

Protection of animals during transport and related operations

2023/0448(COD) - 07/12/2023 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to ensure a harmonised approach with regard to the protection of animals during transport.

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

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport established common minimum rules for the protection of animals during transport. Since its adoption, science and technology have evolved. There is a better understanding of space allowance requirements and of the needs of animals during transport, in particular those of unweaned and aquatic animals. There have also been significant developments in the availability of digital solutions for the administrative steps involved in the transport of animals. With increasing citizens' awareness and concerns about animal welfare and the trend towards more sustainable production methods, many Member States are revising or adopting national rules going beyond the Union minimum requirements.

As part of the **Farm to Fork strategy**, the Commission has announced its intention to review EU legislation on animal welfare, including the welfare of animals during transport.

CONTENT: this draft Regulation lays down rules for the protection of animals during transport in connection with an economic activity. It focuses on the following essential elements for better welfare of animals in transport:

Limited journey times and more rest breaks

Animals meant for slaughter have a maximum journey time of 9 hours, while currently there is no limit in the duration of the journey to a slaughterhouse (only a requirement to rest for 24 hours in a control post after 24 to 29 hours of journey, depending on the species).

For other animals, the maximum journey time is 21 hours, which must include at least 1 hour rest after 10 hours. After this journey, the animals must be given 24 hours of rest outside the vehicle before the continuation of the journey. During rest, the animals must be fed and given water. After the 24h rest period, animals can be transported for one more stage of 21h (including a 1h rest after 10 hours), after which they must reach the final destination.

Furthermore, **journey logs** are important tools to allow all actors involved in the transport of animals, and competent authorities, to be aware of the planned route and timing of the journey, and to check if the planned route is followed in practice, therefore facilitating enforcement. Specific elements of the journey log should be designed to ensure better enforcement of animal welfare standards, in particular by increasing the traceability and transparency of transport operations.

Competent authorities in the Member States should approve journey logs for long journeys both within the Union and to third countries, as well as short journeys to third countries. The use of journey logs should be fully digitalised by making use of and expanding the possibilities provided by TRACES.

Increased space allowances

The proposal significantly improves space allowances compared to the existing legislation. The proposal identifies the minimum space that each animal must have, according to weight and species. These minimal standards follow the EFSA recommendations and are important to allow animals to safely adjust their position and rest during the journey.

Enhanced conditions for exports to non-EU countries

The proposal includes a series of new requirements to ensure that EU's updated rules to protect animals during transport will be effectively applied also for export, until destination in the non-EU country. This includes stricter rules for the transport of animals by sea (higher maritime safety standards for the vessels and animal welfare trained staff on board) as well as a new independent audit and certification system for export of animals both by road and by sea.

Temperature limits during transport

The proposal protects animals from extreme temperatures (both hot and cold).

If temperatures are expected to be between 25°C and 30°C, journeys must be limited to a maximum **9 hours**. When day temperatures are above 30°C, transport of animals will only be permitted at night. When the night temperature forecast is above 30°C, animals will be given more space to prevent heat stress.

At the same time, when the temperature is expected to be below 0°C, road vehicles have to be covered and the animals must be protected from exposure to windchill. Below -5°C, in addition to the above measures, the journey time shall not exceed 9 hours.

Special provisions are included for vulnerable animals, such as pregnant animals, hens at the end of the production cycle and unweaned calves.

Digitalisation

The proposal aims to facilitate enforcement of EU rules on the protection of animals through digitalisation. It introduces a digital application at EU level to reduce administrative costs and facilitate data exchange between Member States.

Budgetary implications

This proposal has the following budgetary implications for the EU budget over the period 2022-2027 of the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF): human resources for the implementation of the proposal, the studies, audits, tertiary legislation and international activities: 6.5 full-time equivalents per year as from 2026. Under heading 1 “Contributing to a high level of health and welfare for humans, animals and plants” of the multiannual financial framework: EUR 2.4 million for the period 2024- 2027.