
Dear Madam/Sir,

As EAEVE, we strive to promote excellence in veterinary education. In this pursuit, we closely monitor all developments that could have an adverse effect on our members' ability to keep adhering to the criteria outlined in the Standard Operating Procedure. We have noticed, with great concern, the adoption of amendments to the *Regulation on Norms and Standards of Working Conditions of Universities and Faculties for Activities Financed from the Budget* on 24.03.2025 by the Serbian government. The implementation of this policy change will effectively reduce the weekly hours assigned to scientific research by academic staff from 20 hours to 5 hours.

Scientific research is one of the cornerstones of research-based education and an indispensable aspect of our Day One Competences. The sharp decrease in time designated to conduct scientific research will greatly affect the student's ability to lifelong learning, critical thinking, and being able to contextualize new developments. These skills are in part or wholly fostered through a deep understanding of scientific research. Further, the competitiveness of established institutions such as the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine will be hampered if students fail to adequately obtain new scientific insight. Lastly, the new reduction in time devoted to conducting research will likely result in the university being unable to comply to our quality standards.

The consequences of losing the accredited status could be profound. Presently, the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is part of a European network that promotes information exchange, staff exchange, and student exchange between members. Moreover, the EAEVE accreditation ensures that the teaching standards are on par with all other European universities that are a member of EAEVE. Losing this status will mean that students and researchers will opt for other universities outside Serbia that are part of this European network. Additionally, the university risks losing its international research network, together with the grants and research exchanges that are dependent on these connections, creating a brain drain in the field of veterinary medicine. This effect might be further aggravated by the loss of accredited status by the national accreditation service NEAQA that, just as EAEVE, is an ENQA affiliate and adheres to the European Higher Education Area (ESG) quality standards.

For these reasons, EAEVE would like to urge caution with changing policies that may have an adverse effect on the university's performance overall and on its ability to conduct scientific research specifically. The University of Belgrade, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is a valuable member of our organization and on its way to complete a challenging trajectory to adhere to the standards outlined in our Standard Operating Procedure. We would like to reiterate the importance of scientific research in completing this course and in keeping on delivering the best possible education for a new generation of veterinarians.

Sincerely,



Prof. Petra Winter
President of EAEVE



Prof. Pierre Lekeux
Director of ESEVT