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

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PURPOSE : to present a report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the experience acquired by Member States since the implementation of Council Directive 95/29/EC amending Directive 91/628/EEC concerning the protection of animals during transport. COMMUNITY MEASURE : the main findings of the report show that that Member States have difficulties in fully applying the Directive and also that there is a low level of priority given by Member States in implementing it. Difficulties in collecting inspection reports from Member States and insufficient harmonisation of the data transmitted limited their use. The transport of horses from Central and Eastern European Countries to the European union is a particular area of concern. Little long-term improvement has been secured. From a technical point of view the main findings are the following: inadequate road vehicles, illegal route plans and non-compliance with travelling time limits, negligence and poor handling of animals, transport of unfit animals, insufficient ventilation on road vehicles, overloading, difficulties in checking the approval of transporters for animal transport. Arising from these findings, the main areas where remedial action must be considered are as follows: - Member States must allocate rapidly adequate resources to meet the objectives set up by the Directive; - a harmonised certificate of registered transporters needs to be established in order to allow rapid checks; - specific procedures must also be set up with a view to facilitating checks by competent authorities in particular in relation to the impelmentation of the route plan and appropriate follow-up of violations; - the Central and Eastern European countries should be called upon to ensure that their transport operators are aware of their obligation to respect Community rules once they have crossed the border of the Union; - the Community should become a party to the European Convention for the Protection of Animals during International Transport; - to address the specific problem of transported horses, unloading and fixed resting period of horses passing through the border of the Union should become compulsory; - technical amendments of the Directive are necessary and in particular in relation to route plan, definition of animals unfit for transport, health certificates, ventilation standards for road vehicles and Member States inspection reports. Longer-term initiatives will be considered especially the need to update the scientific knowledge presently available to the Commission. Several fundamentals of the Directive should be evaluated on a scientific basis and notably data concerning travelling times and loading densities. Reflection is also needed to improve the qualifications of the personnel involved in animal transport. Measures to encourage the slaughter of animals closer to their breeding place also merit examination.