

Animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movements of pet animals: extension of the transitional period

2007/0202(COD) - 08/10/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to extend the transitional period for derogations in Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 until 31 August 2009.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 harmonises the rules for the non commercial movement of pet animals between Member States or after entry or re-entry into the Community from third countries. It entered into force on 3 July 2003 and applies to pet animals when travelling with their owners.

The Regulation introduced, inter alia, the pet passport for cats, dogs and ferrets when being moved from one Member State to another, which provides proof that the animal has been vaccinated against rabies. This is the sole requirement for pets to travel to all Member States.

However, the Regulation provides for specific derogative conditions for the movement of pet animals to certain Member States for a transitional period of **five years** starting from the date of entry into force, i.e. until 3 July 2008. Accordingly, the entry of pet dogs and cats into the territory of Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom is subject to special requirements, taking into account the particular situation in those Member States with regard to rabies. In addition, certain Member States have a derogation for the control of echinococcosis and ticks. Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom apply their specific entry rules relating to echinococcosis; Malta, Ireland and the United Kingdom require pet dogs and cats to undergo an additional treatment against ticks that must also be certified in the animal's passport.

These derogations should be reviewed by 3 July 2008, in the light of the experience gained by Member States and of a scientific opinion from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

To this end, the Commission was required to submit to the European Parliament and to the Council, before 1 February 2007, a report on the need to maintain the serological test, together with appropriate proposals for determining the regime to be applied after the transitional period. Because the scientific assessment has taken longer than envisaged, the Commission report has been delayed. In order to be able to take the conclusions of the report sufficiently into consideration, it is proposed to extend the above transitional period.