The OIE Regional Seminar on Veterinary Statutory Bodies in the Eastern European Countries’ Context, which took place in Astana, Kazakhstan from 12 to 13 December 2012, was part of a series of regional seminars on VSBs organised by the OIE to assist its Member Countries in improving the good governance of their Veterinary Services. A similar seminar was organised in Bamako, Mali, in April 2010 and served as a useful model for the European region.

Representatives of Veterinary Services and VSBs (or veterinary associations) from all 53 Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe had been invited, of which 15 (in Eastern Europe and Central Asia) were sponsored by the OIE. In all, 13 sponsored and four self-funded countries ended up attending the seminar. Representatives from each region of Kazakhstan also attended, raising the total number of participants to around 120. Kazakhstan was also represented at the highest level, with the attendance of the Vice-Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr Kusherbayev Krymbek, and the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Mamytbekov Asylzhan.

The agenda was organised into lectures, country presentations and three working-group sessions run in parallel.

Speakers included external experts (Dr M. Baussier, President of the French National Veterinary Council; Dr J. Vaarten, Executive Director of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe [FVE]; and Dr A. Milon from the National Veterinary School, Toulouse, France), and staff from OIE Headquarters in Paris and the Regional and Sub-Regional Representations.

The seminar proved to be very successful. Many participants commented positively on the meeting’s smooth running, interesting format and excellent organisation. Most stated that the seminar will have a positive impact on their technical work.

The presentations from individual countries were illuminating in their portrayal of the region. At present, most countries do not have a VSB; however, a VSB or equivalent structure is in place in Kazakhstan, Israel and Turkey; while in Kyrgyzstan, Moldavia and Ukraine, such a structure is currently being established, in line with OIE standards. The main obstacles to the successful setting up of VSBs in the region include a lack of knowledge about their function, definition and role, and a scarcity of legislation supporting their establishment. One positive note was that countries in which
The main conclusions from the seminar include the need for countries to:

a) improve their understanding/knowledge of VSBs and, more generally, of Veterinary Services, Veterinary Authorities, veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals;

b) set up a VSB or equivalent structure, in compliance with OIE standards. As a starting point, they should review their veterinary legislation. The assistance of the OIE through the PVS Pathway capacity-building activities (in particular, the OIE PVS evaluation mission, PVS legislation mission and OIE twinning programme) were presented in detail;

c) improve information-sharing among the countries of the region, in such areas as VSBs’ experience, veterinary education and codes of conduct, etc.

an OIE PVS mission has been carried out have already initiated the necessary steps towards the establishment of a VSB.

The conclusions of the seminar (together with those from further VSB seminars in other regions) will be presented during the OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Education and the Role of the Veterinary Statutory Body: ‘Ensuring excellence and ethics of the veterinary profession’, to be held in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, from 4 to 6 December 2013.

All available documentation on the seminar is available on the OIE regional website (www.rr-europe.oie.int).

The OIE would like to extend sincere thanks to Kazakhstan for its invaluable cooperation in the organisation of this important regional event.

Appointment of permanent Delegates

1 October 2012
Vietnam
Dr Dong Pham Van
Director General, Chief Veterinary Officer, Animal Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

9 October 2012
Trinidad and Tobago
Dr Simone Titus
Chief Veterinary Officer, Animal Production and Health, Ministry of Food Production

12 October 2012
Madagascar
Dr Marcellin Biarmann
Directeur, Services vétérinaires, Ministère de l’Élevage

18 October 2012
Sudan
Dr Kamal Tagelsir Elsheikh
Undersecretary, Chief Veterinary Officer, Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rangelands

14 November 2012
Serbia
Dr Ivan Sočo
Acting Chief Veterinary Officer, Veterinary Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management

28 November 2012
Tunisia
Dr Hichem Bouzghaïa
Directeur général, Direction générale des Services vétérinaires, ministère de l’agriculture