



FEDERATION OF VETERINARIANS OF EUROPE

Subject: The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe opposes re-classification of Ketamine

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Brussels, 30 October 2015
FVE/15/Corr/36

Dear members of the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence,

On behalf of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), representing over 230 000 European veterinarians, and with reference to the upcoming meeting of your committee on 16 – 20 November in Geneva, we would like to underline our support to your Committee's Critical Review Reports and Expert Peer Reviews, which state that there is no justifiable evidence for the international control of Ketamine.

We also wish to underline that Ketamine is very widely used for anesthesia and analgesia by the veterinary profession in Europe. It is the only injectable anesthetic that is safe and well tested in the full range of species under a veterinarian's care. It is used for general anesthesia as primary anesthetic and for the introduction to inhalant anesthesia. Ketamine is an essential anesthetic for large and small domestic animals, common and exotic pets, horses, laboratory animals including primates, wildlife and zoo animals.

FVE supports the evaluations of Ketamine made by your Committee in 2006, 2012 and 2014, and which lead to the conclusion to keep Ketamine on Schedule 2. In most European countries, the license of veterinary practices ensures the control by special record-keeping of those drugs and the obligation to be stored in a locked cabinet.

FVE does agree with the need for narcotic and psychotropic drugs to be controlled, regulated and abuse to be prevented. However, these measures must be science based and proportional and should not unnecessarily hamper their use by veterinary surgeons neither put at risk the health and welfare of the animals under their care. It could be detrimental to good veterinary practice if ketamine was put under the more stringent restrictions.

President

Rafael Laguens

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FVE therefore strongly opposes to restrict the availability of Ketamine by placing it in Schedule I of the 1971 UN Convention on psychotropic substances. Such re-classification of ketamine, may lead to ketamine shortage in veterinary practices which will put at risk the health and welfare of animals.

I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration and remain at your disposal for any additional information you may require regarding the use of Ketamine in veterinary medicine.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Rafael Laguens, FVE President