

## **HIGH LEVEL MEETING AND DINNER**

### **The Animal Health Law's international dimension**

#### **Relations with OIE standards and the competitiveness of the European livestock sector**

**- 10 July 2014 -**

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European farmers and their professional organisations are strongly concerned about the increasing globalisation of health risks. The health crises in recent decades show that the threat is real and that it concerns both animal health and public health. This reality is becoming more and more obvious for the population worldwide, affecting farmers, public authorities and consumers. The challenges are considerable: protecting human and animal health and at the same time ensuring food security by developing the production capacity and worldwide trade. Because of their economic, political and historical importance, the European Union and its Member States have a duty to continue and to even strengthen their commitment in this area while respecting a balanced global partnership. The future European regulatory framework for animal health will make a particularly important contribution here.

Indeed, the international dimension of this project of regulation is exceptional. First of all, by consolidating the European health status, it will make an effective contribution towards improving the global health situation. Then, by clarifying the animal health principles in Europe and strengthening preventive policy within the Union, this text will be an essential reference for the setting of priorities and international standards. Finally, by safeguarding the production conditions in Europe, it will promote the sustainable development of European livestock farming and will thus guarantee an essential contribution to the world's food production.

The draft presented by the Commission responded broadly to all these concerns. However, it is important that the work now carried out within the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament takes into account this international dimension and is even more ambitious in this area. In addition, as the text must be backed up by delegated and implementing acts, it is necessary to ensure the precise definition of orientations to be followed when adopting these implementing measures. Finally, international concerns will have to be incorporated here, too.

For FESASS, it is therefore essential to recall the guidance developed by the CVO working group in the framework of the “Adelbrecht Process”<sup>1</sup>, and to focus for the current debate on the following three topics:

- Relations between the OIE international standards and the European regulations,
- The impact of EU legislation on animal health guarantees for imports,
- The link between the regulatory framework and the exporting capacity of European livestock.

Individual and collective activities of farmers will strongly depend on the responses in these areas. Of course, these topics go well beyond the activities on farms. For example, ensuring safe movements of animals must be a common concern in all these three areas.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that farmers have exceptional responsibilities as they work with live animals and their production feeds mankind. But, at the same time they have to manage commercial enterprises that are increasingly exposed to international competition. The future regulatory framework must not only respond to animal health security issues linked to international trade. It must also allow preserving the competitiveness of Europe’s livestock farms. Only on this condition the European farmers will be able to contribute sustainably to the worldwide food safety and security.

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<sup>1</sup> Council of the European Union: 9536/08 ADD 3, 22 May, 2008