

Online FVE GA 2020

FVE delegates discuss telemedicine and adopt the new FVE strategy

Members

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

Observers

- Armenia
- Russia
- Ukraine

Sections

- UEVP
Practitioners
- EASVO
State Officers
- UEVH
Hygienists
- EVERI
Veterinarians in
Education, Research
and Industry

It was not to be. The Czech Veterinary chamber had proposed to host the autumn general assembly of the FVE in Prague this November, on the occasion of its 100th anniversary, but the current pandemic decided otherwise. ‘I would have given something dear to have been able to meet in person as we have done since our federation was established,’ stressed FVE president Rens van Dobbenburgh, addressing the 120 delegates and guests, including from the US and Canada, who participated in the online autumn general assembly, held on November 6th.

It takes more than a pandemic...

He went on to describe how the SARS-CoV2 pandemic had affected the profession, having cause ‘an unprecedented situation’. It was important to keep an eye out for each other, he reminded, calling for the support of colleagues, especially the younger generation. ‘Having said that, fighting disease, promoting animal health and public health is part of our daily job.’ During a crisis like this one, ‘veterinarians can demonstrate their added value in terms of One Health.’ He went on to describe the many initiatives the profession had taken at various levels, concluding that, ‘it takes more than a pandemic to stop vets do their job.’

Telemedicine paper adopted

The pandemic had also highlighted the importance of telemedicine. ‘Developments go very, very fast and as FVE we should have a position paper that can be used as a guideline to help countries decide how to deal with developments,’ Dr van Dobbenburgh commented.



Marc Veilly, chair of the Statutory Working Group that had drafted the position paper, stressed that telemedicine is a tool to support veterinarians. While it can complement other methods to do a consultation or make a diagnosis, it is not intended to replace veterinarians.’ And while in-person consultation, examination and prescription ‘is always preferable,’ it was important to regulate and provide standards for professional conduct. ‘Because, whatever the tool used, the vet remains responsible.’ The position paper was adopted and can be found [here](#).

President

Rens van Dobbenburgh

Vice-Presidents

- Thierry Chambon
- Siegfried Moder
- Torill Moseng
- Stanislaw Winiarczyk

FVE strategy 2021-2025

‘Embracing technology’ was also one of the five pillars of the [FVE strategy 2021-2025](#), that was adopted unanimously by the assembly. The other pillars were: One Health and sustainability, One Veterinary Community, being recognised and influential, and Veterinary demography and rewarding careers. ‘Digital technology and artificial intelligence (DT&AI) are entering the veterinary world, with fast and drastic changes for practice, reported FVE board member Stanislaw Winiarczyk. ‘No vet will be replaced by robotics, stressed UEVP board member Volker Moser (Austria), member of the DT&AI working group. ‘But they will probably be replaced by vets who are familiar with robotics.’ The mandate of the working group included following trends and making recommendations on competencies, teaching methods, professional conduct and quality assurance linked to DT&AI. The DT&AI WG presented its [report](#), which was adopted.

PRIORITIES

- One-Health and Sustainability
- One Veterinary Community
- Being Recognised and Influential
- Veterinary Demography and Rewarding Careers
- Embracing Technology



Shortage of vets in rural areas

A survey among 28 countries had shown that the shortage of veterinarians in rural areas was a problem faced by many countries, including Spain, France, Germany and the UK. An [infographic](#) summarising the situation had been produced, reported FVE vice president Thierry Chambon (France). Setting up profitable practice and working in a remote area is difficult, he acknowledged. However, a lack of veterinary workforce had an impact on farm animal welfare and reporting of notifiable diseases, he recalled. While some Member states and local authorities were taking initiatives, he announced that the Commission’s DG Agri was currently holding a [consultation on the long-term vision for rural areas](#), and he encouraged colleagues to respond by 30 November.

Antimicrobial resistance, anaesthesia and antiparasitics

On the front of the medicines, ‘the medicines working group has been extremely busy,’ reported FVE deputy executive officer Nancy De Briyne.

Not only has the working group, which was renewed this year, made recommendations on the Veterinary Medicinal Product Regulation, ‘which will enter into force in less than 14 months,’ but it had also been looking into reviewing its position papers on critically important antibiotics. It had also elaborated the [FVE position paper on recognising the anaesthesia of animal as a veterinary act](#), which was adopted unanimously earlier this summer. Currently, the working group is preparing a reflection paper on the veterinary use of cannabis and CBD oils and has participated in a wide range of consultations, from autogenous vaccines to the environmental impact of pet antiparasitics.

Finally, she announced that the FVE was now also participating in the Antimicrobial Resistance network, as the only non-human healthcare stakeholder. She invited everyone to participate in the [16 November webinar](#).

Immunocastration in line with organic farming

‘Immunocastration is in line with organic farming,’ stated FVE board member Torill Moseng, citing a [statement by the FVE](#) in reply to DG Agri. She also announced that the FVE/UEVP animal welfare working group had started preparing an overall animal welfare strategy, and reported on the results of a [recent survey](#) on animal welfare education in European veterinary schools. ‘In just seven years, education in animal welfare, ethics and law have increased significantly!’ Finally, she gave an overview of the many topics that the working group had been discussing, including the housing of laying hens, end-of-life protocols for horses and the ban on farrowing crates for sows.

Jan Vaarten to retire

Christophe Buhot reported on the new mandate of VetCEE, which is preparing to take on the task of accrediting continuing professional development across Europe. Other topics discussed included the Professional qualification directive update, which FVE would like to see based on competences, and reports from the FVE sections, and the recent SARS-CoV2 outbreak in mink in Denmark.



the success of FVE.’

Finally, Rens van Dobbenbrug announced the retirement of FVE Executive director Jan Vaarten at the end of 2020. He praised Jan’s professionalism and sense of humour, ‘with a keen eye for animal health and animal welfare, always safeguarding FVE’s independence.’ Mr Vaarten commented: ‘My biggest achievement of the past 17 years is that we all together, members and staff, have been able to strengthen FVE and build a well-respected organisation with an extensive international network committed to

Karine De Lange