



**WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH**

*Protecting animals, preserving our future*

**Speech by Dr Bernard Vallat**

Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)

**Photo Exhibition Preview at the European Parliament (Brussels) - 25 November 2013**

**“PROTECTING HUMAN HEALTH THROUGH BETTER ANIMAL HEALTH”**

Dear Members of the European Parliament, Dear Guests  
Good evening,

I am very pleased to welcome you all to the preview of this exhibition, and I warmly thank the European Parliament and especially our contact point Jan Mulder, for inviting the OIE and hosting this event. I am delighted to introduce you these photographs, which highlight some beautiful facets of the work and involvement of veterinarians and animal owners all over the world. They have been selected in order to feature the constant link which exists at the human-animal interface over the five continents.

We intend to raise your awareness on the fact that better health of people also depends on better health of animals.

The photos presented are derived in part from a Middle East Member Countries and in part from a photographic competition organised in collaboration with the European Commission during the World Veterinary Year, in 2011.

The World Organisation for Animal Health is the intergovernmental organization currently composed of 178 Member Countries in charge of improving animal health and welfare worldwide, regardless of the cultural practices or the economic situations in Member Countries. It was created in 1924, more than twenty years before the United Nations, and has kept its historical acronym “OIE”. I am the elected Director General of the OIE within a five year mandate.

Through its mandate, the OIE develops intergovernmental health standards for animal disease prevention and control and ensuring safety of international trade in animals and animal products as well as developing intergovernmental standards on animal welfare and food safety at farm level.

Besides these activities, the OIE is deeply involved in the supporting the efficiency of Veterinary Services as a global public good, whose benefits extend to all countries, people and generations.

Consequently, the OIE has set up support programmes for countries seeking to improve the capacities of their Veterinary Services. Indeed, their sentinel role for early detection and warning of natural, accidental or intentional potential biological disasters is essential to secure animal health, prevent the development of animal diseases and in so doing helping to protect human health and biodiversity.

The OIE seeks to strengthen activities aimed at consolidating the “One health” concept: it works in partnership with other world organisations to prevent, control and eradicate diseases existing at the interface between animals, humans and environment.



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There have already been numerous success stories, such as the global eradication of Rinderpest: long term vision, commitment of governments, support of the international community and regional organisations, efficient vaccines, have enabled the control and the eradication of this disease in the whole world in 2011. The financial and political support of the European Union has been key in this achievement.

Further challenges still remain to be taken up in various areas:

- to ensure safe trade of animal and animal products in the context of an exponential global demand,
- to be prepared to ever-growing threats in a context of globalization, because unprecedented movements of commodities and people are used by pathogens to colonize the whole planet, and because 60% of the pathogens that cause human diseases are transmitted by domestic or wild animals,
- to prevent the rise of antimicrobial resistance,
- to early detect and rapidly respond to potential biological disasters,

We need to be prepared,

- because we know that preventing diseases is always more beneficial than curing,
- because we know that the costs involved in crisis are by far higher than those involved in prevention.

To succeed in these new challenges, we need rely on national Veterinary Services that are able to early detect, notify and respond rapidly to animal disease emergencies that could potentially pose a risk to human health. Bringing Veterinary Services into line with international standards of quality should be seen as a public investment priority.

The OIE recently evaluated the capacities of more 120 Member Countries and one of the conclusions is that solidarity from developed countries towards all these countries is key for rural development and global biosecurity. This is a win-win process which helps poor countries and protects countries free of diseases from re-introductions.

Thank you very much for your attention, I am convinced you will spend a pleasant time watching these pictures. The entire team of the OIE and I are here to further discuss and answer your questions.

**Dr Bernard Vallat**