

Protection of animals during transport

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The Council took note of the progress report (6582/04) presented by the Presidency concerning the proposal for a Council Regulation on the protection of animals during transport and of the comments of the delegations, pending the opinion of the European Parliament, which is expected in March 2004. The Council also took note of the intention of the Presidency to make progress on this issue in order to reach a possible agreement at the Council meeting in April. All delegations acknowledged the need to improve animal welfare during transport on the basis of sound scientific data. However several delegations reiterated their request to include a limitation of journey times in particular for slaughter animals, and of the number of transport cycles for some categories of animals. Several other delegations, whilst taking duly into account animal welfare concerns, also drew the attention of the Council to the need to analyse the situation of the meat industry as well as the transport industry carefully. Some of these delegations also stressed the need to take into account geographical specificity, especially for remote areas as regards transport costs. The Commission hopes for an agreement on the proposal in April 2004.