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Position paper

Written declaration on the significance of the liberal professions for Europe

The Union of European Veterinary practitioners (UEVP) strongly supports the initiative of Angelika Niebler, Stefano Zappala, Patrizia Toia, Françoise Grossetête and Christina Gutierrez-Cortines, for the recognition of the significance of the liberal professions for Europe. The UEVP is indeed highly concerned about the different infringement procedures launched by the European Commission against the regulations regarding some liberal professions in different Member States (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Austria and Portugal). The UEVP would like to recall that these regulations, especially in the health sector professions, are justified on grounds of public health and safety.

These regulations indeed guarantee professionals' independence towards external financial interests, and therefore the quality of care or service provision. Moreover, they enable a harmonious geographic repartition of professionals, which is especially true for veterinarians who are currently fighting to maintain a veterinary web throughout the EU territory. Finally these regulations ensure that the liberal professionals have a high level of education and training.

In addition, liberal professionals are all committed to these shared values:

- confidentiality as cornerstone of the relationship between the professional and the patient / client
- ethical relationship with the client / patient, based on honesty and integrity
- strict compliance with legislation and codes of conduct set up at national and European level
- subscription to professional liability insurance, in order to cover potential adverse effects resulting from an error or an omission made in the provision of service
- commitment to lifelong learning in order to keep meeting educational requirements

The UEVP therefore very much agrees with the necessity to recognise the specificity of the liberal professions, and their added-value for the EU society. In this perspective, the UEVP would like to insist on the fact that a sole market-based approach would not be appropriate, given the general interest role played by the liberal profession in general, and the veterinary profession in particular.

In any case, the UEVP calls on the European institutions to organise a comprehensive consultation with the various stakeholders on this dossier, prior considering any further initiatives.

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