



International

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EUWELNET

Summary of proposals for new network

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Objectives of EUWeINet project 2013

EUWeINet investigated the feasibility and usefulness of establishing a network of institutions having a recognised knowledge of animal welfare and **independent of private interests** to assist the competent authorities and the stakeholders in improving the implementation of EU legislation on animal welfare through targeted knowledge strategies.

The project had four main objectives:

To establish a consortium and coordinate the pilot study.

To identify bottlenecks/difficulties in implementing EU legislation on animal welfare.

To develop and test knowledge strategies.

To carry out an overarching analysis and formulate recommendations on the feasibility and the conditions for a European network

Organisation of official controls Commission proposal 2013

Commission adopted a proposal to revise Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 which establishes a legislative framework for the organisation of official controls.

In this proposal 'reference centres for animal welfare' are defined to support the activities of the Commission and of the Member States in relation to the application of the rules laying down welfare requirements for animals.

Organisation of official controls Commission proposal 2013

More specifically, the foreseen tasks of these reference centres for animal welfare are:

- providing **scientific and technical expertise**
- (e.g. related to specific legislation or the development and application of animal welfare indicators);
- developing methods for the **assessment** and improvement of the welfare of animals used for **commercial or scientific purposes**;
- conducting **training courses** for the benefit of national scientific support staff, of staff of the competent authorities and of experts from third countries;
- **disseminating research findings and technical innovations** and collaborating with European Union research bodies in the fields within the scope of their mission.

EUWELNET Outcome

EUWelNet clearly demonstrated that a coordinated network of knowledge providers can work successfully together and deliver extremely useful support for the implementation of European legislation on animal welfare.

It proved possible to effectively identify difficulties and bottlenecks and to create innovative knowledge strategies to overcome them.

In short, the results of this brief pilot project provided firm proof of principle for a functional Coordinated European Animal Welfare Network.

EUWELNET recommendations for future welfare welfare network

:To build structures and processes to **actively share knowledge and expertise** related to the implementation of EU legislation.

To facilitate the **consistent implementation** of EU legislation through the identification of difficulties and **bottlenecks** as well as related risks for animal welfare.

To develop **knowledge strategies** to overcome difficulties and bottlenecks and to assist Member States with implementation of legislation.

To increase **stakeholders' awareness**, engagement and collaboration in addressing animal welfare issues.

To **minimise duplication** of effort by Competent Authorities from Member States in developing tools to implement animal welfare legislation.

To provide **scientific and technical advice** to national support bodies on animal welfare risks and indicators as well as on best practices to alleviate or resolve welfare problems.

To conduct and/or coordinate **studies on the welfare status of animals**, on methods and **indicators** to assess welfare and on welfare improvement strategies.

To design and conduct **training** courses for staff of Competent Authorities and experts from third countries.

To **disseminate research** findings and technical innovations and to collaborate with European Union research bodies.

EUWELNET

proposed operational principles,

Stimulating an open and collaborative attitude towards realising common aims.
Using a communication/dissemination system that ensures the effective flow of information between the EC,
the Network and other stakeholders.

Taking an evidence-based approach and building on scientific and technical expertise on animal welfare,
while taking account of political, economic, social and cultural factors and the structure and
nature of the related industry and markets.

Undertaking activities in a timely fashion, e.g. during the preparation of new legislation the Network
provides information and strategies to facilitate its smooth implementation.

EUWELNET

proposed operational principles,

Following a bottom-up approach and facilitating the collection and dissemination of information from farmers on existing and proposed welfare legislation particular attention to reaching small scale producers who might otherwise find it difficult to access information and to communicate their input.

Encouraging public private collaboration as a major component of successful implementation.

Ensuring that mechanisms (moderation, audit and validation) are in place to assure the quality and credibility of outcomes.

Allocating available resources according to current and foreseen needs (i.e. targeted at the resolution of specific problems in implementation of legislation).

EUWELNET future structure

We foresee three sets of entities in the Network:

- 1.a Coordinating Body, in charge of identifying priorities and proposing work plans,
- 2.Reference Centres - (mentioned in the EU proposal to revise Regulation (EC) No 882/2004) - in charge of gathering and collating information and knowledge,
3. Working Groups that will ensure the dissemination and exchange of knowledge *and will be focused on specific tasks designed to overcome identified welfare problems.*

EUWELNET Regional structure

A regional structure of the Network (regional Reference Centres and associated partners) would reduce language barriers, and enable regional and cultural differences to be taken into account thereby supporting the development of trust among relevant actors and agencies in each region. Regional Reference Centres should cover all topics (species or issues) but may be specialised in a given topic due to regional circumstances.

7 Regional	From discussion with Advisory board	There are few regionally based reference centres (4-5 regional centres, e.g. 1 East, 1 North, 1 South, 1 West, 1 Central Europe). They work with regional partners. The coordinating body includes representatives of the Commission and each reference centre.	Priorities and strategies are decided within the coordinating body and thus shared between the Commission and the reference centres.
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