Basic information

2002/2153(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Foot and mouth disease: lessons from the 2001 crisis, proposals for the future **Subject** 3.10.08.05 Animal diseases	

Key players

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Agriculture and Fisheries	2445	2002-07-15

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
16/01/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
15/07/2002	Debate in Council		Summary
20/11/2002	Vote in committee		Summary
20/11/2002	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0405/2002	
17/12/2002	Debate in Parliament		
17/12/2002	End of procedure in Parliament		
05/02/2004	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2002/2153(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Special committee/Committee of inquiry
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 213
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TEMP/5/16416

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0405/2002	20/11/2002	

Foot and mouth disease: lessons from the 2001 crisis, proposals for the future

2002/2153(INI) - 17/12/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report by Wolfgang KREISSL-DORFLER (PES, Germany) on foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and the deliberations of the temporary committee of enquiry. (Please refer to the document dated 20/11/02.) The resolution was adopted by 481 to 32, with 13 abstentions. The EPP-ED group, the Green/EFA and the GUE/NGL group made a number of amendments to the report. The resolution looked at the prevention and control of the disease in the United Kingdom in 2001. It found that contingency planning was deficient. Planning for vaccination was minimal and the plan should also have included a scenario for a serious and extensive outbreak, including a worst-case scenario. Parliament also criticised the delay in banning the movements of FMD-susceptible animals on a nation-wide basis and closing livestock markets. This delay caused a considerable increase in the number of cases. Parliament also criticised the bureaucratic and administrative structures in the UK, and stated that the handling of the epidemic was characterised by a lack of coordination. Information policy was inadequate and caused considerable stress among those concerned. On the question of vaccination, Parliament found that relatively small special interest groups (parts of the meat-producing farming sector and the food trade) seem to have had an undue influence over decisions affecting the wellbeing of whole regions in the management of the FMD outbreak. On the Netherlands, Parliament criticised the amount of time it took to set up a regional crisis centre, and noted hat, at times, here was insufficient capacity to carry out culling measures, which led to unwanted changes in he implantation plans. Whilst Parliament noted the high quality of he Commission's work in controlling he crisis, it criticised the Commission for its failure to review Member States' contingency plans within an appropriate period following the introduction of the ban on prophylactic vaccination in 1992. On the question of vaccination in connection with future strategy, Parliament felt that the decision on vaccination is not a scientific matter but a political one and therefore depends on the circumstances and interests which are taken into account and the priority objectives adopted for the purpose of controlling the epidemic. However, such a decision must always be grounded on solid scientific evidence. Despite recent changes to IOE rules, the three-month 'trading penalty' that remains against vaccination should, in the view of many authorities, be removed by future resolution of the IOE so that slaughter and vaccination are treated equally. This change will enable decisions to be taken on the proper basis of disease control rather than economic and political considerations. The disease-control objective (motivated by trade considerations) of eradicating the disease as quickly as possible while culling the minimum number of animals should not entail an absolute non-vaccination policy, and must always be weighed against other politically relevant objectives such as avoiding excessive economic losses. A return to systematic prophylactic vaccination against FMD is not yet at this stage an option to aspire to, particularly because there are seven different serotypes, which cannot be tackled by a single vaccination, and 80 known subtypes exist within them, which likewise cannot be fully covered by a vaccination. Only bychance, therefore, could the right vaccine be chosen. Moreover, the impact on trade would still at this stage be very serious. Under IOE recommendations, vaccinated animals cannot be exported to countries which have the status of 'FMD-free countries where vaccination is not practised'. Also, exports of other animal products derived from vaccinated animals to countries which are FMD-free and do not practise vaccination would in practice be substantially hampered. On the question of compensation, Parliament stated that the Commission should consider whether and to what extent national compulsory insurance schemes for the livestock farming sector might in future be supported through co-financing of expenditure on public support. Alternatively, it might be more appropriate to provide financial assistance to the Member State affected by the outbreak of a disease within the framework of an ad hoc decision. Parliament felt that the practice adhered to in compensating farmers in the event of an FMD outbreak is unjust. It is not clear why only farmers whose animals have been culled should receive compensation, while none is paid to farmers who have been unable to market animals or animal products properly because of the movement ban. It is also desirable to take into account economic losses arising from these bans. The provisions of Decision 90/424/EEC concerning compensation payments by the EU should be amended accordingly; Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to adopt certain measures, including the following: -the Commission should play an active part in developing a worldwide strategy to control FMD within the framework of the FAO, do more to assist the countries concerned in their efforts to control or eradicate FMD, particularly by making vaccines available and providing assistance with diagnostic tests in areas chronically affected by the disease based on the principle 'helping people help themselves', and seek to improve cooperation with regard to information (early warning systems); -the Commission and Member States must actively strive to bring the waiting period for regaining FMD-free status after application of a strategy of vaccination without subsequent slaughter of the vaccinated animals into line with the period used when a slaughter policy is applied, in other words, three months in both cases. - the Commission should review its overall strategy for preventing and controlling livestock diseases in the EU. The preparation of such a strategy should also address the extent to which the increasing globalisation of the food trade plays a part in the increasing number, and spread, of animal disease outbreaks, and identify appropriate measures to counteract this process - e.g. inter alia, the reduced movement of meat and livestock within and between Member States, and the provision of more local abattoirs; Parliament went on to make recommendations on the content of contingency plans and on import controls, as well as on research and development and on compensation. With regard to the latter, it stated that the Commission should publish a communication laying out various possibilities for an insurance scheme or guarantee fund covering the part of the costs for FMD and other livestock diseases borne by the EU budget. This communication should provide a cost-benefit analysis of such schemes and recommendations on, for example, a private insurance scheme withre-insurance or guarantees from the European Communities, or an EU Animal Health Fund to be financed, up to a certain ceiling, by contributions from all livestock farmers. The communication should also include recommendations on the introduction of such schemes for non-direct costs of livestock disease epidemics in both the agricultural and the non-agricultural sector.

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2002/2153(INI) - 15/07/2002

The Belgian delegation, supported by the Netherlands, drew the attention of the Council and the Commission to the latest scientific development concerning the existence of serological tests. It is now likely possible to distinguish between the antibodies in vaccinated animals and in animals contaminated by the FMD wild virus following the latest state of research presented at the Office International des Epizooties (OIE). The use of these tests at Community level could avoid the mass slaughtering of healthy animals and enable to reduce the minimum waiting period (12 months) before re-entering trade flows currently provided for by international legislation. This waiting period could be reduced to six months. The Belgian delegation called on the Commission to take account of this new development in its future proposal for a Directive on FMD. The Danish delegation recalled that any change in the existing legislation should be compatible with the OIE standards and should not put at stake the position of the Community in that field.