

# Protection of animals during transport

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The committee adopted the report by Albert Jan MAAT (EPP-ED, NL) amending the proposal under the consultation procedure. MEPs stressed that animals should be moved around as little as possible and should be slaughtered as close as possible to their point of origin, rather than being taken to a different country just to find a cheaper slaughterhouse. As a way of reducing the frequency of animal transport, they proposed that mobile slaughterhouses be created and called for "the development of local slaughterhouses and hence employment, in particular in disadvantaged areas". Whereas the Commission was proposing that, for road journeys of more than 50km, the driver should stop every 9 hours and let the animals rest for 12 hours, MEPs felt that this was impractical and instead proposed limiting journey times to a maximum of 9 hours in total for animals intended for slaughter, in journeys exceeding 100 km. However, they said that this restriction should not apply if there were not at least two slaughterhouses available within a radius of 500 km from the place of departure. MEPs also said that animals intended for public performances, shows or training activities (like racehorses) should not be covered by the new regulation. Moreover, animals with a serious illness or those that are too young should not be allowed to travel either. To ensure that animals do not suffer unnecessarily, the committee wanted transport vehicles to meet minimum standards regarding the maximum number of animals per lorry, temperature, space per animal, ventilation system and availability of feed and fresh water. Furthermore, the use of instruments for administering electric shocks should be prohibited. MEPs believed that extra measures were needed to ensure that companies obey the new rules and therefore called for each Member State to appoint a national authority in charge of granting a certificate of approval to vehicles which meet the equipment requirements. Moreover, drivers should also be required to have undergone special training "on animal physiology and drinking and feeding needs, animal behaviour and the factors causing stress, and, in particular, the practical aspects of handling of animals and emergency care for animals". In the event of negligent or deliberate infringements causing severe suffering of animals, it should be possible to withdraw the transporter's authorisation for one year. MEPs stipulated that penalties must include the possibility of imprisonment up to two years. Lastly, the committee wanted government inspections to be tightened up and adopted an amendment stating that "the competent authority shall carry out at any stage appropriate checks on a random or targeted basis to verify that declared journey times are credible and that the journey complies with the regulation". MEPs said that at least 20% of journeys should be checked, of which at least 10% should be in the form of a spot check on the road. Moreover, they said that exports and imports of animals should also meet the same welfare standards during transport, otherwise the competent authority could refuse to allow the animals to enter EU territory.