The future of the European Veterinary Libraries Group (EVLG)

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The future of the cooperation between veterinary medical libraries and information services in Europe was discussed at the General Assembly of the EVLG (European Veterinary Libraries Group) at the EAHIL (European Association for Health Information and Libraries) conference in Cologne 2002. As a result the president of EVLG, Tom Roper, opened a discussion for the members on the EVLG-list. He looked at ways in the future, including turning EVLG into a virtual organisation alongside further developments of EAHIL in a similar direction.

After his resignation as president because of change of employment, there was a need and an opportunity to revive the discussion at the 4th ICAHIS conference with the aim to reach some solutions. A poster had been prepared by Teodora Oker-Blom and her colleagues Raisa livonen and Sinikka Suckcharoen as a basis for the discussion and with the purpose to inspire the 4th ICAHIS delegates to express their views on how to activate EVLG and themselves. How could increased publicity and awareness of the existence of the European and worldwide cooperation be achieved and how could the dissemination of information and sharing of concrete and useful achievements be improved? The following decisions were made at the meeting chaired by Teodora Oker-Blom:

*Develop EVLG into a networked association alongside EAHIL.*

The delegates from Europe at the 4th ICAHIS meeting agreed on continuing to develop EVLG as a subgroup under the EAHIL umbrella in the same virtual direction as EAHIL. The goals of EVLG will in principle be the same as before. Its organization and membership fees will be reviewed when the future of EAHIL has been approved of. The suggestion to develop EAHIL into a virtual organisation is described by Tony McSeán in the EAHIL newsletter no 64 of August 2003 pp 6-7. Decisions will probably be taken by the EAHIL General Assembly at the conference in Santander 21-26.9.2004. The next possibility to concretize the organisation of EVLG will also be in Santander. Till then a team of voluntary EVLG members with assigned tasks will develop EVLG in a virtual direction.

*Develop the EVLG web site, activate the EVLG-L list, turning the EVLG newsletter into electronic brief communications*

The first step towards a virtual EVLG is an informative and regularly updated web site. Holger Kulemeyer at the Veterinary Medical Library of the Free University, Berlin designed the original web site and has been responsible for it since the EVLG was founded in 1994. The meeting decided to forward its gratitude to him via the chairman of this meeting. The responsibility of acting as a host for the web site will next rotate to Friedhelm Rump and Alexandre Kossovoi at the Library of the School of Veterinary Medicine, Hannover, Germany.

The content of the web page, like goal, history of founding and information and photographs of earlier conferences will naturally be preserved. New subject contents will be chosen with care and with an aim to keep them accurate and updated. A gradual development according to common needs will take place. Sandra Tatum volunteered to create a national template for the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland containing
basic veterinary related information about professional bodies, government institutions, research institutes, veterinary schools and other useful organisations and some selected statistics. Step by step each European country will produce a page with the same structure as the template. The responsibility for preparing the national page equivalent to the template and for keeping it updated till the Santander conference was assumed by Sandrine Vandenput for Belgium, by Irena Sekaninová for the Check Republic, by Raisa Livonen for Finland, by Marie Teissier for France, by Alexandre Kossovoi for Germany, by Eva Orbán for Hungary, by Anne Cathrine Munthe for Norway, Denmark and Iceland, by Michael Eklund for Sweden and by Sandra Tatum for United Kingdom and Ireland. Countries will be added when volunteers are found to produce their page for the web site. Robert Taylor, CABI will prepare a list of addresses to veterinary medicine libraries and information services in Europe. This will facilitate future communication.

The EVLG-L will continue and the newsletter will be discussed at the General Assembly in Santander.

* Own session and general assembly at the EAHIL conferences every 2nd year.

It was agreed to continue having a session on veterinary medicine as part of the EAHIL conference every second year followed by a general assembly. Teodora Oker-Blom will distribute the announcement on EAHIL conference topics and call for papers for Santander, Spain 21-26.9.2004 to EVLG members and will coordinate the session in cooperation with the EAHIL conference organising committees (http://ibio.humv.es/biblioteca/eahil). The deadline is the 31st of October 2003. EVLG’s 10th Anniversary will be celebrated at this conference. The 4th ICAHIS delegates are urged to spread this information and to submit papers.

*Take part in the arrangements of ICAHIS in connection with the ICML conferences every 5th year

It was not considered necessary to arrange the ICAHIS conferences in connection with ICML.
The African delegates invited the 5th ICAHIS conference to be held in Pretoria, South Africa in 2005.

IN COOPERATION WITH VMLS/MLA

Trenton Boyd will continue as the VMLS’ liaison to EVLG. Many other conference delegates from USA expressed their interest to take part in the cooperation between the two organisations.

*Encourage publishers to make accessible more veterinary journals online.

It was agreed that all efforts are of value in this issue, which is part of VMLS’ action plan. More attention should be paid to open access, addressed at this conference.

*Build a network of partners (list of all veterinary medical libraries).

The plans above to create a web page for each European country with important addresses of institutions and organisations in veterinary medicine is an effort to gradually fulfil this aim.
*Cooperation between Vetlib-L and EVLG-L

This already happens to a certain extent but can be further developed.