

Interview with the Director General of WOAAH Monique Eloit



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At the conclusion of the WOAAH Regional Commission for Europe's 30th Conference in Catania, Director General Monique Eloit, introduced by her trusted advisor Romano Marabelli, addresses some questions on the current state of veterinary medicine globally.

The interview, conducted by Anna Marino and Benedetta Cappelletti, has been published in the Fnovi magazine "30giorni" in December 2022.

Prof. Marabelli as the advisor to the Director General of WOAAH you are in a privileged position to witness the significance of the veterinary profession in the world. Can you tell us more about this remarkable experience?

Indeed, it is a unique experience and opportunity. The World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), thanks to the Director General, has put a lot of effort to gain recognition at a higher level and has managed to secure regular participation in the most significant international conferences like the G7 and G20, etc.

The Italian government made a strong contribution to this recognition and enhanced Italian participation through different financial sources from the Ministry of Health, the network of the Istituti Zooprofilattici, and the Istituto Superiore di Sanità, placing Italy

among the key sponsors of WOAAH.

It is a great honor for me to be able to contribute to this project and share my prior experiences in such a vibrant international context that provides for a comprehensive view of the 182 participating Member Countries.

Director General, the 30th Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe has given us the opportunity to resume face-to-face meetings between delegates and experts



ROMANO MARABELLI

from Europe. Unfortunately, animal diseases continue to spread despite political barriers, as demonstrated not only by Covid but also as by African swine fever and avian influenza. What can WOAAH, WHO, and FAO do to sustain communication amongst those in charge of fighting these diseases?

Indeed, diseases ignore borders and many of them can spread across countries. Therefore international collaboration is key to contain them. Our Organisation has been involved for many years in the Tripartite Alliance, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Tripartite's efforts to intensify this partnership and adopt a more holistic approach led to the inclusion of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) earlier this year, to form the Quadripartite. This expanded partnership aims to better incorporate the environment sector in the design of coordinated One Health strategies, because we know that the health of humans, animals, plants, and the environment are intrinsically interconnected. Looking at the example of avian influenza, the disease has been heavily impacting all regions of the world over the last years, including Europe. Heavy losses have been observed in both domestic and wild birds, posing a potential risk for biodiversity. Considering its

further impact on the economy, livelihoods, and potentially human health, containing the disease calls for a coordinated multisectoral response.

In order to further advocate for One Health, the Quadripartite has recently launched the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA) that we advocate for with political authorities and major international donors in various high-level events, such as the World Health Summit or the meetings organised in the framework of the G20.

This plan aims to strengthen collaboration, communication, capacity building and overall coordination. It guides the implementation of activities across all sectors responsible for addressing health concerns at the human-animal-plant-environment interface. The plan notably focuses on the strengthening of health services capacity, including for animal health. Indeed, Veterinary Services are still often underfunded while they have a key role to play at the frontline of a combined health workforce.

The One Health approach to managing diseases has received a lot of attention; Do you believe that European countries are implementing this principle within their national health systems? Are there any good examples to follow?

This approach is more and more recognised by different sectors and is also generating growing attention at the political level. However, its practical rollout remains unequal between countries. To address this, the OH JPA provides a framework of action and set of activities that aim to strengthen the mentioned collaboration, communication, capacity building and coordination. It also guides the implementation of these activities across sectors responsible for addressing health concerns. Raising awareness amongst national stakeholders and policymakers requires the implementation of impactful communication actions but also concrete activities, such as those we implement with our Quadripartite partners.

National bridging workshops, for example, target the scaling-up of a truly operational One Health approach at national level. With equal participation by the human and animal Health sectors, they help countries develop appropriate bridges to facilitate coordination between sectors, to jointly address major health security risks, by improving dialogue and collaboration across sectors.

The Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway also represents a pivotal mechanism to support the concrete implementation of the One Health concept, so that it becomes a regular practice among health professionals from different sectors to give due consideration to the animal health sector. In the longer term, it could also influence the set-up and structuring of national health services in general.

The Organisation's seventh strategic plan addresses significant and ambitious challenges, including digitalization, which was also discussed during the Catania Conference. What is the current state of overall implementation?

The digital transformation of the World Organisation for Animal Health is an ambitious objective: it impacts all our activities. Through digitalisation, we strive to provide easy access and analysis of animal health data for all stakeholders to maximise the potential of these valuable animal health datasets, that we collect, analyse and disseminate. We have developed a detailed roadmap

to progressively implement the digital transformation of our Organisation. We have developed a data governance framework which provides a means of ensuring that any data system employed by our Organisation is secure and efficient. This also allows for better transparency and accessibility by all Members and stakeholders.

We have made good progress on several initiatives, and today I am proud that we can already highlight significant achievements:

We have been fully remodelled our World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS). The new platform benefits from great improvement compared to the previous version. While the work is still evolving, the new public interface offers interactive mapping and dashboards to facilitate data access, visualisation, and ex-

traction, benefitting national decision-makers and the international community in making evidence-based decisions.

We have recently launched a new platform, called AN-IMUSE, to better monitor the use of antimicrobials in animals. This new customised interactive online system collects, analyses and reports data on the use of antimicrobials in animals. The upgraded database already allows for faster analysis and reporting, while providing more autonomy to our members who will benefit from valuable insights and information. A public interface is being developed and will launch in 2023.

In the upcoming years, we will continue to place a main focus on improving the governance of global animal health data, its accessibility and innovative usage to tackle global health challenges that lie ahead.




Per difendere la biodiversità quando decidi di prendere con te un animale da compagnia

informati



*su quanto vive,
di cosa ha bisogno
e se è una specie aliena
che può diventare
un pericolo per
le specie selvatiche*

scegli



*l'animale
che sei in grado
di accudire meglio*

prenditene cura



*con costanza
e affetto per
tutta la sua vita*

non abbandonarlo

La tartarughina e molti altri animali da compagnia sono specie aliene (specie portate dall'uomo al di fuori della loro area di origine) che possono diventare un grave pericolo per le specie selvatiche se liberate in natura.

Nuove norme identificano le specie aliene invasive di rilevanza unionale che non si possono più commercializzare, detenere, rilasciare ecc. per i danni che creano alle altre specie e all'ambiente. Per saperne di più visita il sito www.lifeasap.eu o **inquadra il QR-code** con il tuo smartphone.



Chiedi al tuo medico veterinario di fiducia cosa fare se possiedi una delle specie aliene invasive di rilevanza unionale.























