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Swiss Animal Facilities Network (SAFN) – Mandate Board of HAFs (Head of Animal Facilities)

At its meeting on 16 and 17 January 2014, the CRUS Plenary Assembly approved the establishment of the "Swiss Animal Facilities Network (SAFN)". With the entry into force of the HEdA on 1.1.2015, swissuniversities took over the tasks of SAFN. On 30.06.2023, the Chamber of universities of swissuniversities approved a new mandate for the SAFN as a Commission of the Chamber of universities (entering into force on 1 January 2024) and entrusted it with the following mission:

1. Tasks

The SAFN works under the supervision of the swissuniversities delegate for animal experimentation. It:

- Coordinates the activities of the animal facilities of the universities that are members of the Commission, with the aim of facilitating the exchange of good practice;
- Coordinates the exchange of information on all topics related to animal facilities management and daily operations;
- Implements ad-hoc infrastructure-sharing initiatives (e.g., platforms) to make these services accessible to the entire Swiss university research community;
- Supports the drafting of position statements on animal experimentation (e.g., consultation on new laws or ordinances);
- Supports the communication of swissuniversities, particularly in the case of media requests;
- Works closely with the swissuniversities delegate for animal experimentation and reports to him/her (especially regarding its activities and finances);
- Maintains relations with the federal and cantonal authorities responsible for animal experimentation within its area of competence (e.g., the FSVO) as well as with partners whose activities are linked to animal experimentation (e.g., STAAR, the AWO network, the 3R Competence Centre, the Advisory Board Animal Experimentation, etc.);
- Collects and analyses data relating to animal experimentation at universities in order to have a constant overview of this activity.

2. Composition

- The organ is composed of the heads of the animal facilities (HAFs) from the member universities. They are nominated by their institution and appointed for an unlimited term.

The institution may decide to replace its representative at any time. In the following, this organ is called 'Board of HAFs'. In addition, representatives of the Animal Welfare Officer Network (AWO-N), the *Réseau des Animaleries Lémaniques* (ResAL) and the Institute of Laboratory Animal Science (*Institut für Labortierkunde – LTK*) take part to the meetings of the Board of HAFs as observers without voting right.

- The Board of HAFs is chaired by a President and a Vice-President. The board of HAFs appoints its president and Vice-President by itself.
- In the event of absence, the representatives may appoint a deputy who shall automatically be entitled to vote.
- Each member university is entitled to a maximum of two representatives and to a single vote.
- If necessary, the Board of HAFs may invite guests to its meetings.
- A coordinator, employed at 50%, is responsible for setting up and managing the activities of the Board of HAFs.

In addition to the Board of HAFs of SAFN, there is also a project group 'SAFN Communication', which regularly exchanges information on communicating about animal experimentation and provides additional support to SAFN and swissuniversities where necessary (e.g., parliamentary motions or popular initiatives).

3. Communication

The SAFN is a commission of the Chamber of universities and is therefore an integral part of the swissuniversities organisation. The following rules therefore apply to the SAFN:

- External communication concerning the field of animals in research is coordinated by the Communication Department in accordance with the swissuniversities communication concept.
- Excluded from the above rule are publications or presentations of a purely informative nature (e.g., fact sheets on the current statistics of research animal facilities or presentations aimed at raising awareness of the SAFN and its operation, etc.) which do not constitute a position statement.
- Non-public correspondence addressed to partner institutions is also excluded from the above rule.

4. Management

The administrative management of the SAFN is carried out by the Division Research and Development of the swissuniversities General Secretariat. The coordinator is employed by swissuniversities and works within the General Secretariat; his/her tasks are defined by the Board of HAFs.

5. Budget

The SAFN's activities and the salary of its coordinator are covered by the SAFN's member universities. The Chamber of universities decides on a proposal of the delegate for animal experimentation the amount of the contribution from member universities for a period of 3 years. The budget is managed by swissuniversities.