Veterinary medicines legislation: vote in European Parliament

Veterinarians play a crucial role in fighting antimicrobial resistance

14 March 2016. On 10 March 2016 the European Parliament voted in the plenary on the proposal to amend the EU law on veterinary medicines. The vote is an important step in the EU co-decision process.

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) welcomes the plenary vote and is happy to see that the European Parliament put much emphasis on fighting antimicrobial resistance in animals and people. The Parliament clearly recognized that “prevention is better than cure” and the important role of veterinarians in keeping animals healthy. It also recognized that when animals become sick and treatment is needed, the veterinarian plays a crucial role in the examination of the animals, making the diagnosis and in the prescribing of medicines. FVE appreciates that there is need for rapid, reliable and effective veterinary diagnostics both to identify the cause of the disease as well as to perform antibiotic sensitivity testing.

According to the votes, preventative use of antimicrobials will only be permitted in individual animals with exceptional indications and when fully justified by a veterinarian. Group treatment of animals would only be allowed in animals that are clinically ill and to those individual animals that are identified as being at high risk of contamination. FVE agrees to keep decisions about the way veterinary medicines are distributed at the National level.

FVE welcomes the internet trade ban for antimicrobials, psychotropic, biological or immunological medicines and that Member States can prohibit the internet trade of all veterinary medicinal products for food-producing animals on their territory.

FVE remains concerned about the idea to ban certain antimicrobials for use in animals. FVE fears that a complete ban will lead to serious animal health and welfare issues. The Federation also warns that further measures should always be based on scientific evidence, be proportionate, and aligned with complementary measures in the human use of the product. Any action to be taken should follow a risk assessment based upon a world-wide ‘One Health’ approach. FVE is happy to see that MEPs confirmed their preparedness to go in that direction.

FVE’s concerns regarding the limited availability of veterinary medicines remains. Since the proposal will not lead to a single EU market for veterinary medicines, FVE is worried that the availability problems will not be solved.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of 44 veterinary organisations from 38 European countries, representing a total of around 240,000 veterinarians.
- The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) strives to promote animal health, animal welfare and public health across Europe.

For further information, consult the FVE website www.fve.org or contact the FVE Secretariat on Tel +32 2 533 70 20 or by e-mail to info@fve.org.