

Inaugural speech of OIE President-elect Dr Karin Schwabenbauer

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Dear colleagues and friends,

Thank you for your confidence in me: I am extremely moved and honoured!

I should especially like to thank our outgoing President, Carlos Messuti, who has guided our Organisation these past three years. I should just like to mention two major events for our Organisation that took place under his presidency:

- the declaration of the global eradication of rinderpest, and
- the celebrations to mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of the first Veterinary School, both in 2011.

These two events are related, in that rinderpest was instrumental both in the founding of veterinary schools in Europe and in the creation of the World Organisation for Animal Health in 1924.

Carlos has also worked for the benefit of you, the Members of the OIE, for instance by participating in the Regional Conferences to gain a better understanding of the different OIE regions.

He has also taken into account the needs of staff both at Headquarters and in the Regional Representations. A particular concern has been to ensure that working conditions are comparable with those in other International Organisations.

I am grateful to him for having welcomed me so warmly to the Council and it is reassuring that his continued presence on the Council as Immediate Past President will ensure a smooth transition.

However, if there is an outgoing President, there must also be an 'incoming' President. I am fully aware of the responsibility I am taking on following my election to the head of this prestigious veterinary institution. And I count on the support of you, the Delegates: together we can support and develop our world organisation!

For the years ahead, I have set myself a number of objectives:

- to support the **modernisation of the OIE administration** and, if necessary, help to boost the process. I am referring in particular to the modernisation of the accounting system. I don't know if it is purely by chance but, as far as I can remember, this is the first time the proposed budget has been adopted unanimously!

- to ensure the **transparency** of procedures, information and their dissemination. The new web page and WAHIS 2 are important avenues to follow in this respect.
- to promote **solidarity** between OIE regions. Although I come from a wealthy country, I undertake not to forget that OIE standards and guidelines must ensure the participation of all Members of the Organisation. I think it is also important to develop a policy that will allow a more equitable sharing of the resources made available at the regional level.
- And a point that is particularly close to my heart – and one that I am sure will come as no surprise – is to ensure **a fair share for women**. Ensuring greater participation of women in the work of the OIE is to my mind crucial for the future. To this end we must encourage women to become involved in the Organisation by creating a working environment conducive to their involvement.

In short, the key words of my programme are: modernisation, transparency, solidarity and participation of women.

I trust that this programme will receive the support of you all – Delegates, re-elected and newly elected members of the Council and the Director General and his team.

I look forward to working closely with you all for the benefit of the World Organisation for Animal Health!

