Resolution on the statement of the European Commission on foot-and-mouth disease in the European Union

2001/2542(RSP) - 05/04/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament voted by crushing majority (415 votes to 19 with 27 abstentions) to ask the Commission for an immediate review of the 'basic non-vaccination policy of the European Union' and for alternative solutions. It calls on the Commission and Council to give Member States the option of taking emergency vaccination measures. It wants a 'ring vaccination' (protective emergency vaccination) as an option for a region with an outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) but stipulates that the ultinate aim must be to eradicate the foot and mouth disease virus from the EU's territory. It also wants to allow temporary emergency vaccination in an FMD-free region, as a buffer against a region or Member State which has the disease, and the vaccination of special breeds of foot and mouth disease susceptible animals in wild-life reserves and zoos. The Parliament also calls on the Commission to step up efforts to develop a market vaccine, as well as NSP testing technology, making it possible to differentiate between infection and vaccination, which does not necessarily have to lead to culling healthy animals in case of disease. Lastly, the Commission is called upon to set strict limits and, where necessary, impose strict bans on transport of live animals and animal products thoroughout the EU in order to prevent the further spread of the disease and to devise a common strategy for an overall reduction of animal transport in the future. With the transport of live animals and animal products over long distances seen as a major factor in the spread of the disease, MEPs are demanding strict limits and where necessary strict bans on these transports and a common strategy for reducing them in future. Moreover, the Parliament urges the Commission to consider a proposal for registration of the sources, uses and treatment of swill in order to prevent untreated or insufficiently sterilised swill being used in animal feed. The House is also demanding tougher controls on goods, passengers and luggage entering the EU and more stringent health inspections to stop animal products entering the EU food chain from countries and regions that have foot and mouth disease. Mindful of the disastrous effects of the crisis on rural economies, Parliament is seeking a compensation package for food, phytosanitary or veterinary crises and other seriously affected branches of trade and tourism and urges the EU's trade partners to continue importing from Member States or regions not affected by the outbreak. it is also calling for a Commission study to investigate ways of minimising the risk of foot and mouth disease in the EU and tackling future infection.