

# Recommendation to the Council and the Commission following the investigation of alleged contraventions and maladministration in the application of Union law in relation to the protection of animals during transport within and outside the Union

2021/2736(RSP) - 20/01/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 557 votes to 55, with 78 abstentions, a recommendation to the Council and the Commission following the investigation of alleged contraventions and maladministration in the application of Union law in relation to the protection of animals during transport within and outside the Union.

Millions of live animals are transported every year over long distances, both within Member States and to third countries, for breeding, rearing and slaughter. EU citizens want to see animal welfare standards respected, especially in the transport of live animals. Furthermore, the EU and its Member States believe that animals are sentient beings whose special needs must be taken into account.

Parliament stated that **all conditions necessary to ensure animal welfare during transport must be ensured** at all times, irrespective of their species, age, category or physical condition, the means of transport used, the duration of the journey and the place of destination, including third countries.

## *Transition to a more efficient transport system*

Members stressed that the EU should strive to create the necessary conditions for a fair and adequate transition period to a more efficient, economical and ethical system that favours, as far as possible, the **transport of semen or embryos** over breeding stock, and of **carcasses and meat** instead of animals being taken to slaughter.

The European Commission is invited to come forward urgently, by 2023 at the latest, with an **action plan** to support this transition, allocating various funds, including under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to this objective and providing the appropriate incentives to encourage farmers and transporters to make the necessary changes.

## *Implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005*

While the EU's regulatory standards for animal welfare are among the highest in the world, they are **not adequately implemented** by all Member States. The most blatant violations include insufficient headroom, lack of water and feed, transport of unfit animals and overcrowding. Inappropriate vehicles are used, transport sometimes takes place in extreme temperatures and for long periods of time.

Parliament called on all Member States and the Commission to take the necessary steps to **improve the implementation, enforcement and full application of the existing regulatory framework**, in particular by establishing a rigorous and harmonised control procedure at EU level. Members believe that the main way to address some of the issues relating to animal welfare during transport in a harmonised manner

across the EU is to **revise Regulation (EC) No 1/2005** with a view to establishing applicable and enforceable provisions for all animals transported.

### *Authorisation procedures and approval of the means of transport*

Parliament considered that the transport methods used should always respect the physiological, behavioural and mental needs of the animal and its welfare. It insisted that the provisions on **space allowances**, stocking densities and **headroom** provisions need to be aligned with the most recent scientific data and the relevant EU regulation on the maximum weight and height of trucks.

Members also stressed that the means of transport must be better designed and **transport distances shortened** to prevent the transmission of diseases, given the serious threat posed by antimicrobial resistance. They want to make it mandatory to install closed-circuit television (**CCTV**) for long-haul journeys, with a particular focus on the loading and unloading operations.

The Commission is called on to define and propose a set of **harmonised criteria and minimum standards** developed in conjunction with an EU-wide expert panel, which could be used by the competent national authorities when approving all means of animal transport and containers.

Parliament also called on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen monitoring of compliance with maritime safety standards by **livestock vessels** as well as the creation of an EU-wide centralised system for vessel approval under a uniform procedure.

### *Journey times and rest periods*

Parliament recommended the introduction of an EU-wide species-based procedure for recording feeding and watering frequency from the last feeding prior to loading at the farm of origin until the end of the journey, without causing additional delays or added stress.

Members consider that in future legislation, journey time for domestic animals going to slaughter should, in principle, not exceed **eight hours**. In addition, the transport of gestating animals should be avoided and the transport of animals in the last third of gestation should be limited to a maximum of **four hours**. The transport of unweaned animals should not be allowed for calves less than four weeks old, except in cases where the transport is carried out by farmers for a distance of less than 50 km.

### *Temperature during transport*

Members consider that the Member States should only grant approval of a journey, journey logs and travel plans when the temperatures are forecasted to be within the range of **5 °C and 30 °C**, for the duration of the whole journey, regardless of the type of transport used, unless the means of transport used is equipped with climate control systems capable of maintaining the temperatures within the appropriate range. Temperature, humidity and ammonia levels in vehicles should be recorded.

### *Transport of live animals to third countries*

Recognising that there is currently no control system in place for transport to third countries, Parliament called on Member States to **inspect all consignments to third countries** to ensure that animals are fed and hydrated, that watering devices are working properly and that animals have sufficient space and headroom. The Commission and the Member States should ensure that the rules that apply within the EU also apply to animal transport shipments leaving the Union.