



Report of the Chairman of the Advisory Board for Animal Health and Welfare 2022

Dear Chairman, dear colleagues on the Board of Directors, dear fellow breeders,
I

was recently appointed Chair of the Advisory Board for Animal Health and Welfare at the Congress in Denmark. I am therefore here to give you my first report as a General Assembly.

You have already heard at the various division meetings what changes have occurred in our committee and what we are working on. The advisory board has a new composition according to Prof. Dr. Joachim Schille and Dr. Joseph Rey Bellet retired in September after many years of service on the Advisory Board. They were rightly thanked extensively in Denmark for this and I would like to thank them once again for their commitment to EE.

The new committee consists of 7 members who were approached in consultation with the executive committee and the chairmen of the divisions. They were selected because they can provide a wealth of knowledge and experience to the committee. They decided on a digital meeting, which makes the work much more effective and has the second advantage that the entire committee no longer has to be present. The committee now consists of Eduard Gendrin (France), Gunther Anthonissen (Belgium), Wim Halsema (Netherlands), Peter Supuka (Slovakia), Hristo Lukanov (Bulgaria), Andy Verhelst (Belgium) and myself, Erik Apperlo from the Netherlands. The last 3 people are here at the conference.

As you may have already heard at the department meeting, our advisory board is dealing with the topics of overtyping, housing requirements and vaccinations. The most important issue we discussed is European legislation. This has led to great uncertainty regarding cross-border animal transport and was one of the main reasons why the European Show in Kielce, Poland, will not take place this autumn. It has been shown that the above-mentioned topics endanger the practice of our hobby.

I therefore feel compelled to repeat the message of my predecessor, Prof. Dr. Schille and our President Dr. Great to repeat. We live in a time in which our hobby is no longer a given. Where once animal welfare was determined by the presence of food and drink and the absence of pain and discomfort, it has evolved into a concept in which the intrinsic value of the animal and the type of specific behavior play the main role. Society across the European Union demands this and will increasingly demand it. Since this is a widespread experience across Europe, it is pointless to resist it. We are by far in the minority and experience our hobby, even in the administrative area, as a hobby. We have failed to make our interests known in Brussels and we lack strength vis-à-vis political parties, commercial parties and professional animal welfare organizations. All we can do is try to adjust the direction with the current in our favor.



Everyone within EE must accept their responsibility and be able to explain why we keep the animals the way we do. Hobby breeding of our species is undeniably crucial to the preservation of hundreds of native breeds and wide genetic variation. The hobby ensures that people from the very young to the very old come into contact with animals and the responsibility that comes with it and that our hobby and its activities are part of society's cultural heritage and thus bring people together.

Not just the EE Congress or the board of a national association, but every breeder of every animal species in every corner of Europe must be able to explain to their neighbors that the keeping of animals will always restrict this animal, but that we want these Restrictions should be minimal and that we strive for maximum animal welfare within these restrictions. We love animals too, but we have to show it better. And when things come up that you can't explain, you have to improve them, otherwise you have no right to exist. This promotes social acceptance at the local level.

The challenge for the boards of national associations is to continue the dialogue with national politicians, their executive bodies and European representatives. Make it clear here that we ultimately strive for the same thing, namely the best animal welfare for our animals. A solution can only be found through discussion. The EE and we as an advisory board will try to collect as much information and arguments as possible at the European level, share it with the countries and contribute to the European Commission. Recently it has become clear that there is significant potential for improvement here.

Through connections within the Advisory Board and the Executive Board, we know that in some countries there is a strong lobby with good connections to the European Commission. For too many countries within the EE, we do not know whether these connections exist and what happens to them. I ask you: send us this information! Our lobby will be much more powerful if we can show that the entire hobby breeder in Europe has the same concerns. It has taken a lot of energy recently, especially Andy Verhelst, to mobilize the EE to object to the 429 regulation, which requires registration of all poultry and pigeon breeders. For a European association that brings together 2.5 million breeders, it follows that almost 2,000 responses were sent, of which it must also be noted that most of them came from a few countries. This should be handled better by the states in the future. Our shared interest is to protect the hobby as a whole. Maybe our chances aren't great, but if we don't try, we'll lose the hobby sooner than we'd like.

Thanks for your attention.