



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Crisis preparedness in food, animals and plants
The Director

Brussels
SANTE/G5/RH/nc(2021) 7850273

Subject: Request to ban exports of live animals

Dear Petitioner,

President von der Leyen asked me to thank you for your letter of 26 August 2021 and to reply on her behalf.

In your letter you express your disagreement that live animals are transported to third countries by sea and slaughtered without stunning. You state that international animal welfare organisations have been on a regular basis reporting to the Commission these cruel operations. Finally you ask the Commission to ban live animal transports, to ensure the enforcement of the Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport¹ and to penalise the Member States that violate EU law.

Animal welfare during transport is a priority for the Commission. The Commission is, however, aware that improvements on animal welfare during transport are necessary.

For this reason, the Commission works continuously on improving the welfare conditions of animals during transport, especially over long journeys. In this context, the Commission services conducted a series of audits focusing on the welfare of animals transported by road² and by sea³ leading to the publication of two overview reports. These two reports indicate that improvements are still necessary.

In addition, the Commission closely cooperates with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to strengthen the implementation of its international animal welfare standards and in particular on the protection of animals during transport and at slaughter.

As announced in the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission will revise the animal welfare legislation including on animal transport, to align it with the latest scientific evidence, broaden its scope, make it easier to enforce and ultimately ensure a higher level of animal welfare.

Against this background, in 2020 the Commission requested the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to prepare a scientific opinion on animal transport. The request on

¹ 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).

² <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0e74506d-5846-11ea-8b81-01aa75ed71a1>

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fc8d71e4-93f5-11ea-aac4-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-130896440>.

animal transport specifically mentions the export of animals by road and the export of animals by sea.

To address the challenges in the implementation of the EU legislation for transport operations at sea, the Commission has decided to prepare tertiary legislative acts to strengthen official controls on livestock vessels. In addition, the Commission has planned to perform more audits on animal transport by sea in 2022.

The Commission continues to work both on short and long-term actions to improve the welfare of animals during transport. It considers that the revision of the legislation will offer the opportunity to make substantial progress in this area. In the meantime, the Commission is working together with the competent authorities of the Member States to ensure compliance with the EU legislation on animal welfare during transport and address any problematic areas.

I invite you to participate in the ongoing public consultation on the revision of the EU animal welfare legislation:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Revision-of-the-EU-legislation-on-animal-welfare-/public-consultation_de.

I would like to thank you for your commitment in protecting animals.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]
Bernard Van Goethem