Protection of animals during transport : experience acquired (Directive 95/29/EC)

2001/2085(COS) - 10/10/2001

The committee adopted the report by Albert MAAT (EPP-ED, NL) on the Commission paper looking at the implementation of the directive on animal welfare conditions during transport. The committee called for the existing rules on animal transport to be amended, and made a series of recommendations. It called, for example, for a maximum transport time of eight hours, or a maximum distance of 500 km. This could be exceeded in the case of animals intended for breeding and sporting purposes, subject to a maximum travelling time of 48 hours and prior authorisation. Temporary dispensation to the maximum 8-hour travelling time could also be granted in certain areas where there were no slaughterhouses within a radius of 500 km, although the travelling time could not be increased by more than 50%. The committee called on the Commission to present a policy plan by 1 January 2003 for the regionalisation of meat production chains so as to limit the long-distance transport of live animals. It should look into ways of promoting small, local abattoirs and mobile slaughterhouses to ensure that journey time to slaughter was minimised. Shocked by the scandalous abuses of animal welfare rules revealed in the Commission's report, the committee called for tougher sanctions against offenders, which should be harmonised at EU level as far as possible. It also reminded the Commission that it was the latter's task to ensure that the Member States enforced the directive properly, and said that infringement proceedings against Member States which had not yet complied with EU rules on animal transport should be speeded up. The report also called for specific proposals to improve the quality of road transport, such as aligning journey and rest periods for animals with driving and rest periods for drivers, defining space and temperature requirements during transport, etc. It also wanted animal transporters to undergo compulsory training and certification. Lastly, the committee called for the abolition, as of 1 January 2002, of subsidies for the export of live animals for slaughter to third countries and said imports of animals into the EU must meet EU standards.