



Federation of  
Veterinarians  
of Europe  
Strategy  
2021-2025

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Veterinarians  
know, care and  
contribute

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Federation  
of Veterinarians  
of Europe

# Welcome

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I'm very pleased to present to you the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)'s strategy for 2021 to 2025. It was developed under the unprecedented circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. The virus has greatly impacted our lives, and in a very short time, the world has changed enormously.

If one thing is clear from Covid-19, it's the importance of One Health: the interconnected health of people, animals and ecosystems. To tackle challenges like the current pandemic effectively, a cross-sectoral and trans-disciplinary One Health approach is crucial. More than ever, the European veterinary profession needs to look beyond the immediate health of animals and people, and consider the larger picture that lies behind single health issues.

This is a key part of FVE's 2021-2025 strategy. Our strategy also underlines the significance of the veterinary profession and its continuous contribution to the health and well-being of animals and people. Veterinary medicine in all its diversity is a part of the solution to many of the issues our world faces today.

I thank everyone, within and outside FVE, who has helped develop this strategy. I hope you find it inspiring and motivating, and I trust we can rely on you to help deliver its goals.



# About FVE

**F**VE is the umbrella body for veterinary associations from 39 European countries. In close collaboration with our members, we promote and support the veterinary profession. We help veterinarians to optimise their contribution to animal health, animal welfare, public health and environmental protection. We primarily focus on the collective needs of the veterinary profession that can't be fulfilled at the individual, local or national level and that benefit from a European approach.

Most veterinary legislation is EU legislation, meaning that by the time it reaches individual countries little can be changed. We communicate effectively with the EU institutions, Commission, Parliament and Council on an almost daily basis, as well as running awareness and advocacy campaigns. Just some topics we work on include effective regulation of the veterinary profession, availability of veterinary medicinal products, and recognition of qualifications.

Being a liberal profession,<sup>1</sup> veterinary medicine is based on a professional qualification. Veterinarians are educated to deliver science-based opinions and high quality services. They take into consideration the sometimes conflicting interest of animals, their owners and society at large. FVE closely follows societal concerns and expectations, and when faced with technical or ethical dilemmas, we carefully consider and balance the interests of animals, owners, the environment and society at large. We aim to make sure every veterinarian can deliver his or her professional responsibility in an independent capacity, without any undue pressure.



## OUR MISSION

FVE enhances animal health, animal welfare, public health and the protection of the environment by promoting the veterinary profession.

Together with our members, we support veterinarians in delivering their professional responsibilities to the best possible standard and ensure that veterinary expertise is recognised and valued by society.

<sup>1</sup> *Liberal professions are practised on the basis of relevant professional qualifications in a personal, responsible and professionally independent capacity by those providing intellectual and conceptual services in the interest of the client and the public. (EU Directive 2005/36/EC, recital 43)*

# About this strategy

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**T**o prepare this new strategy, an external company anonymously interviewed several of our members and external stakeholders. Their feedback about FVE's performance was remarkably positive. Members perceived FVE as an effective organisation, making their voice heard on the European stage. External stakeholders found FVE to be a credible and reliable organisation to collaborate with. Overall, FVE has a strong position as 'the voice of the European veterinary profession'.

Members and external stakeholders also thought FVE's communications were effective, and considered them to be a vital source of information about the profession on a European level. Interviewees appreciated the recently renewed FVE website, and suggested that FVE should strengthen its social media presence.

FVE was seen as an effective link between veterinarians, and essential for their daily work. In terms of lobbying, some members and stakeholders suggested FVE should be more pro-active, provide more leadership and take a stronger stance on various issues.



# The past five years: our achievements

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**U**nder our 2015-2020 strategy, the past five years have been busy and productive and we have achieved most of our goals.

We were actively involved in ongoing EU veterinary legislation, in particular the revision of the Animal Health Law, the Official Controls Regulation and the Veterinary Medicines Regulation. We saw most of our key asks included in these.

We also surveyed the demography of the European veterinary profession in 2015 and 2019 and we initiated the European VetFutures project to consider the issues the profession will face in the future. In addition, we contributed to and promoted the accreditation of European veterinary schools and renewed our website. We also welcomed the veterinary associations of Russia and Armenia as observer members. The Albanian Veterinary Chamber became a full member.

In summary, we have made excellent progress towards the main goals we identified five years ago: improving the veterinary profession, promoting the role of veterinarians, extending our network, promoting veterinary interests, and strengthening our organisation. We are proud of our successes.





# The changing environment we're working in

**T**he first decades of the 21st century have been dynamic. Important socio-economic, cultural and political changes have occurred and all signs are that this trend will continue and almost certainly accelerate.

At the global level, issues include the world's ever-growing population, increasing urbanisation, growing demand for food, globalisation of markets and trade, and climate change. These major challenges led the United Nations to develop its Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup> (SDGs). Several of these directly link to the health and welfare of people, animals and ecosystems, interconnected as One Health.

At the time of writing this strategy, our world is facing an extraordinary One Health challenge: a global coronavirus outbreak. Soon after its discovery, the virus became a pandemic, spreading all over the world, with millions of cases and massive material and immaterial losses. Although the virus originated from animals, as the majority of (re-)emerging infectious diseases in people do, there is so far no indication that animals have played a significant role in further spreading it. Several species of companion animals (cats and dogs), fur animals (mink) and zoo animals (lions and tigers) have been infected, mostly by people. However, the primary mode of transmission of Covid-19 in humans is person-to-person spread.

However, this doesn't mean there is no connection between pandemics like the current one and the way people and animals live together. Bushmeat, wet markets, long-distance transport of living animals, areas densely populated with people and livestock, encroachment of human populations into wildlife ecosystems and massive international movements of people all increase the risk of novel diseases emerging and spreading. We have already seen this with influenza virus strains, Ebola, SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV.

Controlling single One Health issues such as a specific disease outbreak or antimicrobial resistance is not enough. Instead, we have to consider the interconnection between the health of people, animals and ecosystems in a systemic way. What are the structural imbalances in natural and social systems that lead to the conditions which allow pathogens and diseases to emerge and spread? What are the drivers behind changes in the ecosystem and what impact do these changes have on agriculture, and vice-versa?

For the first time in the EU's history and after years of Member State numbers consistently growing, one of its larger members left the Union. The UK's departure has changed the political balance within the EU. Undoubtedly

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>



this will affect important topics for the veterinary profession, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, an important tool for the promotion of good agriculture practices.

With the proposed Green Deal for the Union and its citizens, the EU Commission is resetting its commitment to tackling climate- and environmental-related challenges. This new strategy aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society; a resource-efficient and competitive economy where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.

The EU Farm to Fork Strategy is also seeking to transform the food system. Among its goals are a circular food economy, reduced environmental impact, better information for consumers to make healthy and sustainable choices, and reducing antimicrobial use further. Veterinarians are well placed to contribute to several aspects of the strategy, not only directly to animal health and welfare and public health, but also to aspects such as biodiversity, and environmental sustainability while feeding a growing population.

In our day-to-day activities, we also see developments like digitalisation, artificial intelligence and telemedicine. In several countries, veterinary corporates are growing rapidly and business models are changing. Regardless of these developments, veterinarians' core activity is protecting animal health, animal welfare and public health. The question is how these advancements can support this.

Within the profession, a decreasing number of young veterinarians are choosing to work in large animal practices and in food hygiene. This makes it difficult to maintain proper veterinary coverage, especially in rural and remote areas. A relatively high number of veterinarians also face mental health and well-being issues, finding it hard to combine work and private life. Valuable and respected colleagues are leaving the profession at an early stage.

On top of these concerns are long-standing critical issues such as the need for continued attention to animal welfare, the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance and the quality of pre- and post-graduate education.

To keep fulfilling our mission in this ever-changing world, FVE needs to continuously revise and update its strategy and priority goals. FVE and the veterinary profession as a whole need to be flexible and resilient. As a responsible profession, we want to be part of solutions, at local, national and international levels.

# The next five years: our priorities

**F**VE will continue to devote much of our capacity and energy to our core activities, as described in our mission: enhancing animal health, animal welfare, public health and the protection of the environment by promoting the veterinary profession.

We will maintain our existing Working Groups (Animal Welfare, Medicines, Food Safety and Sustainability and Veterinary Statutory Bodies), but we will regularly update their composition and terms of reference. We will also continue to collaborate with other organisations and networks.

Our five other key priorities are outlined over the following pages.

# 1

## Promoting One Health and sustainability

**A** top priority for FVE is the promotion of One Health – the interconnection between the health of animals, people and ecosystems. Veterinarians have a lot to contribute to many areas of One Health. We want to take a leadership role, and strengthen our collaboration with other relevant professions and disciplines.

### Objectives

- \* We will further strengthen our collaboration with other One Health actors and promote interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral activities, including One Health education for veterinary and medical students together.
- \* We will take a One Health approach in all our initiatives and when feeding back on EU legislation, in particular in the further development and implementation of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy. We will especially promote the value of good food from quality sources, reducing food waste and paying fair prices throughout the chain.
- \* We will develop an Animal Welfare Strategy to promote animal welfare contributing to sustainable animal production and responsible ownership for all animals. For livestock this includes improved animal husbandry systems and breeding programmes that select more resilient animals. We will prioritise the development of husbandry systems that meet animals' needs (including less animal transport). For companion and exotic animals, we will promote responsible breeding, trade and ownership, including working on issues around identification and registration, pet passports and fighting illegal trade.
- \* We will strengthen our efforts on disease prevention (by promoting better rearing conditions and regular animal health visits, for example) and continue to promote the responsible use of medicines (including antimicrobials).
- \* We will promote reduced environmental impact, more sustainable farming solutions and better information for consumers.



# 2

## Building one veterinary community

**A**s the veterinary profession is relatively small, it is vital that FVE and its member organisations synergise their activities as much as possible. The more we can support each other, the more likely it is we will be able to be influential and make a difference.

### Objectives

- \* We will encourage veterinarians working in different fields (clinical practice, research, policy-making, food hygiene, education and industry, for example) to build multilateral networks and work in synergy.
  - \* We will continue to support our member organisations to promote veterinary interests at the European and national levels.
  - \* We will work together with veterinary statutory bodies to promote the importance of ethics in veterinary medicine and to keep the European Veterinary Code of Conduct up to date.
  - \* FVE and the four Sections will review the relationship between the Federation and the Sections. We will explore opportunities to strengthen our synergy and to work together more. At the same time, to ensure a correct balance in our decision-making processes, we will reflect on the needs and demands of our national member organisations.
  - \* We will continue to foster our communication with veterinary corporates and keep veterinary well-being high on the agenda of these meetings.
  - \* We will continue to work with the International Veterinary Students Association (IVSA), as they are the future of the profession. We will also promote communication and collaboration with other members of the veterinary team, like nurses and technicians.



# 3

## Being recognised and influential

**V**eterinarians being recognised and valued for their contribution to animal health, animal welfare, public health and environmental protection is essential. Life-long learning is a must for every veterinarian, based on science and technology as well as on careful consideration of emerging ethical dilemmas. At the European level, we want to be valued as the credible and reliable representative of the entire European veterinary profession.

### Objectives

- \* We will continue to work on making all aspects of veterinary medicine more visible, and to underline the value of the profession's contribution to society at large.
- \* We will review our communication plan and strengthen our presence on social media. We will recognise that different audiences need different, targeted approaches.
- \* We will speak up about societal concerns related to veterinary medicine, in particular One Health. Within the Federation, we will encourage discussions about controversial topics.
- \* We will strengthen our relations with the EU institutions, proactively put forward topics of veterinary interest, advocate for veterinary goals and input into consultations.
- \* We will continue our communication with veterinary corporates.
- \* We will keep veterinary well-being high on the agenda.



# 4

## Studying veterinary demography and promoting rewarding careers



It is vital that enough veterinarians choose to work in each area of veterinary medicine so the profession can meet the needs of animals, their owners and society at large. It is also important that veterinarians find their jobs attractive and rewarding (financially, socially and mentally), so they stay in the profession.

Given the growing diversity in the tasks veterinarians are asked to do, attracting a broad variety of young people to the profession is important. Diversity will contribute to the flexibility of the profession and its ability to adapt to new situations. It will also strengthen veterinary resilience.

### Objectives

- \* We will continue our veterinary demography surveys and closely follow developments. We will raise awareness about growing shortages in clinical practice in rural and remote areas and explore possibilities to reverse this trend, for example through the Common Agricultural Policy. We will also address the shortage of veterinarians in food hygiene, depending on national situations.
- \* We will foster diversity and inclusiveness in the veterinary profession with equal opportunities for all, regardless of socio-economic or cultural background. Our goal is to be a diverse, balanced, inclusive and resilient profession. We will address and where possible remove barriers to entry to the profession, while safeguarding the quality of veterinary medicine.
- \* We will strongly advocate for equal salaries for equal positions for male and female veterinarians.
- \* We will encourage all veterinarians (in particular women and young graduates) to take a role in our Working Groups, Board and in other leadership positions at local and national level.
- \* We will continue to work on the availability of good quality pre- and post-

graduate veterinary training. We will deepen our collaboration with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) and Veterinary Continuous Education in Europe (VetCEE).

- \* We will promote life-long learning, and differentiation and specialisation in different fields (for example in food hygiene, animal welfare, research positions and policy-making) and professional matters (leadership and communication skills, for example).
- \* We will explore the possibility of establishing a Working Group on the mental well-being of veterinarians in diverse roles across the veterinary sector. We hope to address topics including how to raise the resilience of individual veterinarians and the profession, the early recognition of mental difficulties and finding timely solutions.

# 5

## Embracing technology

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**N**ew technologies that are useful for veterinarians, like digitalisation, precision livestock farming, collecting animal-based indicators, artificial intelligence and telemedicine, develop rapidly – not only in clinical practice, but also in areas such as veterinary education, veterinary inspection and food safety.

We will closely monitor the development of such tools and technologies. We will evaluate their technological progress as well as ethics and deontology, including the Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR), and how to mitigate any potential risks.

### Objectives

- \* We will closely monitor technological developments and evaluate their possible effects, reflecting on necessary policy actions to ensure integrity in veterinary practice and the VCPR.
- \* We will keep in touch with experts in the field to exchange information and to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration.
- \* We will analyse the impact on the veterinary curriculum and reflect on the necessary competences for future veterinarians.
- \* We will promote post-graduate education in the relevant fields.

# In numbers: veterinarians in Europe



# FVE members

## **Albania**

Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons

## **Austria**

Österreichische Tierärztekammer

## **Belgium**

Union Professionnelle Vétérinaire (UPV)

## **Bosnia/Herzegovina**

Veterinary Chamber of the Republic of SRPSKA

## **Bulgaria**

Bulgarian Veterinary Union (BVU)  
Union of the Veterinarians in Bulgaria (UVB)

## **Croatia**

Croatian Veterinary Chamber  
Croatian Veterinary Society

## **Cyprus**

Pancyprian Veterinary Association

## **Czech Republic**

Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons of the Czech Republic

## **Denmark**

Danish Veterinary Association

## **Estonia**

Estonian Veterinary Association

## **Finland**

Finnish Veterinary Association

## **France**

Ordre National des Vétérinaires  
Fédération des Syndicats  
Vétérinaires de France (FSVF)

## **Germany**

Bundestierärztekammer  
Bundesverband Praktizierender  
Tierärzte e.V.

## **Greece**

Hellenic Veterinary Association

## **Hungary**

Magyar Állatorvosi Kamara  
(MAOK)

## **Iceland**

Dýralæknafélag Islands

## **Ireland**

Veterinary Council of Ireland  
Veterinary Ireland

## **Italy**

Federazione Nazionale degli  
Ordini Dei Veterinari Italiani  
(FNOVI)

## **Latvia**

Latvijas Veterinararstu Biedriba

## **Lithuania**

Lithuanian Veterinary  
Association

## **Luxembourg**

Association des Médecins  
Vétérinaires du Grand-Duché  
de Luxembourg

Collège Vétérinaire du  
Grand-Duché de Luxembourg

## **Malta**

Malta Veterinary Association

## **Montenegro**

Veterinary Chamber of  
Montenegro

## **Netherlands**

Royal Veterinary Association  
of the Netherlands

## **North Macedonia**

Macedonian Veterinary Chamber

## **Norway**

Norwegian Veterinary Association  
(DNV)

## **Poland**

Krajowa Izba Lekarsko-  
Weterynaryjna

## **Portugal**

Ordem dos Médicos Veterinários

## **Romania**

The General Association of  
Romanian Veterinarians College  
of Romanian Veterinarians

## **Slovak Republic**

Komora veterinárnych lekárov  
Slovenskej Republiky

## **Slovenia**

Veterinarska Zbornica

## **Serbia**

Veterinary Chamber of Serbia

## **Spain**

Consejo General de Colegios  
Veterinarios de España (CGCVE)

## **Sweden**

Swedish Veterinary Association  
(SVF)

## **Switzerland**

Société des Vétérinaires Suisses

## **United Kingdom**

British Veterinary Association  
(BVA)

Royal College of  
Veterinary Surgeons  
(RCVS)

## **OUR SECTIONS**

Veterinary practitioners  
(**UEVP**)

State officers  
(**EASVO**)

Food safety and  
veterinary public health  
(**UEVH**)

Veterinarians working in  
education, research and  
industry (**EVERI**)

## **OBSERVERS**

### **Armenia**

National Association  
of Veterinarians

### **Russia**

Russian National Veterinary  
Chamber

### **Ukraine**

Association of Veterinarians  
of Ukraine



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