

Transmissible animal diseases

2013/0136(COD) - 15/04/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 570 votes to 63 with 19 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Animal Health.

Parliament's position in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Emphasis on prevention: Parliament was of the opinion that the regulation should establish: (a) rules for the prevention and control of animal diseases, which are transmissible to animals or to humans; (b) instruments and mechanisms to facilitate progress towards the declaration of disease-free zones and territories; (c) priority actions; and (d) the division of responsibilities in the area of animal health.

Measures taken should aim for (i) the effective functioning of the internal market, and food and feed safety; (ii) a reduction in the adverse effects on animal health, public health and the environment; (iii) reduction in certain diseases and risk factors leading up to diseases.

Biodiversity and the need to protect and conserve rare animal breeds, and to preserve genetic diversity should be taken into account.

Antibiotic resistance: Members also proposed that Member States should pay particular attention to antimicrobial resistance and ensure better access to professional training in this area when designing their national plans for the prevention and control of infectious animal diseases.

Member States should take certain criteria into consideration, particularly the use of **veterinary medicine on human health**, such as the detrimental effects of antimicrobial resistance, when determining whether or not to use veterinary medicinal products as disease prevention and control measures for a specific disease.

Listed diseases: Parliament introduced a table of diseases of terrestrial animals in an annex to the regulation. The Commission will be empowered to adopt delegated acts, taking due account of the opinions of the European Food Safety Authority, and after due public consultation with stakeholders and experts, concerning amendments to the listed diseases.

Generally, Members felt that the existing system should be supplemented by strategic measures to monitor, prevent and control infectious animal diseases, **including those not listed** in this regulation (the most resistant to antibiotics). These measures should include a requirement for a good animal husbandry and responsible use of veterinary medicines.

Veterinarians or aquatic animal health professionals should immediately notify the competent authority in the event of an outbreak or suspicion of an outbreak of a listed disease. Doctors should immediately inform the competent authority of any sign of a zoonotic disease.

Border controls: Member States should, with technical assistance at Union level as regards listed diseases, ensure that appropriate **preventive, risk-based biosecurity measures** were applied along their external borders, in cooperation with the competent authorities of the third countries concerned.

Animal welfare and animal health: Parliament stressed the well-established link between animal welfare and animal and public health. They made references to animal welfare in the text, since this has an

influence on animal health such as when part of biosecurity measures. Moreover, an explicit reference was made to Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in order to emphasise that animals are sentient beings.

Members also wanted to reiterate the importance of **good animal husbandry** and the requirements arising from EU legislation on animal transport. With respect to the movement of live animals, the Regulation should be amended to the effect that the deciding factors should be the journey time and the number of assembly operations, not whether the journey crosses a national border.

Stray animals: by 1 January 2018, Member States should introduce a registration requirement for dogs. The Commission should submit by 31 July 2019 a report on the experience of the Member States with the registration and identification of dogs, with particular reference to stray animals.

Urgent measures: to tackle diseases that have a major impact on public health, agricultural production or animal welfare and health, the Commission must be empowered to adopt urgent measures. However, Members insist that both Parliament and Council must have proper scrutiny over the measures adopted and the possibility of repealing them if necessary.

Union reference laboratories: the Commission should designate Union reference laboratories for illnesses for which, owing to their impact on health or the economy, this is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Regulation. Member States should designate one or more national reference laboratories for each Union reference laboratory designated.