



**Report of the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the**

**European Coordination Committee on Veterinary Training (ECCVT)**

**Held on Thursday 26 March from 3.00 pm to 7.00 pm  
and Friday 27 March from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm  
at the Università di Padova**

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

The meeting was attended by:

For EAEVE: Marcel Wanner (president), Ljiljana Pinter, Hans-Henrik Dietz  
For EBVS: Stefano Romagnoli (president), Frank Gasthuys, Jens Arnjberg (2<sup>nd</sup> day only)  
For FVE: Walter Winding (president), Karin Östensson, Christophe Buhot  
Jan Vaarten (FVE secretariat)

**1. Welcome and Opening**

The meeting was hosted and chaired by Prof. Stefano Romagnoli, president of EBVS. He welcomed all participants and wished every one a pleasant stay in Padua. He looked forward to stimulating discussions and a fruitful meeting.

**2. Adoption of the Agenda (FVE/09/am/016)**

The agenda was adopted after adding one extra item, "teaching of swine diseases in regions without pigs". It was decided to discuss the matter under point 11 Any Other Business.

**3. Minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> ECCVT meeting held on Tuesday 7 October 2008 (FVE/08/am/050) and action points**

Some typing errors were corrected.

One action point - the development of an ECCVT logo - was still on going, all others were finalized.

Christophe Buhot remarked that the original questions about veterinary education, as given to the European Parliament, should be added to the minutes. They will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

The University of Lleida did not respond to the second letter of ECCVT about setting up a new curriculum (partially in Lleida and partially in Barcelona).

Marcel Wanner noticed that the other Spanish deans were aware of the developments in Lleida, and that they didn't agree.

Later on in the meeting Marcel Wanner came back again on the Lleida issue. He then added that students could get a bachelor degree in Lleida and then after 2 additional years a master degree in Barcelona. In many other studies

President

Walter Winding

Vice-Presidents

Ljiljana Markuš  
Rainer Schneichel  
Stephen Ware  
Margareta Widell

e.g. law, social sciences, arts, etc. where students can follow a more individual track, doing a Bachelor in one university and a Master in another, it wouldn't be a problem. For veterinary medicine however it is clear that this doesn't work. It also is against Directive 2005/35 which speaks of "...a total of at least five years of full-time theoretical and practical study at a university or at a higher institute providing training recognised as being of an equivalent level, or under the supervision of a university, covering at least the study programme referred to in Annex V, point 5.4.1."

It was decided to contact the Spanish competent authority directly. A visit of Marcel Wanner, Walter Winding to the competent authority will be organized. They should point out to the Spanish authorities that as soon as diploma's not complying with the Directive will be awarded, ECCVT will file an official complaint against Spain.

→ FVE will contact Rafael Laguens in the Spanish Consejo General de Colegios Veterinarios de Espana to prepare the meeting.

It appeared that Lleida is dependent on the support given by the Barcelona school. Stephano Romagnoli remarked that a comparable situation exists in the south of Italy. The school of Catanzarro is supported by those of Bari and Naples. It was suggested to address this topic within EAEVE.

Christophe Buhot reported that comparable ideas were developed in Paris. The new curriculum would comprise a 4-year course animal husbandry and agriculture followed by 2 additional years in a vet school.

Marcel Wanner said that the problem was a more fundamental one. Governments were primarily interested in saving money and reducing budgets. They did not understand the need for an integrated approach and try to outsource parts of the curriculum.

Another topic he raised was the differentiation within the schools. More and more schools have difficulties in offering a complete range of subjects; they try to reduce the programmes by tracking or focusing on a few animal species only. Walter Winding added that exactly this was one of the reasons for FVE to stay fully involved in the evaluation system.

#### **4. Evaluation of the meeting of FVE with the EU Commission DG SANCO on 11 March**

Walter Winding reported about the meeting FVE recently had with the European Commission. At this moment the Commission only thinks of official veterinarians working on behalf of the competent authorities. These vets could be regulated, including requirements for training. Private veterinarians don't fit in this approach. FVE argued that also private veterinarians very much contribute to the public interests and that the competent authorities should take this into account.

The meeting of ECCVT with Commission representatives, which was held 6 October 2008 in Brussels was discussed.

Again Commission representatives said that they understood the problem but they had difficulties to see how they could solve it. Part of the problem is the weak implementation of EU legislation in some of the Member States. Moreover they said that have difficulties in interfering national education programmes because these fall under the Member States' competences. Another juridical was the position of private veterinarians.

Karin Östensson thought we should broaden our approach and not focus on the EU Commission alone. We should try to involve others like the Parliament, members of the Council of the European Union, national authorities like ministers, etc in this topic.

Christophe Buhot said that he had very good experiences with the EP. All members he talked to understood the problem and were convinced that it should be solved as soon as possible.

→ It was proposed to strengthen our co-operation with OIE, who holds a more holistic view on the functioning of Veterinary Services.

## 5. ECOVE

### Accrediting body

First Marcel Wanner expressed his views on the structure and role of the accrediting body. He explained that ECOVE, the former JEC, is not a legal entity, it is an unofficial committee. EAEVE is an organization under the French law, its statutes are registered in Austria and its seat is Vienna. ECOVE cannot be accepted by ENQA as accrediting body. According to Marcel Wanner, EAEVE should become the owner of the accreditation system and FVE would be invited to participate in the system.

Jan Vaarten replied that so far EAEVE and FVE have been equal partners in the system and FVE does not wish to change this. He also thinks that EAEVE cannot unilaterally decide to do so. Christophe Buhot also thought that it should stay a joint venture of EAEVE and FVE.

Marcel Wanner said that he had difficult discussions with ENQA and finally ENQA refused to have a further meeting with EAEVE and that one had to accept the situation.

Hans-Henrik Dietz remarked that this was an important point. Potentially it could be extremely damaging for our system and for EAEVE in general, leading to a situation where AVMA would take over. Karin Östensson supported him and thought that every possibility should be used to find a proper solution.

After ample discussions it was decided to see if EAEVE and FVE could have a joined meeting with ENQA to see where the problems exactly are and how they could be solved.

Karin Östensson emphasized that we should try to use different channels and develop an action plan.

### Internal Rules

A proposal to update the internal rules of JEC for ECOVE was circulated with the documents for the meeting.

Two changes were agreed:

- Point 12. second paragraph. If a conflict occurs, the member in question must ..etc will be: ~~If a conflict occurs,~~ The member in question must ... etc.
- Point 13. an extra sentence saying that "a summary of the report will be made publicly available" will be added.

Without further changes the rules were adopted.

## 6. Post graduate training:

Proposal by FECAVA (see cover page article by FECAVA president Andrew Byrne <http://www.fecava.org/files/FECAVA%20Newsletter%20Dec-08.pdf> )

ECCVT members were surprised about the article by Andrew Byrne, president of FECAVA, the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations, about the accreditation of post graduate training courses. Walter Winding said that FVE could

agree with the general idea to stimulate post graduate training, but he had reservations about how the idea was worked out. Karin Östensson also thought the idea could be good and it deserved to be looked at in a positive way. We should not completely turn away from it she said.

Christophe Buhot said that UEVP, the European organisation of veterinary practitioners did not want new levels of veterinarians. There are practitioners, acknowledged veterinarians (per animal species) and EBVS recognised specialists. That was enough. More levels would make things unnecessarily complicated.

Hens-Henrik Dietz remarked that accreditation was “big business”. Much money is involved and people easily hold more than 1 agenda.

Accreditation at a European level doesn't seem very easy to manage, certainly not by 1 central organisation. It would probably be more efficient to have national accrediting bodies recognising each other. Karin Östensson thought that “accreditation” might be not the right term, she would rather speak about harmonisation or something like that.

Stephano Romagnoli wondered if it could be interesting to have Colleges for practitioners, although not at the level of specialists. The European Society for Feline Medicine already functions for several years, but Christophe Buhot warned that one should not divide the profession in too many small parties.

Walter Winding stressed that if we have good ideas about what we want we should take it in our hands and take the lead. If we don't act, more initiatives will come up, and it will be even more difficult to co-ordinate these, he said. He also suggested doing a survey about what is already done in the different countries. Hans-Henrik Dietz supports this idea.

→ It was decided to invite Andrew Byrne for the next meeting to explain FECAVA's ideas.

## **7. EBVS supervision by ECCVT.**

Jan Vaarten pointed out that according to its own rules ECCVT should oversee the functioning of EBVS, by reviewing the minutes and recommendations from EBVS AGM's. Sofar this item was never worked out. He suggested that either it should be done properly or the rule should be deleted.

After some discussion it was agreed that ECCVT was meant as a platform for the three organisations to share ideas and to co-ordinate their activities and not to oversee each other. The rule should be deleted.

→ Jan Vaarten was asked to propose an amended text at the next meeting.

## **8. Standards for specialist examinations**

Reference was made to a letter from the deans of Utrecht, Hanover and London. They are concerned about a decline in the registrations within some of the Colleges and also about problems with examination procedures reported by schools with recognised residency training programmes.

Frank Gasthuys remarked that he felt unpleasantly surprised by this letter. He suggested that it could be a problem related to the Utrecht faculty. He also said that EBVS wishes that specialists are more than good technicians, they should have an integral insight in their discipline.

Hans-Henrik Dietz replied that although he couldn't agree with every point mentioned in the letter, he thought there is a message in the letter. He wondered if the system is

always fair to the candidates. High numbers of candidates who invest a lot of time and effort but nevertheless fail for the exams will de-motivate others to begin. Also Marcel Wander thinks that the opinion of these three respected and influential deans should be taken seriously.

→ EBVS will draft a reply to the deans. It will be circulated to the other members of ECCVT before it will be sent.

## **9. Actual developments in the field of Veterinary Education**

### **EAEVE**

EAEVE is facing difficulties with ENQA (see page 3 of this report).

Furthermore Marcel Wanner thought that all around Europe universities are breaking down veterinary education. According to him academia are not really interested in this type of training. Clinics are reduced and basic subjects are diminished. Some wish to focus on a few animal species only, without recognising that the broad multi-species approach is one of the biggest assets of a veterinarian. Other schools introduce tracking systems. Apparently in medical schools undergraduate training prepares for postgraduate follow up curricula, while in veterinary medicine, the training should provide everything needed to work as a veterinarian. Many schools and faculties find it much more interesting to go into research. They also find it easier to get extra funding for research projects. For example in Gent over 50% of the budget comes from research projects.

Hans-Henrik Dietz said that it is necessary that all schools provide basic training but not every differentiation can be made available in every school. He warned that each proposal to introduce a new subject in the curriculum will give a rector an argument to reduce the (expensive) hours of clinical training.

Stephano Romagnoli added that it should be seen in connection with our discussion about schools that do not provide training for a certain animal species. In these cases they should liaise with other schools and use the money that is saved for sending students out to the other school. In the end the school keeps its responsibility to deliver a complete curriculum. It should be taught in its own premises or - under their responsibility - in the premises of other schools.

Christophe Buhot reported about the situation in France. Schools have contracts with private practices. They call it a sandwich course, the student goes to the school, to a practice, back to the school again, to a practice, etc. There is a whole list of tasks they have to do.

The Zurich school has a comparable system. Practitioners are paid to train the students.

In Austria all graduates follow an extra year in practice to gain more experience. It is made a condition to be allowed to have an own pharmacy.

Walter Winding saw the value of the multi-species approach. It should not be given up. Karin Östensson agreed, she said tracking, although introduced for good reasons, might undermine the unique overview of the vet and fire back at him. Also in Sweden an extra year in between graduation and licensing was introduced. Karin Östensson added that we have to explain the society what the veterinarian is, what he does, and why that is so relevant for the society.

### **EBVS**

Stephano Romagnoli reported that EBVS is working on many topics. The most important one is its voting system. Probably there will be a change of the EBVS

constitution. Colleges that are provisionally recognised will then be allowed to vote on all issues except for full recognition and accepting new Colleges.

EBVS is also working on a quality system for the examinations.

EBVS wishes to strengthen its contacts with the American Board of Veterinary Specialisation. ABVS might become an observer in EBVS. Hans-Henrik Dietz suggests doing such things only on the base of reciprocity.

The College of Avian Medicine and Surgery wishes to include other species into its scope.

## **FVE**

Walter Winding said that FVE worked a lot on lobbying the European Commission. First they did not want to be involved in the topic, but he believes one should not give up. We keep on knocking on their door and beating them with their own arguments. Christophe Buhot invested much time and effort in lobbying the European Parliament.

## **10. Any Other Business / Next ECCVT meeting**

Stephano Romagnoli, as chair of the meeting, proposes to postpone the topic of phasing out animal species from the curriculum to the next meeting.

Frank Gasthuys asks if any one has more information available about the new EU legislation about experiments with animals. He heard some rumors that were rather alarming. IN FVE, the section EVERI deals with the matter.

→ Next meeting will be on 29 October from 10.00 to 16.00 hours in Brussels

## **11. End of meeting**

### **Action Points**

- FVE will contact Rafael Laguens in the Spanish Consejo General de Colegios Veterinarios de Espana to prepare the meeting. 2
- It was proposed to strengthen our co-operation with OIE, who holds a more holistic view on the functioning of Veterinary Services. 3
- It was decided to invite Andrew Byrne for the next meeting to explain FECAVA's ideas. 4
- Jan Vaarten was asked to propose an amended text at the next meeting. 4
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