

Protection of animals during transport

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The Council took note of the technical progress achieved under the Italian Presidency concerning the proposal for a Council Regulation on the protection of animals during transport, and agreed to continue the technical examination of the proposal during the first three months of 2004. The Council noted that the Irish Presidency intended to expedite discussions in order that a decision might be taken on this dossier on receipt of the opinion of the European Parliament, which is expected in the spring of 2004. The Presidency suggested basing the animal transport provisions on the social legislation for hauliers, together with a number of specific requirements taking into account the nature of the cargo (feeding, watering, rest periods and veterinary checks). The Belgian, Danish, Swedish, Netherlands and Austrian delegations, while open to such an approach, wanted a maximum limit to be set for the transport of animals for slaughter and a ceiling placed on the number of transport stages for other types of animal. The Swedish and Danish delegations in particular emphasised the need for more account to be taken of animal welfare, with animals being slaughtered close to the place of rearing and meat transported instead of animals. The United Kingdom, Netherlands, German, Swedish and Danish delegations also called for more checks to be carried out throughout the journey.