

## **President's Report 2013**

On the occasion of the 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly I would like to welcome the representatives of the 97 member schools of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education. The present report includes the summary of the activities of our Association in 2013 and in the first months of the current year.

The year of 2013 was a very busy one with remarkable events in the life of our organisation. The main mission of EAEVE has not changed, namely increasing the level of veterinary education both in the European Higher Education Area and beyond by means of regular evaluations of the member schools. This mission acts as basis for all other activities of the association, such as the promotion of exchange of information, facilitation of mobility of students and teachers, development of teaching methods etc. This Europe-wide, profession specific evaluation and accreditation system is absolutely unique; veterinary medicine is the only one among the controlled professions in the European Union, where such a system exists, and has been continuously working for more than 25 years. The evaluation system is widely accepted by the profession; more and more veterinary establishments strive to meet the requirements laid down in the directive 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EU, and the number of accredited and approved member schools is continuously increasing. It is a pleasure for me to inform the General Assembly that at the time of writing the present report 6 member schools are accredited, 47 are approved, and 4 ones are conditionally approved, so in total 59% of the member schools fall into the categories mentioned above. Out of the 75 member schools within the European Union 5 are accredited, 43 are approved and 3 are conditionally approved, which amounts to 68%. I am very happy that the number of schools, which realize the need to have their quality assurance system evaluated and thus apply for a combined visit of Stage 1 and 2, is significantly on the rise. The conditionally approved and several non approved schools are also working hard to rectify the deficiencies and their promising interim reports clearly show their tenacity and desire to improve. I sincerely hope that their efforts

pay off and will be reflected in successful revisits which will eventually catapult them onto the list of approved faculties in the very near future. We would like to encourage the non approved schools and the not evaluated schools to ask for a visitation; as a matter of fact, they were approached by the office recently on this issue. The modification of the statutes last year by reclassifying those member schools to Affiliates that do not ask for evaluation within 5 years after becoming non approved or 3 years after joining EAEVE will hopefully help to persuade non approved and non evaluated schools to undergo an evaluation soon, which is one of the goals of the association. Consultative site visits were the option of choice by several schools as an excellent way to prepare for and hopefully succeed in a following full visitation. I am very happy that since 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2014 the chief coordinatorship has been in the hands of the new Director of Evaluation/Accreditation Programme, Pierre Lekeux.

The 25-year-long activity in the field of evaluation and accreditation of veterinary training and being the largest veterinary profession specific evaluation/accreditation body of the world explains the intention of EAEVE to become member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, ENQA. In order to achieve this goal, a Self Evaluation Report of EAEVE was written and handed in in December 2012, followed by an on site audit at the Head Office in Vienna, conducted by a Review Panel in order to evaluate our activities. In the framework of this visit meetings and discussions with different representatives of EAEVE and stakeholders were held. Representatives of the Executive Committee, the Committee of Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA), the European Committee on Veterinary Education (ECOVE), the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, academic stakeholders (rectors, deans), students, graduates, members of the visiting teams and the office staff were invited to these interviews. A half-day long visit was paid to the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna on one hand to illustrate the structure of a visit performed by EAEVE and, on the other hand, to enable the team to conduct discussions with the academic staff members of a recently accredited school as well as the visiting experts from this establishment. The report acknowledges the benefits of the work of EAEVE in the field of veterinary education and emphasises its positive impact on the level of veterinary training in Europe. It contains several constructive statements and suggestions, which are clearly beneficial to EAEVE, and have thus been already adapted or are on the verge of being implemented. The report includes, however, several misunderstandings and wrong conclusions, on the basis of which the Board of ENQA informed us in late November that they would not support the admission of EAEVE into

ENQA. EAEVE handed in an appeal against this decision focusing on the misunderstandings, and to our knowledge it will be discussed by the ENQA Board in its meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> April. You were informed about the details of this procedure in the newsletter in December. Summarising the ENQA issue, in the name of the whole Association I would like to express my sincere thanks to everybody who provided help and support in this process.

I am pleased that after a break EAEVE's newsletter "Staying in touch" was resurrected and in December 2013 and March 2014 respectively a new edition was issued. We plan on "keeping in touch" on a regular basis in the future to bridge the time gap between the General Assemblies. We would like to use this tool to enhance information flow not only from the Executive Committee and the Head Office towards the member schools but between the member schools as well. Hence, all faculties are encouraged to use the newsletter; papers on opinion, good experiences, suggestions and any issues of common interest are welcomed.

Higher education, including veterinary education is subject to continuous change; EAEVE faces several challenges, too, so we have to be aware of the need for changes within EAEVE. With the growing need for Stage 2 evaluations it became evident that more detailed standards and expectations regarding quality assurance are needed. Stage 2 experts are working hard in order to produce a list of minimum requirements and guidelines in this field. The SOP Working Group under the chairmanship of Anton Pijpers has also been enlarged with some Stage 2 experts in order to strengthen the quality assurance in our activity. Another important challenge is the increased demand for joint visitations, when the EAEVE teams together with experts of profession specific national or international agencies evaluate schools. In order to prevent overlapping work and to reduce the work load and the costs of the schools, the elaboration of a new guideline is indispensable. The intensification of collaborations with national and international accreditation agencies and especially with profession specific ones is of major importance to us; it is apt to pave the road to a wider acceptance of our Association. I am happy to inform you that more and more national accreditation bodies accept the results of the evaluations done by EAEVE.

Being an international veterinary organisation, collaboration with other professional bodies is a high priority. We maintain a very intensive cooperation with the European veterinary organisations, representatives of the FVE are involved in the evaluation process and several members of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) are listed in our expert

pool. The European Coordinating Committee on Veterinary Training (ECCVT) involving representatives of FVE, EBVS and EAEVE provides a perfect framework to enable exchange of ideas, discussions and collaboration. On the basis of this long-term cooperation in the field of education, the principle of “One Profession, One Voice” has been perfectly realised. ECCVT is an excellent platform to discuss issues of common interest. The surveys on bee health, laboratory animal medicine and aquaculture are good examples in this respect; they provide valuable data for the profession and education. The results of these surveys were published in the newsletter and they are available on our homepage, as well. The international activities of EAEVE go beyond Europe; we entertain excellent connections with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE), and we are eager to further intensify them. I am also delighted that the Réseau des établissements d’enseignement vétérinaire de la Méditerranée (REEV-Med), an association with similar targets as EAEVE was founded some years ago in order to help veterinary education in the Mediterranean area, and we are looking forward to a fruitful cooperation with them.

The present General Assembly is special, since the members are about to elect a new President. I was elected four years ago in Vienna and I will reach the end of my second term at the General Assembly in Murcia. As I have made it evident before, I am not going to apply for a third term. In order to keep a healthy rotation I am happy to pass the presidency on to another colleague. At this point I would like to grab the opportunity to thank for the devoted job of my predecessor, Marcel Wanner; it was indeed a pleasure to continue his work. I am pleased that we have an excellent candidate for the presidency, Prof. Ana Bravo, former dean of the Lugo school, member of ECOVE, ECCVT and the SOP working group, who used to work for the association as member of the ExCom and Vice President. I am sure that her wide experience in the main activity of our association, in the field of evaluation and accreditation, familiarity with the management of EAEVE, her excellent personal capabilities and skills and kind personality serve as a guarantee for the smooth leading of this outstanding organisation. It is needless to mention that I am eager to continue to work for the Association and help the new president in the future, too.

Before reaching the end of my report I would like to thank everybody, who has been working for our Association. It is based on voluntary work, commitment and enthusiasm of the academic staff of the schools. Without the excellent job of the members of the Executive

Committee, ECOVE, CIQA, SOP working group and visiting teams EAEVE would not have been able to stand where it stands. I would like to thank Gert Niebauer for his work between 2010 and 2013. I would like to express my special thanks to Dr. Uschi Deimel, Office Manager and Ms. Zsuzsa Nagy, Assistant to Management, whose devoted work I could always rely on and with whom I could work together not only as collaborators but as real friends.

At the end of my term I would like to wish all the best to the newly elected president, I wish her to carry on the traditions, to achieve her far sighted goals and to strengthen this unique organisation. I would like to thank everybody, who has helped me in this position in the last four years. It was a wonderful period of my life in the course of which I had the chance to meet many extraordinary people. I have made several life-long friends plus I have learnt a lot and gained a lot of experiences. It was admittedly a hard job which I could not have done without your continuous support, which was much appreciated.

László Fodor

Budapest, in April 2014