

Regional workshop on animal welfare during slaughter

11-12 February 2025, Tirana, Albania



Funded by
the European Union



Meeting Report

Summary

The Regional workshop on animal welfare during slaughter took place on February 11–12, 2025, in Tirana, Albania, bringing together 32 participants, including representatives from 12 WOAHA Members and five experts in the field.

The workshop focused on identifying capacity-building needs and supporting WOAHA Members in developing comprehensive national training programs on animal welfare during slaughter.

Expert presentations provided an overview of ethical considerations, the current legal framework, and technical aspects of animal welfare during slaughter, along with associated challenges. Special emphasis was placed on the recently revised Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Chapter 7.5, on animal welfare during slaughter.

Participants shared their countries' current status, highlighting both progress and challenges. Interactive group exercises enabled participants to identify key challenges and develop outlines for training programmes and stakeholder engagement strategies aimed at improving animal welfare during slaughter.

This workshop also served as a preparatory step for the development of the upcoming Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on animal welfare during slaughter, scheduled for late 2025.

Regional workshop on animal welfare during slaughter

1. Background

The recently adopted revision of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Chapter 7.5, on animal welfare during slaughter creates the need and opportunity for awareness and capacity-building activities.

According to the 4th Action Plan of the Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe (the Platform), the first session of the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on animal welfare during slaughter is planned for the end of 2025. The planned programme aims to improve the welfare of farm animals during slaughter (including transport for slaughter) in selected countries through the tailored training-the-trainers programme developed to support the implementation of the WOAHA animal welfare standards. The structure of the programme and learning outcomes are based on the previous ToT programmes delivered within the Platform framework. The follow-up cascading activities and the transfer of knowledge conducted by the Members are essential parts of those ToT programmes. Therefore, to ensure the engagement of targeted members, the regional workshop was organised with a focus on Members' needs assessment and the development of follow-up programmes.

The workshop is funded by the European Union and is kindly hosted by Albania.

2. Session 1: Introduction

Keti Margariti, WOAAH Delegate for Albania, opened the meeting by highlighting the importance of improving animal welfare during slaughter, not only for ethical reasons but also to promote sustainability, ensure meat quality, and meet societal expectations. Estelle Hamelin, Sub-Regional Representative of WOAAH in Brussels, echoed Dr Margariti's remarks and emphasised the crucial role of participating Members in ensuring that the outcomes of the workshop effectively support their day-to-day work, particularly in preparing for the upcoming Training of Trainers programme scheduled for the end of the year and follow up with cascading activities.

2.1. WOAAH Global Animal Welfare Strategy ([Link to view presentation](#))

The WOAAH's Global Animal Welfare Strategy (GAWS) envisions a world where animal welfare is respected, promoted, and advanced alongside animal health, human well-being, socio-economic development, and environmental sustainability. GAWS is built on four key components: developing animal welfare standards, education and capacity building, implementing these standards and policies, and effectively communicating with governments and the public. WOAAH also develops and implements regional animal welfare strategies and platforms to address specific regional needs and priorities. This approach fosters collaboration and enables tailored strategies to improve animal welfare in diverse contexts. Additionally, the WOAAH Observatory was created as a systematic and continuous monitoring system to track the implementation of WOAAH's international standards.

2.2. WOAAH Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe ([Link to view presentation](#))

The Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe is a regional mechanism to improve animal welfare in all 53 countries of Europe and to empower Veterinary Services to take action on animal welfare in compliance with WOAAH standards. The 4th Action Plan of the Platform for 2024-2026 builds upon the achievements of the previous plans and focuses on strengthening member involvement and collaboration in its implementation. The Platform's priority topics cover the slaughter of animals, animal transport, dog population management, animal welfare during natural disasters, and the welfare of working equids. Key 2024 achievements include the successful implementation of the action plan activities, improved communication strategy, and ongoing work to refine the monitoring and evaluation system.

3. Session 2: Animal welfare during slaughter – legal framework

This session's objective was to provide an overview of the current legal framework and technical aspects of animal welfare during slaughter, along with associated challenges, with a special focus on the recently adopted revision of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Chapter 7.5, on animal welfare during slaughter.

3.1. Animal welfare during slaughter – ethical aspects and societal perception ([Link to view presentation](#))

Tomislav Mikuš discussed the key factors driving animal welfare at the time of slaughter. The presentation addressed ethical concerns, consumer awareness and attitudes, and various philosophical perspectives on animal welfare during slaughter. The presentation also recalled the definition of animal welfare, the concepts of the Five Freedoms and the Five Domains of Animal Welfare. The presentation underscored the growing awareness and concern for animal welfare among consumers and the need for policies supporting the humane treatment of farmed animals.

3.2. Introduction (scope, hazards, animal-based measures, development and implementation of an operating plan) ([Link to view presentation](#))

Antonio Velarde described the scope of the recently revised Chapter 7.5 – Animal Welfare during Slaughter (which was first adopted in 2005). This revision resolves inconsistencies in the methods used in the slaughter of animals, addresses current scientific knowledge and reviews the structure of the chapter. The chapter is divided into two main sections, addressing two animal categories: free-moving animals and animals in containers. It covers arrival, handling during unloading, lairage, restraint, sunning, bleeding and emergency killing. For each stage, the chapter describes animal welfare

concerns, animal-based and other measures, general recommendations and species-specific recommendations.

Discussion:

The discussion raised the importance of addressing hazards faced by workers handling/stunning animals. It was emphasized that ensuring staff protection and safety enhances their ability to perform their duties effectively. Therefore, this aspect is necessary to ensure that the slaughterhouse is also adapted to protect the people working in it. The safety of the personnel during the animal handling and slaughter process was included in WOAH training materials on slaughter.

3.3. Arrival and unloading, lairage and handling ([Link to view presentation](#))

In the presentation, Tomislav Mikuš emphasized the importance of proper animal transport and highlighted the need for conditions preventing injury and unnecessary suffering. Key principles for transport include animal fitness, careful handling during loading/unloading, sufficient space and ventilation, adequate food and water, rest periods for long journeys, and emergency preparedness. The presentation stressed the importance of appropriate handling procedures and loading, unloading, and animal holding facilities, which are crucial for reducing stress and injury. The presentation also covered antemortem inspection, the importance of identifying unfit animals, and procedures for handling animals at slaughterhouses, including ensuring rest and calming periods. The presentation concluded with an overview of the consequences of inadequate handling, which can lead to issues with meat quality.

Discussion:

The discussion highlighted that ensuring animal welfare during slaughter starts with the transport of animals. It is essential that only fit animals are loaded for travel, which includes limitations on pregnant animals. This responsibility begins with animal owners, drivers, and veterinarians.

The post-mortem/meat inspection provides a numerous opportunity to collect data for animal health, animal welfare and food safety surveillance. Because most food animals would eventually be slaughtered, slaughterhouses are considered a key element in the food production chain and represent an essential control point for the early identification of potential problems that may impact public health, animal health and welfare.

The use of video recording technologies offers a valuable tool for monitoring animal welfare in slaughterhouses. In addition, video records may be used as training materials. However, data privacy concerns must be addressed.

3.4. Restrain stunning and bleeding ([Link to view presentation](#))

Antonio Velarde described animal welfare concerns, animal-based measures (ABM) and other measures, general recommendations and species-specific recommendations during restraint, stunning and bleeding. Incorrect restraint leads to ineffective stunning or bleeding but also causes distress, fear and pain. ABMs are slipping or falling, struggling, escape attempts, vocalisation, reluctance to enter the restrainer and use of electric goads. The stunning methods described for free-moving animals are captive bolt stunning, electrical stunning and exposure to a controlled atmosphere. Indicators of the state of consciousness are described during the three key stages (between the end of stunning and shackling, during neck cutting and sticking, and during bleeding. For animals transported in contained, the welfare concern of shackling conscious animals is discussed, as well as the water bath electrical stunning. The other stunning method presented is the exposure to control atmosphere.

Discussion:

A question was raised regarding the optimal frequency for assessing the effectiveness of stunning without causing a negative impact on the production system. The recommended sampling size calculation to assess the state of consciousness in [broilers](#) and [turkeys](#) can be found following the links (the information is on the 2nd page of the factsheets).

3.5. Slaughter without stunning ([Link to view presentation](#))

Luigi Iannetti outlined the main animal welfare concerns related to slaughtering without stunning with references to the WOAH TAHC (Chapter 7.5) and to the EC regulation 1099/2009. The most critical points were identified in restraining, neck cutting and bleeding. The results of a research project carried

out in Italy and funded by the Italian Ministry of Health were also discussed. The study demonstrated that religious slaughtering does not present higher risks related to meat microbiological hygiene than conventional slaughtering, but ethical and animal welfare concerns should always be taken into account. Post-cut stun is a solution that could be accepted by religious communities. In any case, the training of operators is crucial to ensure the highest possible degree of animal welfare in slaughtering without stunning.

Discussion:

The presented study did not find differences in meat quality or microbiological contamination levels between the various stunning and slaughter methods investigated.

There is a need to use well-defined terms, especially in the context of slaughter without stunning, to ensure the implementation of relevant provisions of welfare standards (e.g. in Serbia: “ritual slaughter” refers to slaughter without stunning outside of a slaughterhouse).

3.6. Animal welfare during slaughter – European Union perspective ([Link to view presentation](#))

Ester Alaez Pons from the European Commission presented the European Union's perspective on the protection of animals at slaughter and killing. The presentation gave an overview of the EU animal welfare legal framework and the requirements in the EU Regulation related to the protection of animals during slaughter and killing. In particular, the EU Commission explained the role of the animal welfare officer, the requirements for the standard operating procedures and how training and competence certification are organised in the EU. In addition, the EU Commission presented some activities undertaken by the EU to promote animal welfare (i.e. EU animal welfare reference centres and the EU animal welfare platform) and provided links to some materials and information sources.

4. Session 3: Understanding the countries' situations and identifying key challenges

This session allows countries to present their own system giving the opportunity to discuss and identify legal framework, responsibilities, current situation and available resources for training personnel responsible for animal welfare during slaughter.

- **Albania** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Armenia** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Azerbaijan** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Georgia** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Kosovo*** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Moldova** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Montenegro** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **North Macedonia** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Serbia** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Türkiye** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Ukraine** ([Link to presentation](#))

Discussion:

The discussion highlighted the challenges faced by Veterinary Services in effectively monitoring and overseeing slaughterhouse operations. These challenges include gaps in regulations, difficulties in tracking the number of animals slaughtered, especially outside of slaughterhouses, and significant differences in practices between small and large facilities. Participants emphasised that using checklists and ensuring the presence of official veterinarians in slaughterhouses are crucial tools for maintaining proper oversight of slaughterhouse activities.

4.1. Working group exercise – Identifying key challenges (level of competency and training) ([Link to presentation](#))

The main objective of this working group exercise is to enable participants, organised into small groups (6 people from 3 countries per group), to identify and prioritise the key challenges in ensuring animal welfare during slaughter in line with WOH standards.

A summary of the challenges identified by the four groups is outlined below, revealing eight key areas of challenges that are closely interconnected.

1/ Human Resources:

- Insufficient personnel knowledgeable in animal welfare, both at central and field levels.
- Limited personnel dedicated to official controls on animal welfare issues within veterinary services
- Lack of legal framework and financial resources for establishing the role of animal welfare officers (a competent person appointed by slaughterhouse management to ensure that standard operating procedures are implemented) and

2/ Financial Constraints:

- Animal welfare is often not considered a priority, leading to budget limitations.
- Financial challenges implementing IT systems for data collection (including training) limiting the efficiency of the implementation of WOH standards.

3/ Training and capacity building:

- Need for effective Training of Trainers programmes using local or international experts,
- Challenges in funding and further dissemination of training materials.
- Need for a unified approach to training, including specific modules and checklists.

4/ Data Collection and IT Systems:

- Inconsistent data collection.
- Lack of data management system and financial resources to support it.

5/ Management and Operational Practices:

- Inadequate equipment maintenance in slaughterhouses.
- Absence of written procedures, proper training, registers, and systematic data management.

6/ Animal Welfare Standards and Compliance:

- Low standards in animal welfare during transport, especially on the characteristics of the vehicle transporting animals.
- Limited use of animal-based indicators for welfare assessment.
- Need for better alignment with legal requirements and improved training.

7/ Business Operator Motivation and Consumer Awareness:

- Lack of motivation and low economic incentives among business operators to adopt animal welfare standards, except for those exporting to the EU.
- Need for consumer and business operator awareness campaigns to support the implementation of animal welfare standards

8/ Strategic and Systemic Approaches:

- Difficulty in selecting an appropriate model for animal welfare implementation.
- Challenges in making additional investments to meet animal welfare requirements.

5. Session 4: Training resources

The objective of this session was to provide the participants with an overview of the different training tools and resources on animal welfare during slaughter that are available for them to use.

5.1. WOAH Competency Framework and e-learning ([Link to view presentation](#))

The presentation "Strengthening Capacities in Animal Welfare Through Competency-Based Training" showcased WOAH's approach to improving animal health and welfare through structured training. It covered the WOAH Competency-Based Training Framework (CBTF), Learning Needs Assessment (LNA), and the Animal Welfare Competency Package, including the WOAH eLearning Module on the welfare of animals during slaughter. It concluded by raising awareness of the available training modules and inviting participants to explore, use, and promote the WOAH eLearning Platform to strengthen Veterinary Services worldwide.

Discussion:

The WOAH eLearning platform has open access, allowing individuals to complete the training courses at their own pace. Upon completion of each course, participants receive an electronic certificate; however, it is not an accredited certification.

5.2. WOAH Training of Trainers approach ([Link to view presentation](#))

The presentation outlined the WOAH Training of Trainers (ToT) approach for capacity-building programmes designed to support WOAH members in implementing WOAH standards on animal welfare. Initially, WOAH conducted a series of ToT workshops focused on animal welfare during slaughter in Southeast Asia and the Middle East as part of the WOAH Improved Animal Welfare Programme (IAWP). Between 2015 and 2018, utilizing the IAWP methodology, the Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe conducted three regional ToT workshops on animal welfare during slaughter. The key objectives of the ToT workshops are to improve the welfare of farm animals during slaughter and transport in line with WOAH standards. Participants learn about animal welfare science, animal behaviour, stockmanship, and effective training techniques, enabling them to lead training sessions on animal welfare during slaughter, including practical animal handling exercises. The ToT workshops consist of a technical session, a training and learning session, and a stakeholder conference session.

The long-term goal of the ToT programmes is to support the implementation of WOAH standards by leveraging a cascading knowledge transfer model to provide training for veterinarians and inspectors at various levels and to raise business operators' awareness of their obligations regarding animal welfare. Effective implementation of follow-up activities and the cascading knowledge transfer model requires active stakeholders' engagement to create a supportive environment that enhances the initiative's overall impact and promotes a shared commitment to improving animal welfare standards.

5.3. WOAH Member experience – training programmes ([Link to view presentation](#))

North Macedonia already have established and accepted national legislation for animal welfare during the time of the killing, according to which education of business operators is mandatory. Implementation of these directives means implementation of new skills for slaughterhouse personnel (implementation of the killing directive) and certification of "animal welfare officer". The development of training programs must be designed on the basis of the identification of competencies, which will serve as a base for learning objectives for training curricula. There are numerous challenges as regards the effective implementation and enforcement of relevant legislation. There is no sustainable framework for the training of stakeholders, and national authorities are dependent on sourcing the training externally, often from abroad. Many activities related to the training of stakeholders have been developed through TAIEX and the BTSF program. This training approach does not ensure sustainability, and this type of education is not part of national accreditation processes for approval by national authorities. Also, training programmes are not fully equipped with training materials, and they are not involved in national programs of vocational programs. Developing the training programs through the national vocational programs can bring added value and sustainability to the training of business operators.

5.4. Knowledge and training resources ([Link to view presentation](#))

Antonio Velarde described the activities, deliverables and training material of the four EU Reference Centres for Animal Welfare (EURCAWs) on pigs, poultry, ruminants and equines, and aquatic animals.

Their main role is to assist the national Competent Authorities in performing better official controls and enforcing EU animal welfare rules. The target groups are Competent Authorities, policy workers and their 'support bodies'. The five main activities are coordinated assistance, animal welfare indicators, scientific and technical studies, training courses and dissemination.

Discussion:

The EU Reference Centres collaborate with Member States by addressing their questions in agreement with the EU Commission. A discussion is ongoing on how to support better countries applying for EU membership.

Inquiries that involve legislative interpretation are outside of the EURCAWS mandate and cannot be answered directly. Collaboration with universities is managed through the National Reference Centres to avoid duplication.

6. Session 5: Developing training programmes

This session's objective was to provide the participants with the basis of how to build a training programme before engaging in the 2nd working group exercise, which will invite them to discuss how they would build their training programme.

6.1. Principles of developing training programmes ([Link to presentation](#))

Chiara Albanello presented the principles of developing effective training programmes based on experience with IZS Teramo in delivering the EU's BTSF programmes. The training methodology evolved over time, starting with face-to-face courses and incorporating eLearning modules. It adapted to pandemic restrictions by utilizing virtual classrooms and eventually returned to a blended approach.

The training included various formats, focusing on different animal types and slaughter contexts. Its success can be attributed to a strong emphasis on active learning, practical exercises, and a thorough evaluation process. Furthermore, the program's model has proven to be transferable to other training initiatives, highlighting its effectiveness and broad applicability. Overall, the presentation underscored the importance of diverse training methodologies and robust evaluation tools to assess the effectiveness of training programs.

6.2. Developing training programs – animal welfare during slaughter examples ([Link to presentation](#))

Luigi Iannetti presented the main methodologies used for training in the framework of two WOAHP twinning projects on animal welfare. In particular, activities carried out with South Africa and Tunisia collaborating centres candidate institutes were described, with a specific focus on training courses on the protection of animals at slaughter. Both practical on-field and theoretical activities were carried out, and discussions were triggered to define the main needs to improve animal welfare and effectively implement WOAHP standard 7.5.

6.3. WOAHP Public-Private Partnership Framework ([Link to presentation](#))

The presentation emphasised the Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) role in strengthening Veterinary Services. It highlighted the WOAHP framework for PPPs, distinguishing them from privatisation and demonstrating their importance in animal health, veterinary education, and policy development. The presentation outlined strategies for building partnership capacities at regional, national, and global levels, with presented case studies from various countries demonstrating successful PPP implementations. It also provided a list of available resources, including the WOAHP PPP database and targeted support initiatives, to help member countries develop sustainable partnerships in the veterinary domain.

Discussion:

A question was raised about how to initiate a PPP. To facilitate effective collaboration, the initial step in establishing a PPP is to identify the relevant stakeholders and assess the mutual benefits each party could gain from the partnership.

6.4. The role of regional stakeholders ([Link to presentation](#))

The presentation highlighted the Regional Animal Welfare Centre (RAWC) as a key regional stakeholder supporting the WOAHA action in the Western Balkan region. RAWC has been a partner for WAOH for over a decade and is committed to continuing in future activities. The RAWC activities covered support for the development of welfare outcome assessment and 'on farm' intervention tools, training programmes on dog population management and animal welfare during slaughter and support with implementation of the WOAHA responsible dog ownership awareness campaign,

6.5. Working group exercise – Developing a training programme (parts 1 & 2) ([Link to presentation](#))

The main objective of this two-part working group exercise was to develop potential training solutions to the identified challenges, identify potential partner organisations and outline their roles in the training programme.

A summary of the key aspects of developing an effective training programme for animal welfare during slaughter, focusing on stakeholders, challenges, and potential solutions, is available below.

1/ Target audience:

- Official veterinarians, slaughterhouse personnel and facility managers (including animal welfare officer)

2/ Training Priorities:

- Emergency slaughter procedures.
- Training of Trainers (ToT) for veterinary inspectors at central and local levels.
- Self-assessment tools for facilities.

3/ Stakeholder Roles & Collaboration:

- Competent Authorities (CA): Ministries of Agriculture, Finance, and Education responsible for organising, harmonising training, and policy development.
- Educational Institutions: Veterinary faculties collaborating with CA (varies by country).
- International Organisations (IOs): WOAHA, FAO supporting expertise, awareness, and best practices.
- Industry Stakeholders: meat production sector, food business operators, and livestock breeders contributing to training implementation.
- NGOs: Providing resources, expertise, and capacity-building (collaboration varies across countries).
- Regional Cooperation: Countries proposed forming a regional training committee for efficiency, experience-sharing, and harmonisation.

4/ Country-Specific Insights:

- The importance of exchanging experiences and addressing resource limitations through step-by-step improvements was highlighted.
- The importance of international knowledge exchange to benchmark progress.
- Emphasis on public-private partnerships (PPP) as a way to enhance training efforts.
- The role of chambers of commerce in PPPs and the challenges of NGO involvement
- The need for IT tools, training, and ToT programmes
- The need for a regional approach, with WOAHA acting as a facilitator between countries

5/ Potential Next Steps:

- Development of standardised training activities.
- Implementation of regional cooperation mechanisms to enhance training efficiency.
- Establishment of MoUs to address accreditation issues across different countries.
- Strengthening of PPP initiatives to support training efforts and policy implementation.
- Promotion of audit and control mechanisms to ensure compliance and effectiveness of training.

In conclusion, the exercise underscored the need for structured collaboration, harmonisation of training programmes, and a regional approach to improving animal welfare practices during slaughter.

7. Main outcomes

The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to gain insights into the technical aspects of animal welfare during slaughter, with a special focus on the recently revised Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Chapter 7.5. It also aimed to enhance the understanding of capacity-building needs for WOAHA members in developing comprehensive national training programs on animal welfare during slaughter.

The key outcomes of the workshop are:

- A collective effort to identify key challenges faced by participants, offering valuable insights for the development of the upcoming ToT.
- Recognition of the need for regional collaboration to improve the efficiency of training development and organisation.
- Strengthening bilateral connections between countries, facilitating mutual support in areas such as IT data management systems.
- Acknowledgement that while funding remains a challenge, setting clear priorities and fostering collaboration can help overcome resource constraints.

Following the outcomes of this workshop, including identified priorities, specific capacity-building needs, and challenges reported by WOAHA members, WOAHA will develop a detailed proposal for the Training of Trainers programme on animal welfare during slaughter.

To ensure the effective implementation of the ToT programme and follow-up cascading activities, WOAHA will actively involve members and stakeholders throughout the development process.

Regional workshop on developing national action plans for animal welfare

13 February 2025, Tirana, Albania



Funded by
the European Union



Meeting Report

Summary

On February 13, 2025, we hosted the Regional Workshop on Developing National Action Plans for Animal Welfare, back-to-back with the Regional Workshop on Animal Welfare During Slaughter that took place on February 11–12, 2025, in Tirana, Albania. This workshop brought 32 participants, representing 12 WOAHA Members and experts in the field.

This workshop guided WOAHA Members in formulating sustainable, multi-annual national action plans to improve long-term animal welfare management.

Participants presented an overview of their countries' current landscape and policy developments and identified key priorities and challenges. The workshop also provided an opportunity to showcase methodological approaches, tools, and concrete examples for developing context-specific action plans. The workshop concluded with an interactive group exercise, allowing countries to engage in discussions and propose practical solutions for strengthening their national action plans.

The workshop highlighted the importance of knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and strategic planning, reinforcing the collective commitment to advancing animal welfare standards across the region.

As a pilot initiative, the workshop received positive feedback, encouraging further collaboration with WOAHA Members to explore additional activities that support

1. Background – Action Plans

WOAHA National Focal Points on Animal Welfare, during their last meeting in June 2024 in Madrid, highlighted the need for a comprehensive, long-term, and sustainable approach to implementing WOAHA animal welfare standards. In response, WOAHA developed a workshop proposal for targeted Members to support the development of national Action Plans on Animal Welfare. This workshop served as a pilot initiative, and its further development will be evaluated and discussed following its implementation.

The workshop is funded by the European Union and is kindly hosted by Albania.

2. Session 1: Introduction

2.1. Building the Action Plan for Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe ([Link to presentation](#))

The presentation shortly recalled the process of the development series of the three-year action plans for the Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe since beginning in 2013, highlighting improvements in the methodology and development process. The current 4th Action Plan (2024-2026) of the Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe ([link](#)) builds upon previously successfully implemented action plans, aiming to improve animal welfare across Europe. The 4th Action Plan focuses on maintaining five priority topics: transport of animals (land and sea), slaughter, dog population management, animal welfare during natural disasters, and welfare of working equids. The plan emphasises a common vision and strengthens WOAHA member's involvement and collaboration with all stakeholders. It will progressively

improve compliance with WOAAH standards by using a results framework and Theory of Change to monitor progress via indicators across outcomes and outputs. The plan aims to consolidate past achievements, strengthen its foundation, and secure additional resources. More information about the Platform's action plans is available on the Platform's website ([link](#)).

3. Session 2: Understanding the countries' situations and identifying key challenges

This session provided WOAAH members with an opportunity to share an overview of their current situation and the challenges they face. It will also enable them to learn from others' experiences and explore methodologies for developing an effective action plan.

3.1. Countries' presentations

- **Albania** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Armenia** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Azerbaijan** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Georgia** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Kosovo*** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Moldova** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Montenegro** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **North Macedonia** ([Link to presentation](#))([Animal Protection and Welfare Strategy](#))
- **Serbia** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Türkiye** ([Link to presentation](#))
- **Ukraine** ([Link to presentation](#))

Discussion:

The discussion underscored the potential need to revise legislation before drafting an action plan and emphasised the importance of collaboration with partners. Examples included support from NGOs and the involvement of unions and professional organisations in developing action plans or drafting regulations. Additionally, participants highlighted political barriers that may limit the capacity of Competent Authorities to develop a national action plan.

3.2. WOAAH Member experience – National Action Plan for Animal Welfare ([Link to presentation](#))

Portugal's perspective on the monitoring and evaluation process was presented, using the example of the procedure adopted under the National Animal Protection Plan. The National Animal Protection Plan aims to establish annual strategic and operational objectives and controls for animal welfare at farms, transport, and slaughterhouses.

The monitoring and evaluation process is part of a continuous improvement cycle, including the definition of strategic and operational objectives for Animal Welfare, the establishment of annual actions and controls, as well as the implementation, monitoring and assessment of whether what was planned has been achieved. In a later stage and based on these assessments, new actions and objectives are redefined. The aim was to illustrate this process with practical cases, indicating which aspects are considered when defining priorities and objectives and how the measure indicators are chosen, monitored, and evaluated.

It also presented the use of animal welfare indicators to select the farms to be controlled each year, as well as some of the databases used for this purpose.

Finally, a set of challenges relating to the monitoring and evaluation process were listed, namely, the definition of the priorities, operational objectives, and indicators (they must be meaningful, realistic and measurable), the motivation of all the personnel to achieve the objectives, the availability of the data (Implement new IT/Tools systems- Money and human resources) and the time needed for monitoring and evaluation.

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

Animal Protection Plan ([PPA](#))(2022-2025) and the Supervision Control Plan ([PAPPA](#)) for 2025 (*in Portuguese*).

Discussion:

The discussion highlighted the challenges that may arise in enrolling farmers into the process. In the case of Portugal, implementing the required elements is mandatory for farmers.

The validation process for an action plan was also discussed. In Portugal, the CVO is responsible for its approval. Since the document has been in use for many years, the focus is now on the yearly updates and improvements.

The importance of a data-driven system was emphasised to help establish priorities in alignment with limited resources. Additionally, linking various databases was recognised as a crucial element to gain a comprehensive overview of the situation.

3.3. Methodology to build an Action Plan ([Link to presentation](#))

Alex Hammond Seaman and Tomislav Mikuš presented the Theory of Change (ToC) as an effective methodology for developing an animal welfare action plan. The ToC is a participatory approach that engages stakeholders in identifying the necessary conditions for achieving long-term goals. It includes a causal framework that visually represents desired changes and their interconnections. The process involves clearly defined long-term goals, measurable indicators to assess progress and success and concrete actionable steps needed to facilitate change. The methodology overview includes definitions and practical tools, stressing that a structured and inclusive approach is crucial for effective change in animal welfare. This structured method ensures alignment among stakeholders and the practicality and impact of the action plan.

Discussion:

The discussion highlighted the need to involve all relevant stakeholders in the development of the action plans to have a broader view and to ensure their commitment and engagement in the implementation of those action plans.

3.4. PVS Pathway – A way to progress ([Link to presentation](#))

The PVS Pathway – A Way to Progress presentation covered the PVS Theory of Change, highlighting how the Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway supports countries in strengthening their veterinary systems. It emphasized the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) aspects, demonstrating how PVS assessments track progress, identify gaps, and guide strategic planning. Additionally, the PVS Information System (PVS IS) was presented as a key tool for centralizing data, supporting evidence-based decision-making, and facilitating investment in sustainable veterinary services.

4. Session 3: Working group exercise ([Link to presentation](#))

This working group exercise focused on building participants' knowledge and skills in developing national animal welfare action plans. By working in small groups (three countries per group), participants engaged in hands-on exercises and discussions covering identification priorities, defining measurable objectives, engaging relevant stakeholders, creating actionable steps, allocating resources, and establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Through the first part of the exercise, groups identified priority topics and areas (among those already covered by WOAHS standards) to be addressed in their proposed animal welfare action plans. Selected priority topic covered:

- dog population management
- animal welfare and broiler chicken production systems
- welfare during slaughter with a focus on poultry slaughter

Action plan for dog population management:

The goal of the dog population management action plan was to reduce free-roaming dog populations through legal measures and effective management. The discussed key elements included drafting legislation, stakeholder engagement (governments, NGOs, dog owners, veterinarians), educational initiatives (training, guidelines, expert consultations), and implementing control measures such as sterilization, identification (microchipping), and outreach/awareness

campaigns, shelter development, and establishing municipal and veterinary control mechanisms. The plan also outlined long-term goals, timelines, and assessment methods.

Action plan on animal welfare and broiler chicken production systems:

The defined goal for the action plan on broiler chicken production systems was to improve broiler chicken production to meet EU and national animal welfare standards and facilitate poultry product exportation. The discussed elements covered harmonizing legislation with EU standards, implementing awareness programs, developing a surveillance system, maintaining farm biosecurity, and keeping stakeholders updated on regulations.

Action plan welfare during slaughter:

The defined goal for this action plan was to improve animal welfare during the slaughter of broiler chickens. The discussed elements covered ensuring personnel competence certification, defining roles for competent authorities, comprehensive information campaigns targeting business operators to identify training needs, training strategies (including "train-the-trainer" models and information campaigns), and developing a register/database of personnel's competence certificates to facilitate competences management and assessment and monitoring tool.

Throughout all topics, the discussion emphasised the importance of collaborating with stakeholders, developing data-driven strategies, ensuring continuous evaluation and adaptation of strategies based on data and feedback, and securing sufficient funding and resources.

5. Main outcomes

This regional pilot workshop successfully initiated the development of national animal welfare action plans. The main outcomes of the workshop include:

- The workshop guided WOAHA members in creating sustainable, multi-year national action plans aimed at improving long-term animal welfare management.
- The Theory of Change (ToC) methodology was introduced as a key tool for developing effective action plans. This participatory approach emphasises establishing a clear causal framework, defining long-term goals, developing measurable indicators, and outlining actionable steps.
- Participants presented overviews of their current animal welfare landscapes and policy developments, fostering knowledge-sharing and collaboration.
- A hands-on exercise allowed participants to practice the application of the main principles of developing action plans covering key elements: identifying priorities, defining objectives, engaging stakeholders, allocating resources, and establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework.

In the further development of the animal welfare national action plans, a key goal is to prioritise efforts and resources based on identified key topics and national contexts.

Collaboration with diverse partners (industry, NGOs, educational institutions) will be crucial to coordinate activities, avoid duplication, and ensure broad stakeholders' engagement (producers, businesses, communities, and local authorities), especially regarding critical areas like dog population management.

The workshop provided a strong foundation for developing and implementing effective national animal welfare action plans. Participants confirmed the need for further activities supporting the development of animal welfare action plans (including development tools and templates) to ensure the sustainability and success of these initiatives across the region.

List of annexes

Annex 1 – Agenda

Regional workshop on animal welfare during slaughter

11 - 12 February 2025, Tirana Albania

This workshop is funded by the European Union and is kindly hosted by Albania.



Funded by
the European Union



Provisional programme

DAY 1: 11 February 2025		
Session 1: Introduction		
09:00 – 09:10	Welcome, opening remarks and presentation of the objectives of the workshop	<i>K. Margariti (Delegate of Albania)</i> <i>E. Hamelin</i>
09:10 – 09:20	WOAH Global Animal Welfare Strategy	<i>T. Grudnik</i>
09:20 – 09:30	Regional Platform on animal welfare for Europe	<i>T. Grudnik</i>
Session 2: Animal welfare during slaughter – Legal Framework		
09:30 – 09:45	Animal welfare during slaughter – ethical aspects and societal perception	<i>T. Mikuš</i>
09:45 – 10:15	Introduction (scope, hazards, animal-based measures, development and implementation of an operating plan)	<i>A. Velarde</i>
10:15 – 10:30	Coffee break	
10:30 – 11:15	Arrival and unloading, lairage and handling	<i>T. Mikuš</i>
11:15 – 12:00	Restrain stunning and bleeding	<i>A. Velarde</i>
12:00 – 12:10	Slaughter without stunning	<i>L. Iannetti</i>
12:10 – 12:30	Protection of animals at slaughter/killing - European Union perspective”	<i>E. Alaez Pons</i>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
Session 3: Understanding the countries’ situations and identifying key challenges		
13:30 – 15:45	Countries presentations (10'-15' per country) overview of state of play - legislation, priority topics, resources, main challenges	
15:45 - 16:00	Coffee break	
16:00 – 17:30	Working group exercise - identifying key challenges (level of competency and training) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation (10') - Group work (45' min) - Reporting (5' per group) Discussion (15')	
	Dinner	

DAY 2: 12 February 2025

Session 4: Training resources

09:00 - 09:20	WOAH Competency Framework and eLearning Platform	<i>H. Abdelsattar</i>
09:20 – 09:40	WOAH Training of Trainers approach	<i>T. Grudnik</i>
09:40 – 10:00	WOAH Member experience – Training programs	<i>V. Ilieski (North Macedonia)</i>
10:00 – 10:20	Knowledge and training resources (SLU, EFSA, EURCAW, BTSF, etc.)	<i>A. Velarde</i>
10:20 – 10:30	Coffee break	

Session 5: Developing training programmes

10:30 – 11:15	Principles of developing training programmes	<i>C. Albanello</i> <i>L. Iannetti</i>
11:15 – 12:30	Working group exercise – Developing a training programme (part 1) - Presentation (15') - Group work discussion	
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 14:15	Working group exercise – Developing a training programme (part 1) - Reporting (10' per group) - Discussion (15')	
14:15 – 14:30	WOAH Public-private Partnership Framework	<i>H. Abdelsattar</i>
14:30 - 14:45	The role of regional stakeholders	<i>A. Hammond Seaman/ T. Mikuš</i>
14:45 – 16:00	Working group exercise – Developing a training programme (part 2) - Presentation (15') - Group work (45' min)	
16:00 - 16:15	Coffee break	
16:15 – 17:00	- Working group exercise – Developing a training programme (part 2) - Reporting (10' per group) - Discussion	
17:00 – 17:15	Closing remarks	
19:30	Dinner	

WOAH workshop on developing national action plans for animal welfare

13 February 2025, Tirana, Albania

This workshop is funded by the European Union and is kindly hosted by Albania.



Funded by
the European Union



Provisional programme

DAY 1: 13 February 2025		
Session 1: Introduction		
09:00	Welcome, opening remarks and presentation of the objectives of the workshop	<i>E. Hamelin</i>
09:10	Building the Action Plan of the AW Platform	<i>T. Grudnik</i>
Session 2: Understanding the country's situation and identifying key challenges		
09:20 – 10:40	Countries presentations (10'-15' per country) overview of state of play - legislation, priority topics, resources, main challenges	
10:40 – 11:00	Coffee break	
11:00 – 11:40	Countries presentations (10'-15' per country) overview of state of play - legislation, priority topics, resources, main challenges	
11:40 – 12:00	WOAH Member experience – National Action Plan for animal welfare	<i>M. Correia</i>
12:00 – 12:20	Methodology to build an Action Plan	<i>A. Hammond Seaman/ T. Mikuš</i>
12:20 – 12:35	PVS Pathway – A way to progress	<i>H. Abdelsattar</i>
12:35 – 13:00	Discussion	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
Session 3: Working Group exercise		
14:00 – 14:10	Presentation of the objectives of the group exercise	<i>E. Hamelin</i>
14:10 – 14:30	1 st part: Identifying key topics (20 min session)	
14:30 – 15:30	2 nd part: Establishing an action plan for each key topic – over a 3-year period of time, describe the action taken and the mean needed (it needs to be adapted to the means available)	
15:30 – 16:20	3 rd part: Presentation (5 min per group) and discussion	
16:20 – 16:30	Closing remarks	
Departure		