Recommendation No. 2

Steps towards a common animal welfare approach in Europe

CONSIDERING THAT

1. Animal welfare is a complex, multi-faceted, national and international public policy issue with important scientific, ethical, economic, cultural, political and commercial dimensions;

2. Following the Conventions drawn up by the Council of Europe, the Member States of the European Union and associated countries have, over the last few decades, adopted various harmonised rules on animal welfare and equipped themselves with a strategy, whereas many other contracting parties to the Council of Europe have not yet implemented all of the measures advocated in the Conventions;

3. The OIE has a mandate to improve animal health and welfare worldwide, that standards on animal welfare were first adopted at the General Session in May 2005 and that they have been regularly updated ever since;

4. Animal health is a key dimension of animal welfare and that the subject of animal welfare is included in the OIE PVS Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services and is also taken into account in the OIE initiative on veterinary legislation;

5. Regional animal welfare strategies or approaches, adapted to the situation in each region and accompanied by a suitable implementation plan, make a major contribution to enabling the OIE to carry out its mandate with respect to improving animal health and welfare worldwide;

6. Through PVS evaluations and other activities, the OIE has been able to assess the challenges faced by some countries in the Region of Europe in trying to fulfil the missions inherent in good quality of Veterinary Services;

7. The lack of organisation of the various involved parties in the sector prevents the creation of public–private partnerships essential for the sustainable implementation of OIE recommendations and standards in the field of animal health and welfare;

8. The regional seminars on animal welfare in Europe, which were successfully held in Istanbul (Turkey) in July 2009 and in Kiev (Ukraine) in March 2012 with the support of the European Union, have confirmed the prominent regional role of the OIE in animal welfare and the importance of appointing and strengthening the capacities of Focal Points for Animal Welfare;

9. It is important to continue these capacity-building activities and to improve and develop them, both for the exchange of information and for their contribution to the overall strengthening of the capacities of the Veterinary Services using all the components of the OIE PVS Tool;
10. It is important for the European Union and other potential donors active in the Region of Europe to be associated with these capacity-building activities, and for these activities to systematically include all the relevant parties;

11. The OIE has prepared a draft concept note describing the problems encountered in some European countries and proposing solutions to resolve them in partnership with all involved parties seeking to promote animal welfare in the region.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT

1. The Veterinary Services of all OIE Member Countries in the Region of Europe take all necessary measures to apply the standards on animal welfare adopted by the OIE;

2. The Delegates of OIE Member Countries in the Region of Europe take all necessary measures to ensure that, if a national Focal Point for Animal Welfare has not yet been appointed, one be appointed as quickly as possible and that the Focal Points take part in regional capacity-building programmes organised by the OIE;

3. The OIE use the results of evaluations performed using the OIE PVS Evaluation Tool and Gap Analysis Tool to propose suitably adapted continuing training programmes and twinning actions using OIE Collaborating Centres (CC) specialised in animal welfare and between Veterinary Education Establishments (VEE), or other relevant twinning activities between OIE Members of the Region;

4. The draft concept note developed by the OIE, aimed at achieving greater coordination among the Members of the Regional Commission for Europe on the subject of animal welfare, be transmitted to the Members of the Region in order to finalise its content particularly the balanced representation of the proposed steering group and any other associated committee, so the Concept note be adopted at the next meeting of the Regional Commission in May 2013;

5. The concept note, once adopted by the Regional Commission, be implemented by the OIE with the unfailing commitment of all the concerned countries and with the support of the European Union and other potential donors;

6. The European Union participate actively in these activities, including through financial support, sharing of regulatory and field experience, training programmes and awareness-raising campaigns, jointly with the OIE;

7. Within the framework outlined in recommendation paragraphs number 4 and 5, the permanent need to involve all interested parties including consumer, animal protection, producer, veterinarians and industry organisations, be taken into account.

8. As an outcome of the work to be done, a Regional OIE Animal Welfare strategy be considered.

(Adopted by the OIE Regional Commission for Europe on 21 September 2012 and endorsed by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE on 30 May 2013)