



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Directorate F – Health and food audits and analysis

Director

Grange,
SANTE F2/PC/pp

Dear petitioner,

Subject: Your e-mail to President Juncker calling to stop the export of live animals

President Juncker asked me to thank you for your e-mail calling to stop the export of live animals and to respond on his behalf. In your call you express your concerns in relation to the welfare of these animals both during the journey and at the time of slaughter in the non-EU country.

First of all, allow me to stress that the Commission strongly promotes EU values such as animal welfare and makes continued efforts internationally to ensure compliance with, and improve, animal welfare standards including those related to the long distance transport and slaughter of animals.

Concerning transport, the Commission is aware that some unfortunate events occur during these journeys, particularly after the animals leave the EU. The transport of live animals is in fact a Commission priority in the animal welfare area; however Member States are responsible for the implementation of the relevant EU legislation. The Commission is constantly working with Member States to improve the implementation of EU legislation on the protection of animals during transport¹.

Animal welfare during transport is a complex issue which cannot be solved by simply imposing a limit on transport time or imposing a total ban. As already indicated in the

¹ Mainly, Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 (OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p.1)

relevant Commission report of 2011², the main problem in this field is the enforcement of the existing legislation. The Commission is investing substantial efforts to assist Member States in the process of enforcement of the EU legislation through various actions.

Additionally to previous work with the Member States, the Commission services are running a two-year project (2017-2018) exclusively on the welfare of live animals exported to non-EU countries³. This project includes animal welfare aspects during both road and sea transport. This project also includes audits to exporting Member States and fact-finding missions to both sides of one of the main land borders to get first-hand information on the problems that occur during transport by road and their causes. In light of the findings collected from these missions, the Commission will consider appropriate follow-up actions to ensure a satisfactory level of protection for the animals exported.

Furthermore, a three-year Project on Animal Transport Guides⁴ funded by the Commission, has reached its final stage. This project aims to improve animal welfare during transport, by developing and disseminating Guides to Good and Best Practice for the transport of the main livestock species.

The Commission is not only working with Member States but also with animal welfare NGOs. The Commission values the work of these actors, several of whom are represented in the EU Animal Welfare Platform⁵. This Platform brings together stakeholders from different backgrounds to enhance dialogue on animal welfare issues such as this. During the Platform's meeting of 10 November, the Commission has announced its intention to establish a sub-group on animal welfare during transport. The scope of the sub-group shall be to promote the exchange of information, experience and good practices and to facilitate cooperation in the area of animal transport, with the purpose of supporting the Platform's work and contributing to the achievement of its objectives.

² https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/aw_practice_trans_study_report_en.pdf

³ More detail about this project can be found in the 2017 work programme of DG SANTE's Health and Food Audits and Analysis Directorate published at:
https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits_analysis/audit_programmes_en

⁴ <http://animaltransportguides.eu/>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare_en

The Commission has also been active in promoting animal welfare internationally and has conducted initiatives to increase awareness among non-EU countries, including those concerned by the export and slaughter of live animals. Moreover, the Commission continuously supports the work of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to develop and implement international standards, in particular in the field of animal welfare.

Furthermore, the Commission is supporting the implementation of the OIE Animal Welfare Action Plan for the Middle East countries for 2016-2019 to improve the implementation of OIE standards and to address challenges related to the welfare of animals exported from EU to this region, with particular focus on transport and slaughter of animals.

To conclude, please rest assured that the Commission is continuously working to ensure acceptable animal welfare standards for animals exported to non-EU countries

Yours sincerely,



Paola Colombo

Director