on EAEVE's application for the membership of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). ENQA representatives will join the ECOVE visitation team in Leipzig and the next meeting of ECOVE in Vienna.

6. Swine medicine in Turkey and Israel

Marcel Wanner asked ECCVT for its opinion about the obligation to teach swine medicine in countries where people, in particular Jewish and Muslim people, do not keep or eat pigs.

ECCVT decided that the topic was a very fundamental one and needed an in depth discussion, and should come back at the next meeting of ECCVT.

However in a first reaction, ECCVT strongly felt that all schools should offer a full curriculum including swine medicine. In line with the Directive, all veterinarians have to be able to perform all their duties. This is not negotiable. In the eyes of ECCVT schools that do not teach swine medicine, cannot qualify for automatic recognition of the diplomas they award. In case a school

has no possibilities to teach swine medicine, it should liaise with another veterinary school and organise the training of its students there.

7. Correspondence with the University of Lleida

The University of Lleida (Spain) started to offer a 4 years curriculum “Animal Science and Health”. It is a general curriculum in life sciences not specifically devoted to the training of veterinarians. In addition to this curriculum students can follow extra courses at the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Barcelona and obtain a veterinary degree.

FVE and EAEVE asked the University of Lleida for further clarification. In its reply the rector more or less confirmed the situation. ECCVT decided that it should be pointed out to the rector that this was not acceptable. Veterinary education should consist of a minimum of 5 years training in a establishment for veterinary education. Alternatives consisting of a number of years training in biology, zoology, etc and on top of that a limited number of courses in a veterinary school are not adequate to become a veterinarian. It was decided that Jan Vaarten would send a reply with copies to the EU Commission and the Spanish Government. The reply should state that if this would go on, ECCVT would urge the Commission not to accept veterinary diplomas from the university of Barcelona as fulfilling the requirements for automatic recognition by other EU Member states.

- Jan Vaarten to reply to the rector of the University of Lleida

8. Actual developments in the field of Veterinary Education

Already covered under the previous points on the agenda.

9. Mutual goals

Already covered under the previous points on the agenda.

10. Any Other Business

Marcel Wanner informed ECCVT that the Association of German speaking Veterinary Schools had proposed some amendments to ECCVT’s proposal to update the list of subjects of Annex V. The suggestions were adopted with the exception of two on which further clarification was desired.

- the reason to delete the word “veterinary” from “veterinary hygiene”?
- the reason to delete ecology. It very much relates to sustainability.

Marcel Wanner will ask for it.

- Marcel Wanner to ask German speaking veterinary schools for further clarification

Christophe Buhot attended a meeting in Dublin of the Postgraduate Education working group of FECAVA. The group wishes to promote and to structure postgraduate education. It could become a platform for international harmonisation of credit points. They plan to start a pilot project in Greece, Ireland and Spain and are now looking for an accrediting body.

Christophe Buhot thinks that ECCVT should be involved, not to administer the system but to keep aware of new developments.

A first meeting will be held, in November in connection with the FVE GA, in Hannover.

11. Next ECCVT meeting

The next meeting will take place on the afternoon of Thursday 2 April and the morning of Friday 3 April 2009, in Padova.

12. End of the meeting

Walter Winding thanked every one for their input and closed the meeting.

List of Action Points:

- Marcel Wanner to develop a proposal for an ECCVT logo. 2
 - FVE secretariat to draft a summary report of the meeting with the Commission 3
 - FVE secretariat to investigate possibilities for meetings at national level. 4
 - Jan Vaarten to reply to the rector of the University of Lleida 5
 - Marcel Wanner to ask German speaking veterinary schools for further clarification 5
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Annex I Written questions Niel Parish

Question 1:

Currently a Joint Education Committee exists however this has only consultative powers. Therefore there is no compulsory obligation for the relevant veterinary schools to comply with the conclusions of this Committee.

In its report on the New Animal Health Strategy, adopted on 22 May, the European Parliament called for the establishment of a European accreditation system for veterinary schools.

What decision-making strength does the Commission intend the new accreditation system to have?

Answer:

Answer given by Mr Figel' on behalf of the Commission

According to the EC Treaty, Article 149, the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications⁽¹⁾ contains harmonised minimum training requirements for veterinary surgeons, but it does not entail a system of accreditation for veterinary higher education institutions or faculties.

In the domain of education, the Commission cannot propose to attach decision-making strength to a European Accreditation System.

Neither does the new Animal Health Strategy of the Health and Consumers Directorate-General (DG SANCO) foresee any specific measures aimed at setting up a European Accreditation System for veterinary education facilities.

However, the Commission encourages and supports a range of voluntary initiatives for accreditation at national and European level, which comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, endorsed by both the Ministers responsible for Higher Education of the Bologna Process (46 countries) and the EU Parliament and Council⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2005/36/EC of Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, OJ L 255, 30.9.2005.

⁽²⁾ Recommendation of 15 February 2006 on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education OJ L 64, 4.3.2006.

Question 2:

The Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications (2005/36/EC⁽¹⁾) allows professionals, including veterinarians to have their qualifications recognised throughout Europe and to practice in any EU Member State.

However, the Joint Education Committee, which is charged with the evaluation of veterinary education establishments recently declared some veterinary schools in Estonia, Italy, Spain and Slovakia to be deficient.

Veterinarians who have graduated from these schools can continue to practice throughout the EU as their diplomas are recognised in the Annex of the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications.

Is the European Commission aware of the potential threat that this poses to both animal and public health and what measures does it intend to take to solve these problems?

Answer:

Not yet answered.