



# 8<sup>th</sup> Stakeholders consultation meeting of the WOAH Platform on animal welfare for Europe

14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – Brussels

## MEETING REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

The eight stakeholders' consultation meeting of the WOA Platform on animal welfare for Europe took place in Brussels on June the 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The objectives of the meeting, in line with the previous one, were to report on the implementation of the Platform activities carried out since the last meeting held in July 2022 and present the activities to be implemented until the end of the year according to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Action Plan for 2021-2023. In addition, meeting provided opportunity to present planned activities within proposed 4<sup>th</sup> Action Plan of the Platform for 2024 - 2026.

Stakeholders were asked to report on new and planned activities in the five priority topics of the Platform – transportation, slaughter, dog population management, disasters, working equids, comment and suggest on possible additional initiatives to be taken in the framework of the Platform activities.

The agenda of the meeting is available in *Annex 1*. Seventeen participants attended the meeting, the full list of participants is available in *Annex 2*. The meeting was chaired by Dr Estelle Hamelin, WOA Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels. Dr Tomasz Grudnik, Dr Paolo Dalla Villa and Dr Fernando de Abreu also represented the Platform secretariat.

Dr Estelle Hamelin opened the works by reminding the objectives of the meeting, welcoming old and new participants and highlighting the importance of stakeholders' support to the implementation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> action plan and the building of the 4<sup>th</sup> one. The side event on animal welfare clearly showed this evidence on the occasion of the last General Session.

### 1. Latest developments and activities of the WOA Platform ([link to the presentation](#))

The Platform secretariat presented level of implementation of activities for each of all five priority topics of the 3 Action Plan. Dr Grudnik briefly recall overview background of the Platform activities since its launch in 2013, governance of the Platform and main points of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Action Plan including priority topic, objectives (long and short/mid-term objectives) and indicative timetable for the implementation of the action plan.

#### 1.1. Transport of animals by land and by sea

The welfare of animals during transport on land and sea remains a pillar of the Platform Action Plan, and the numerous initiatives on long-distance transportation are now supported by a Europe network of National Contact Points on long distance transportation in Europe. This facilitates the communication between Competent Authorities and strengthen the impact of the events included in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Action Plan.

The Multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario (WJS) workshop on long-distance transport by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East and North Africa was held in Egypt in November 2022, focused on the inspection and approval procedures of dedicated livestock vessels, the development for integrated journey plan, the discussion on how to ensure an information exchange mechanism and for a coordinated response to emergencies. Future activities supporting the implementation of WOAHA standards on animal transport should consider all these elements. The Platform intends to further promote a stronger engagement of the National Contact Points in order to facilitate the timely exchange of the relevant information and solving problems arising with long-distance and cross border transport of animals. A dedicated Self-assessment and monitoring tool focusing on transport by sea and land will be developed in the form of a survey and based on a sound methodology allowing to assess the level of implementation of the WOAHA standards at regional level.

### **1.2. Slaughter of animals**

The 3rd Action Plan foresees the organisation of two regional seminars to ensure the continuity with a series of capacity-building activities aiming at improving animal welfare practices during the slaughter of animals (cattle, sheep and pigs). Considering the difficulties linked to organising physical events and willing to exploit the opportunities offered by information and communication technologies, the WOAHA initially proposed to develop online learning resources based on improved and updated existing training materials already by the WOAHA Collaborating Centres on animal welfare and other partners. Additional considerations brought to the decision to develop an e-module to be published on the WOAHA Platform for the training of Veterinary Services using the procurement system and, if possible, depending on the date of publishing, integrating the new standards under revision. This module will be developed in collaboration with Capacity Building Department and could be used in different scenarios, including a part dedicated Training-of-Trainers (ToT) sessions. It will be based on existing WOAHA materials to be reviewed and updated. It should be available by early 2025 on the WOAHA Platform for the training of Veterinary Services, enabling it to serve as a basis for other WOAHA activities in Europe and other regions.

### **1.3. Dog population management**

As a part of its Third Action Plan 2021-2023, the Platform Secretariat have implemented a series of capacity building and technical support initiatives, including the organization of periodic biannual workshops, aiming at improving the management of the dog population, and the control of free-roaming dogs, by focusing on animal welfare and public health aspects, and the risks for zoonotic diseases transmission, notably rabies. To date, 11 Balkan (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Rep. of North Macedonia, Greece, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Turkey) and 8 West Eurasia (Central Asia and Caucasus countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) countries agreed on a shared vision: to reach full compliance, respectively by 2025 and 2030, with the WOAHA Terrestrial Animal Health Chapter 7.7 on dog population management. Four other East European countries, namely Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine, also confirmed their interest to join this roadmap. In July 2022, a three-year Services Agreement has been signed between the WOAHA and the IZS (Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale) - Teramo, with the objective to develop a web-based self-assessment and monitoring platform (SAM Tool 2.0) to assist countries in making progress on the agreed vision of full compliance with the WOAHA standards on dog population management in Europe. The automatization of the self-assessment process and the user-friendly analysis of the information will provide a more detailed and live time understanding of the overall situation. This will also allow the WOAHA Members to seek for a customized support of and facilitate the implementation of corrective actions for the progressive achievements of short, medium, and long-term objectives. The SAM Tool 2.0 could be also easily tailored for implementation in other regional or sub regional contexts. Although considerable efforts are still needed, the vision to reach full compliance with the TAHC Chapter 7.7 standards remains achievable. The new SAM tool 2.0 was presented on June the 19<sup>th</sup> 2023, along with its technical specifications and functionalities, in preparation to the 5th WOAHA Regional Workshop on Dog Population Management for Balkan countries (SDB5) to be held from 4 to 6 July 2023 in Croatia and later on the 4th Regional Workshop for West Eurasia countries (SDWE4) planned in Tbilisi in September 2023.

### **1.4. Natural disasters**

The WOAHA Platform on AW for Europe (WOAHA Platform) aims at supporting its European Members to act and ensure proper animal welfare assistance during and after natural disasters, in line with WOAHA guidelines on Disaster Management and Risk Reduction. In the frame of the Third Action Plan 2021-2023, WOAHA Members in the Balkans completed a 3-year stepwise pilot approach on natural disaster

preparedness. Thanks to this initiative, Bulgaria, Romania, and North Macedonia currently have specific contingency plans for the management of animal welfare challenges during floods. In parallel, the results of the WOAHP survey on the "Levels of Veterinary Services' preparedness for dealing with animal welfare emergencies during natural disasters" are still under publication. An online stakeholder's "Consultation meeting on the role of Veterinary Services on animal welfare in natural disasters" took place on March 2023. The event was organized in three thematic sessions, and it aimed at capitalizing the lessons learned from the response and recovery phases of previous disasters for the development of new contingency plans and the improvement of the existing ones, defining short and mid-term effective actions to strengthen the Veterinary Services proactive attitude toward contingency planning, from the One Health (OH) perspective. According to the participants, it would be useful to have guidance documents and tools (for developing contingency plans, operational procedures, and instructions) and predefined template documents. Regional collaboration should be boosted, along with communication and cooperation between authorities, actors, and stakeholders. The Platform should offer other opportunities to share experiences from past events (including the triannual pilot project), keep a broad scope (livestock, companion animals and wildlife) and organize practical activities/on-field exercises. This initiative is part of the ongoing regional needs assessment exercise focusing on the assessment of Veterinary Service's preparedness to disaster scenarios. Based on the results of the triannual pilot project and the outcomes of the ongoing regional actions in this field, new initiatives will be developed in this area, within the context of the 2024- 2026 Action Plan.

### 1.5. Welfare working equids.

The 3rd Action Plan includes an awareness campaign on the welfare of working equids targeting selected West Eurasian countries. Based on the results of the baseline survey conducted in 2019, a decision should be taken about further activities that are the most applicable and would have the most impact (e.g. an awareness campaign) to be organized in selected West Eurasian countries to raise public awareness on the economic and welfare importance of working equids. In this vein, an online event is planned to be held in September 2023 with the scope to raise awareness on the economic and societal importance of working equids, share existing tools and knowledge resources and discuss on how to address WOAHP members' needs through the initiatives to be implemented in the 2024 -2026 Action Plan. The goal is to have the most impact in selected West Eurasian countries and to involve other interested parties in the Balkan area.

## 2. Updates on the WOAHP activities at global level

**Dr Leopoldo Stuardo** (Scientific Coordinator on Animal Welfare of the WOAHP Standards Department) provided update on general WOAHP activities at global level in the framework of the WOAHP Global Animal Welfare Strategy and its four strategic pillars. Regarding the pillar on the development of animal welfare standards, he highlighted ongoing revision of Chapters 7.2,7.3 on transport of animals by sea and land, and the revision of chapter 7.4 transport by air in the frame of the MoU between WOAHP and IATA LAPB. The works to revise Chapter 7.5 on slaughter of animals, and chapter 7.6 on killing of animals for disease control continue to progress with the proposal to rename them as "Animal Welfare during slaughter". The revision of chapter 7.1 Introduction to the recommendations for animal welfare introductory section was included in the Code Commission Work Plan. Regarding the Capacity building pillar, activities will be focusing on the development of e-modules, support to the establishment of the WOAHP network of Collaborating Centres network (AWCC Network) on animal welfare and a stronger engagement of the National Animal Welfare Focal Points. through short and focused biannual meetings and informed about the progress done to finalise the establishment of the Global Network of AW Collaborating Centres. Regarding the pillar on the implementation of the animal welfare standards, the Work Plan includes the support of the Regional Animal Welfare Strategies and Platforms. The selected topic of the Fourth Global Forum to be held in presence (and possibly online) on 24-25 October 2023 is to be confirmed.

## 3. Stakeholders' animal welfare activities in Europe; what is new?

### Round table on the stakeholder's animal welfare recent and planned activities in Europe

The round table provided to stakeholders an opportunity to present update on their new and planned activities, since the last stakeholder's consultation meeting, with focus on the five priority topics of the WOAHP Platform – transportation, slaughter, stray dogs, disasters and working equids.

**Hans-Peter Schons** outlined the **European Federation of Animal Health Services (FESASS)** ongoing and planned initiative on animal welfare, starting with the current review of the advantages of the calving interval extension. This reduction in frequency of calving can be beneficial for cow health and welfare, but also of interest to reduce the number of surplus calves and labour associated with this process. Increased lactation persistency is observed, and new breeding strategies reduces the production costs for restocking (i.e., combination of sexed semen) might be also interesting from an economical point of view. Animal transport is also a current breeders' concern since the implementation of the EU legislation seems to be already difficult and considering that new provisions are expected to be developed. Improving compliance, generating reliable data, creating transparent journey plans, and improving long-distance transportation of breeding cattle are key. It will be important to better document the whole journey by storing data in an IT system overcoming the technology deadlock and strongly involve both the drivers and the organizers in the creation of a full journey report of the transportation. Some countries are particularly proactive in this regard, The Dutch company Vee & Logistiek Nederland is developing an operational plan for the use of staging points. Many EU operators are applying private standards, which are stricter than the current EU legislative provisions, based on the evidence that better transportation shows better result on the animal welfare point. ([Link to the presentation](#)).

According to **Cristina Lopez-Perea** from **Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)**, so far, the revision of the EU Animal Welfare legislation represents the main challenge along with the inconsistent implementation of existing rules. CIWF promotes the reduction of travelling times, improve resource-based measures to ensure optimal temperatures inside vehicles at all times, address the issues posed by different regulations of non-EU countries interested in livestock trade. CIWF is also actively campaigning for the inclusion of animal welfare in the sustainability fish farming agenda and support the development of codes of practice for the welfare of fish during farming, transport, and slaughter. It also works on the banning of mutilation, the contrast to illegal pig tail-docking, constantly monitoring the EU Commission position and willing to support the resolution of these issues.

The **Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations** and the **General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives (COPA/COGECA)** represented by **Manon Dubois** is continually active on public information and awareness about pig and poultry welfare. It actively works with DG SANTE with a specific interest on animal transport and the banning of cages while following the works of the animal welfare labelling subgroup of the EU Animal Welfare Platform.

**Staci Mc Lennan** recalled the recent, strong involvement of the **International Fund for Animal Welfare** in disaster management activities in the aftermath of the devastating floods recently occurred in Italy by funding local organizations, and in support to Ukraine after the collapse of the dam. Rabies vaccination and pet microchipping programs are ongoing despite the complicated conflict scenario and animals in need are provided with food and shelter trough local Ukrainians NGOs. IFAW is committed to improve the welfare of equids and strives to guarantee the distribution of animal food and fodder in Ukraine. A report has been recently distributed to mayors and local NGO's to build long-term partnership. The IFAW is also engaged with NGO's and fire fighters in Germany on the development of a for global disasters response mechanism and look forward to the organization of EU COMM-DG Echo humanitarian training initiatives or the protection of animal affected by disasters. In October, IFAW will contribute to boost disaster resilience in the areas of civil protection by contributing to community knowledge and disaster awareness initiatives.

**Stanislav Ralchev** from **DG SANTE** reminded the EU Platform on Animal Welfare hybrid meeting on 15 and 16 June 2023 where all relevant EU activities will be presented and discussed in detail. The EU Commission is working on a single, comprehensive EU animal welfare legislative proposal by the end of this year. The proposal will follow European Union legislative procedure with adoption process by the EU Parliament and Council.

**Valentina Vosna** from **Eurogroup for Animals** mainly focused on the ongoing EU animal welfare legislation revision. Over the last few months Eurogroup for Animals has been also highly active in the assistance of the animals affected by Ukraine crisis with a task force of around 20 members, providing a platform to the actors involved in animal rescue and feeding interventions. At the same time, it provides advice and keep the connections with relevant members operating on the ground. Mapping and strategizing the work is still needed on the ground at the moment. In December last year it was published a report "Animals in disasters: the need for protection and coordination across Europe" aiming at examining the response of the European Union, its Member States and the non-governmental organizations to animals affected by Russia's war in Ukraine. This overview also supports the inclusion of animal welfare actors in a coordinated emergency response mechanism in the EU and its Member

States highlighting why animals in disasters should be protected in order to minimize the recovery costs for the regions where animals are abandoned.

**AnimalhealthEurope** is the association representing manufacturers of animal medicines, vaccines, and other animal health products in Europe. **Clare Carlisle** presented the following points:

- **Annual conference: Animal health and animal welfare – different role, same goal**

Our event on 1 June discussed the different role that different parties play with the aim of achieving the same goal of high levels of animal welfare in Europe. The main focus was on farm animal welfare and the central role that animal health products and veterinarians play therein, alongside that of legislators, NGOs and farmers. [See the event booklet](#)

- **Position on the revision of EU Animal Welfare legislation**

We believe that food and farming choices are personal decisions, and advocate ways in which we can support further improvements in animal welfare through holistic animal health care on all types of farms. We position our role as mainly developing solutions and supporting improvements in breeding and keeping of both farm animals and companion animals. [See the position paper](#)

- **Manifesto 2024-2029**

Our Manifesto for the 2024 EU elections and the incoming Parliament and Commission highlights four main asks: 1) One Health approaches in decision-making; 2) Animal health as a solution to improve animal welfare; 3) Benefit-risk over risk-only processes in policymaking; and 4) Balanced dialogue on the future of animal farming. [See the Manifesto](#)

- **Brochure: How today's animal health care is benefiting people, animals and our planet**

We commissioned Oxford Analytica to detail research-based findings that demonstrate the impact and value of animal health solutions in areas of innovation, one health, and sustainability. The proof points selected for this brochure are drawn from an extensive literature review, expert input, and the of AnimalhealthEurope member companies. They highlight quantitative and qualitative benefits for animal welfare, human health and environmental health.

- **Upcoming event: #PetPower Night**

Taking place on 25 September, this cocktail aims to highlight the important role of the human-animal bond, and the need to ensure the good welfare of companion and assistance/therapy animals in Europe. DG SANTE will present on cat and dog elements of the proposed legislation.

**Joe Collins** recalled the **Donkey Sanctuary** involvement in the El Rocio festivity that takes place in Andalusia late spring, with extremely high temperatures and thousands of horses, mules and donkeys swarming across the region in large groups. Donkey Sanctuary staff attended and contributed to assist the animals. **Donkey Sanctuary** is also very interested to support the implementation of the WOAHP Standards on the welfare of working equids and it will fund the Platform event to be held in September 2023. Withing the context of the EU Platform activities is working in the proposal of new legislative measures with a specific interest on their transport and it contributed to the development of a document about working equids, recently published by the EU Reference Centre for the welfare of ruminants and equines.

**Karen Reed, presented, the Dogs Trust.** The Dog Trust is ICAM member, and it promotes dog welfare in the UK and around the globe. It has been working in Bosnia Herzegovina over the last ten years, focusing on the Balkans in dog training and behaviour. The organization is now considering expanding the work, using the expertise to work in wider areas, as disaster relief support in Ukraine and Turkey.

**RSPCA International** currently operates in East Asia and Europe, on capacity building and knowledge sharing, in collaboration with vets and NGOs. To date, the activities reported by **Alexandra Hammond-Seaman** are concentrated in the Balkans, at the aim of creating a platform to strengthen the technical and scientific capacities of animal welfare experts and dog population managers the region. As an ICAM member, the RSPCA has contributed to the development of the SAM Tool 2.0 and it is interested to support the development of DPM (Dog Population Management) programmes and Training-of-Trainers programs to positively impact on the long standing, unsolved problems posed by free-roaming animals. A RAWC conference is planned for 2024, at the aim of creating a platform for scientific knowledge exchange.

**Federation of Veterinarians in Europe (FVE)** with apologies did not attend the meeting joint still sent a document presenting their activities. [\(Link to the document\)](#)

## External evaluation of WOAAH Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe

**Karen Iles**, contracted consultant for external evaluation of the Platform, updated the participants on the progress of the external evaluation of the Platform. The last assessment of the 1st and 2nd action plan was made in 2019. The evaluation will assess the relevance, coherence effectiveness, efficiency, and contributions towards the impact of the Platform. This evaluation focuses on the last part of the 2nd action plan and on the 3rd action plan, and how it fits into the 4th action plan. It is essential to understand how the platform has been functioning, what worked well and to identify the lessons learned. It is also essential to understand how the WOAAH Members have used it to achieve their goals and measure its effectiveness in achieving the expected outcomes, including the time needed to see changes. Is it possible to measure if some of the outcomes have been positive already. Online survey and interviews with stakeholders will be held in July and August with the external evaluation report to be available by the end of September 2023.

### 4. Building the next action plan

#### Presentation of the proposed activities foreseen and discussion

The discussion was opened by with brief recall on relevant outcomes of previous activities and summary of the proposed actions of the next action plan of the Platform (2024-2026).

[\(Link to see the presentation\)](#)

#### Main points of discussion

- The **self-assessment tool on animal transport** will be used to evaluate the level of implementation of TAHC standards on animal transport on land and sea. It will be essential to discuss with the Members on how to collect and analyse data. The forthcoming meeting of the NCP in Dublin will be used to see the countries work and take information on how to make the tool more efficient, along with the results of the thematic studies to be used in the implementation phase. National control data used to assess the impact of the WOAAH Standards might be collected with the contribution of food business operators and farmers (i.e. FESASS), in addition to Veterinary Services. The link between the self-assessment tool on animal transport and the work of the WOAAH Observatory is also relevant. New technologies such artificial intelligence machine learning and big data analysis should be seen as new opportunities. Wildlife disease and animal transport might be considered a potential future area of work.
- Results of the **external evaluation** will influence the planning of the Platform activities, and it will be important to define how data of impact indicators will be collected, measured, and used. The monitoring phase must be improved, and the importance of post-training evaluation results should be duly considered.
- The need for **efficient coordination mechanisms to emergencies**, with the active involvement of food-business operators, farmers, and NGOs.
- **Capacity building and e-learning training modules** are essential, along with the possibility to share existing material and training resources.
- More efforts should be done to increase the **visibility for the Platform** by revamping the website and strengthening communication efforts.

#### List of annexes

*Annex 1 – Agenda*

*Annex 2 – List of participants*

---

\* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

Annex 1 – Agenda



**8<sup>th</sup> Stakeholders consultation meeting  
of the WOAH Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe**

**14<sup>th</sup> of June 2023  
Brussels - Belgium  
10:00 – 15:30**

**AGENDA**

❖ **Meeting objectives:**

- WOAH Platform Secretariat: to report on the latest developments and activities of the WOAH Platform and implementation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Action Plan for 2021-2023
- Stakeholders: to present new and planned activities in the five priority topics of the WOAH Platform – transport, slaughter, dog population management, disasters, working equids.
- **Chair of the meeting:** Estelle Hamelin
- **Rapporteur:** Secretariat of the Platform (WOAH Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels).
- **Venue of the meeting:** WOAH Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels, FAVV/AFSCA building, floor 0, Salle de formation 2 (FAVV-AFSCA)

Time	AGENDA	Speaker(s)
9:30	Welcome coffee	
<b>Welcome and introduction – 9:30</b>		
10:00	Opening remarks	
<b>LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF WOAH</b>		
10:10	State of implementation of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Action Plan of the Platform	<i>T. Grudnik / P. Dalla Villa</i>
10:30	Update on WOAH activities at global level	<i>L. Stuardo</i>
10:45	Discussion	
11:00	Coffee break	
<b>STAKEHOLDERS ANIMAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES UN EUROPE – WHAT IS NEW?</b>		
11:15	Round table on the stakeholders animal welfare recent and planned activities in Europe	<i>All stakeholders</i>
12:15	Focus on the evaluation of WOAH Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe	<i>K. Iles</i>
12:30	Discussion	
13:00	Lunch	
<b>BUILDING THE NEXT ACTION PLAN</b>		
14:00	Presentation of the activities foreseen and discussion	<i>T. Grudnik / P. Dalla Villa</i>
15:20	Closing remarks	
<b>END OF THE MEETING – 15:30</b>		

Annex 2

8th Stakeholders consultation meeting of the WOAH Platform on animal welfare for Europe

14th June 2023 – Brussels

List of participants

	Name	Organisation
1.	Leopoldo Stuardo Escobar	WOAH HQ
2.	Sandra Perez Zafra	World Horse Welfare
3.	Staci McLennan	International Fund for Animal Welfare
4.	Hans-Peter Schons	FESASS
5.	Joseph (Joe) Collins	The Donkey Sanctuary
6.	Stanislav Ralchev	European Commission
7.	Manon Dubois	Copa Cogeca
8.	Diane Renaudin	Copa Cogeca
9.	Clare Carlisle	Animal Health Europe
10.	Christina Lopez-Perea	Compassion in World Farming
11.	Karen Reed	Dogs Trust Worldwide
12.	Valentyna Vozna	Eurogroup for Animals
13.	Alexandra Hammond-Seaman	RSPCA
14.	Fernando De Abreu	WOAH Brussels
15.	Tomasz Grudnik	WOAH Brussels
16.	Paolo Dalla Villa	WOAH Brussels
17.	Estelle Hamelin	WOAH Brussels