

Brussels, 10 November 2011

EU must act to revise rules to ensure the protection of live animals during transport

EU rules on live animal transport need a complete overhaul - demands Eurogroup for Animals following the publication today of a European Commission report on the impact of the transport legislation on the sector and on the welfare of animals.

The European Union has had legislation in place to regulate the protection of farm animals in transit either to another farm for fattening or to the slaughterhouse since 1977. No other EU protection law has been so controversial and ineffective, with widespread problems of enforcement and lack of compliance which result in continued animal suffering.

More animals are transported than ever and the number of consignments has greatly increased, looking at the transport of pigs alone we see an increase of 70% today compared to 2005, and this report shows that the presumed economic impact and significant administrative burden has been exaggerated.

This increase in transport volume goes against the European Food Safety Authority's scientific advice, published in January 2011 which clearly stated that we must in order to minimise the risk of transport-associated disease outbreaks develop strategies *"that reduce the volume of transport and long distance transport of animals for finishing or slaughter or reducing journey times"*.

It is less clear what the impact has been on animal welfare. This Report states that available information shows that **"severe animal welfare problems during transport persist"** whilst **"the quality of transport has improved"**. This is worrying especially when the external study on which the report is based only refers to a **"slight improvement"**.

The report concludes that appropriate enforcement of existing rules remains the priority and lists some action points such as; implementing rules for the use of navigation systems, improving controls and monitoring, guidance documents, and increased cooperation.

Eurogroup is disappointed about the lack of ambition and failure of the Commission to face up to the problems that exist.

"Relying solely on better enforcement is not an option. The current rules leave too much room for interpretation and some important elements in the law are still missing. In order to make this law work in practice, it is necessary in particular to limit journey times and introduce a legal basis for the use of GPS as a control and enforcement tool," stated Sonja Van Tichelen Director of Eurogroup.

"Furthermore the law is no longer in line with the latest science. Just fiddling with implementing rules without reviewing the existing legal requirement is simply not good enough and will never reach the objective of minimising live animal transport" she concluded.

This Report shows that the EU is still not capable of solving the problems related to live transport. Eurogroup therefore calls for the introduction of an overall journey time limit which will end overly long journeys. Transport conditions must also be dramatically improved and modern technology, such as Satellite navigation systems, introduced if authorities are to control movements in real time effectively.

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Notes

1. Eurogroup for Animals represents animal welfare organisations of nearly all EU Member States. Since its launch in 1980, the organisation has succeeded in encouraging the EU to adopt higher legal standards for animal protection. Eurogroup represents public opinion through its membership organisations across the Union, and has both the scientific and technical expertise to provide authoritative advice on issues relating to animal welfare. For more information about Eurogroup, visit www.eurogroupforanimals.org.
2. [A communication package](#) including a video showing the conditions of animals being transported is available to download on our campaign's page on transport of live animals
3. The European Food Safety Authority's Scientific Opinion Concerning the Welfare of Animals during Transport can be downloaded [here](#).