

Begrüßung der Teilnehmer des Workshops "Stray animals - our sentient fellow creatures" am 10. April 2014 in Brüssel

Ladies and Gentlemen,

good Morning!

On behalf of Dr. Jäger, I also welcome you to this international workshop on stray animals.

It's a great pleasure to have this meeting today here in the permanent representation of Baden-Württemberg in Brussels.

Right at the beginning I want to thank sincerely to the always very helpful team in this representation - first of all Dr. Alexandra Kostorz and Dr. Karin Hipper - for their essential support organizing this workshop. I also want to say "Thank you very much indeed" to Dr. Marlene Wartenberg, from "Vier Pfoten". She has given most important stimuli and much impetus for this meeting and we are very happy about this intensive and hopefully successful cooperation.

I am convinced, that we all will learn a lot about these complex questions in the context of stray animal populations, endangering our most favorite companion animals.

You may probably ask, why the animal welfare commissioner of a federal state like Baden-Württemberg initiated this workshop. There are at least three major reasons for this initiative:

First of all, we are convinced, that responsibility for animal welfare can not be divided on the basis of species or geographic borders. By analogy with the worldwide "one-health"- initiative, there should be a "one-animal-welfare" - ideal in accordance to the basic understanding in Europe: animals are sentient beings and have to be considered respectfully by legislation, enforcement and any kind of social or political activity.

In addition, there have been many impressive efforts by animal welfare organizations to handle the problem of stray animals. The main purposes of this workshop are to exchange experiences derived from successful projects handling stray animals and to describe sustainable solutions for affected countries.

Last but not least this workshop may help to decrease animal health risks all over Europe linked with uncontrolled trade of stray animals or puppies - for example rabies, babesiosis or leishmaniasis.

In the end we hopefully will be able to make proposal to the EU, member states, the OIE and animal welfare organizations, how to further develop their strategies for humane solutions in handling stray animals.

Since we have got a tight time schedule, we will start immediately with this workshop and I wish us a very successful day together here in Brussels.