



**FVE input to the European Commission Consultation
on European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response
Authority (HERA)**

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The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) very much welcomes that establishment of the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority, with a mission to strengthen the EU's preparedness and response in terms of medical countermeasures for serious cross-border threats to health, both of natural and intentional origin.

Undoubtedly the Covid-19 pandemic, likewise SARS and MERS indicate that health of humans, animals and the environment are inextricably linked. Our planet becomes more populated, more interconnected via the increasing global trade and challenged by climate change. This leads to increasing contacts between wildlife and intermediate hosts, animals and humans, which enhances the possibility for outbreaks of zoonotic diseases. The majority (72%) of emerging diseases of humans are caused by zoonotic pathogens, with most originating in wildlife, especially non-human primates, rodents and bats, rather than in livestock. This crisis revealed the need for a paradigm shift, including holistic consideration of our environment and the intersectoral collaboration between doctors, veterinarians and environmental experts using the One Health approach

The veterinary profession in Europe has been long advocating for the value of One health in tackling efficiently health threats in animals and people. It is important to ensure that mandates and new policies fully embrace the 'One Health concept' at the core and that new legislative proposals clearly consider One Health as part of the solution in response to the public health problems. One Health provides solutions for a holistic and more efficient emergency preparedness and should not be ignored.

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A true implementation of the One Health approach encompasses:

- The inclusive use of all available knowledge and expertise of experts in the human, veterinary and environmental field, e.g. veterinarians can make an essential contribution to the management of the current and future pandemics (i.e. viral surveillance in animal reservoirs, epidemiological models, testing strategies and in research)
- Setting up proper surveillance systems and sharing of information, data and laboratory genomic analysis between veterinarians, researchers and healthcare professionals via integrated informative systems
- A communication plan that includes direct exchange between public health colleagues, governments, stakeholder organisations and the general public
- R&D requirements for funding to promote and integrate veterinary and medical professional studies.

While prevention of human health relies at large extent to prevention and control of zoonotic diseases in animals, so far all important grants are available for research only in human healthcare (e.g. epidemiology, diagnostics, vaccines). It is imperative to ensure equal and adequate allocation of EU funds for veterinary research (e.g. epidemiology, vaccines or treatment for animals) to prevent disease in humans

- Intersectoral collaboration between healthcare, veterinary and environmental field integrated in daily practice, education and research starting in peace times

We urge the EC to take into account the Berlin principles:

- 1) Recognize and take action to retain the essential health links between humans, wildlife, domesticated animals and plants, and all nature, and ensure the conservation and protection of biodiversity, which interwoven with intact and functional ecosystems provides the critical foundational infrastructure of life, health and well-being on our planet;

- 2) Take action to develop strong institutions that integrate understanding of human and animal health with the health of the environment and invest in the translation of robust science-based knowledge into policy and practice;
- 3) Take action to combat the current climate crisis, which is creating new severe threats to human, animal and environmental health, and exacerbating existing challenges;
- 4) Recognize that decisions regarding land, air, sea, and freshwater use directly impact health and wellbeing of humans, animals and ecosystems and that alterations in ecosystems paired with decreased resilience generate shifts in communicable and non-communicable disease emergence, exacerbation and spread; and take action accordingly to eliminate or mitigate these impacts;
- 5) Devise adaptive, holistic and forward-looking approaches to the detection, prevention, monitoring, control and mitigation of emerging/resurging diseases and exacerbating communicable and non-communicable diseases, that incorporate the complex interconnections among species, ecosystems, and human society, while accounting fully for harmful economic drivers, and perverse subsidies;
- 6) Take action to meaningfully integrate biodiversity conservation perspectives and human health and well-being when developing solutions for communicable and non-communicable disease threats;
- 7) Increase cross-sectoral investment in the global human, livestock, wildlife, plant and ecosystem health infrastructure and international funding mechanisms for the protection of ecosystems, commensurate with the serious nature of emerging/resurging and exacerbating communicable and non-communicable disease threats to life on our planet;
- 8) Enhance capacity for cross-sectoral and trans-disciplinary health surveillance and clear, timely information sharing to improve coordination of responses among governments and NGOs, health, academia and other institutions, industry and other stakeholders;
- 9) Form participatory, collaborative relationships among governments, NGOs, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities while strengthening the public sector to meet the challenges of global health and biodiversity conservation; and

10) Invest in educating and raising awareness for global citizenship and holistic planetary health approaches among children and adults in schools, communities, and universities while also influencing policy processes to increase recognition that human health ultimately depends on ecosystem integrity and a healthy planet.

Related information:

The Berlin principles on one health – Bridging global health and conservation
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969720364494?via%3DiHub>

COVID-19 & the veterinary profession <https://fve.org/covid-19-faqs/>

COVID-19 and One Health: can we do better? https://fve.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/FEAM-FVE-WEBINAR-Summary-report_Final.pdf

EU Health Policy Platform Joint Statement on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)
https://epha.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/antimicrobial-resistance-joint-statement_final.pdf

Roadmap for Action on Antimicrobial resistance <https://epha.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/amr-roadmap-july-2020.pdf>

Implementation of One Health in undergraduate education -1st debate
https://www.fve.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/OH-Education_briefing-report_FINAL.pdf

Implementation of One Health in undergraduate education -2nd debate
https://fve.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/One.Health.Edu_.2019_report-003.pdf

Ensuring Health & Sustainability in Europe: Doctors and Veterinarians emphasize “prevention is better than cure” <https://fve.org/publications/one-health-conference-conclusions/>

Natural disasters and “One –Health” Are we prepared? https://fve.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/Conclusions_FINAL.pdf