



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY  
Directorate G – Crisis management in food, animals and plants  
Director

Brussels,  
SANTE G2/SR/rb (2016) 3517543

*Cellerjoren,*  
Dear Chief Veterinary Officer,

**Subject: Export of live animals to non-EU countries – suggestions on official checks**

Many livestock traders, in particular those trading in animals of bovine and ovine species, export live animals to non-EU countries over long journeys. This trade represents an important economic activity but also higher risks for the welfare of transported animals.

The purpose of this letter is to draw your attention to these risks and to indicate some key actions and checks that can mitigate them. You can find these suggestions in the Annex to this letter.

These suggestions could also be useful for other authorities involved in animal transport, such as the road police, as well as the organisers planning these journeys.

I therefore ask you to ensure that this letter is forwarded to all authorities and organisers concerned. Your contribution to keeping the stakeholders informed of this matter is highly appreciated.

The Commission services would welcome any information regarding the difficulties you may encounter to implement these suggestions.

Please note that this letter and its Annex have been drafted by the Commission services as a basis for discussion and do not reflect a formal position of the Commission. In addition, it must be noted that only the Court of Justice of the European Union is entitled to interpret Union law with final binding authority.

Yours sincerely,

*Bernard Van Goethem*  
Bernard Van Goethem

**To: CVOs of all Member States**

Cc: Permanent Representations of All Member States

Member States National Contact Points on Animal Transport

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## ANNEX

### Suggested checks and actions to be taken by the competent authorities on the export of live animals to non-EU countries

#### Background

The Commission services receive regular correspondence concerning the situation at the Bulgarian-Turkish border as regards animal health and welfare issues, particularly in relation to transport carried out under conditions that do not comply with the requirements laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 *on the protection of animals during transport*<sup>1</sup>. These events increase in frequency during the hot summer months and have been made more complex this year due to the Lumpy Skin Disease outbreaks in Bulgaria.

**The planning of journeys** is particularly important to minimise the risks to the animals' health and welfare throughout the entire duration of the journey, from point of departure to the final point of destination.

Article 5(3)(a) of the said Regulation requires that when planning each journey the organisers ensure that *"the welfare of the animals is not compromised by insufficient coordination of the different parts of the journey; and the weather conditions are taken into account"*.

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In addition, Article 14(1)(a)(ii) requires that, in the case of long journeys for animals of the species mentioned in the introductory phrase of Article 14(1), *"the competent authority of the place of departure shall carry out appropriate checks to verify that the journey log submitted by the organiser is realistic and indicates compliance with this Regulation"*.

Based on these requirements, and considering that adequate planning of the journey and its approval have a direct influence on the health and welfare of the animals throughout the duration of the journey some main points must be taken into high consideration when planning and authorising journeys ending in a non-EU country, particularly those transiting through the Bulgarian-Turkish border.

#### The organiser must:

- plan the provision of feed, water and bedding throughout the duration of the journey<sup>i</sup>, even for the part of the journey that takes place outside of the territory of the EU. The space allowances should be determined taking into consideration the expected meteorological conditions throughout the journey<sup>ii</sup>;
- plan the journey taking into consideration the opening times of veterinary controls at Kapikule (the Turkish border) so as to avoid waiting unnecessarily<sup>iii</sup>. As far as the Commission services are aware, the opening times are between 9:00 and 18:00 (GMT +2). In addition, these controls generally require several hours to be completed. In order to be able to complete the transit of the border within the time Turkish authorities are available to process consignments, organisers and veterinary authorities preparing and approving journey logs should take into account that vehicles should clear the Bulgarian exit point with sufficient time ahead so as to be processed within the Turkish authorities' working hours.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations, OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1.

- provide a properly completed and signed copy of Section 1 of the journey log to the competent authority well in advance of the time of departure; the legal minimum period to allow the competent authority to assess the plan is two working days<sup>iv</sup>.

### **Recommendations to the competent authorities**

**The competent authority of the place of departure** should verify that the operator has planned the journey taking into account the above points. Furthermore they should check the following:

- **The temperature forecast** during the proposed journey. When it is known that the temperature at the border between Bulgaria and Turkey will be above 30°C (86°F) transports on long journeys should not be authorised if the ventilation system is not capable of maintaining inside temperatures between 5°C to 30°C, with a +/-5°C tolerance<sup>v</sup>. Organisers and veterinary authorities should bear in mind the standstill times indicated above where vehicles will not be moving. In practice, there is no possibility to lower the internal temperatures on vehicles travelling in ambient temperature conditions over 30°C.
- **The provision of food, water, bedding and space allowances:** several Member States have “hot weather guidance” for organisers and official services. As an indication, some of the guidance concerned suggests an increase in space allowances for travel in hot weather conditions of 30%<sup>vi</sup>;
- **The contingency plans** and in particular if they are appropriate for this type of journey<sup>vii</sup>: provision of food, water and bedding in the event of emergencies, including outside of the EU territory, has been organised and can be verified, what to do if stuck at the border, etc.;

In addition, **the competent authority in those Member States operating control posts** should ensure that the controls on live animal consignments destined to leave the EU<sup>viii</sup> include verification of the provision of adequate water, feed and bedding to ensure consignments are adequately prepared for the next part of their journey whether within or outside of the EU. The same should be ensured by all Member States where checks at any stage of the long journey are carried out outside control posts.

**Means of transport** for long journeys have to be initially approved by competent authorities and when approvals have to be renewed, the competent authority should use the knowledge gained over the past years to verify that, for animals of the species mentioned in Article 6(9) and the title of Annex I, Chapter VI of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, such vehicle approvals only include the categories of animals for which the watering devices are suitable<sup>ix</sup>, and that the **satellite navigation systems** are carefully checked to ensure that competent authorities are given suitable information, in a format which is accessible to them, to enable them to verify if long journeys have been undertaken in accordance with the planned arrangements and the requirements of the Regulation<sup>x</sup>.

Finally, any **competent authority that finds non-compliances** should, as a priority, take or require the person responsible for the animals to take the necessary action to safeguard the welfare of the animals including emergency measures<sup>xi</sup>. Depending on the circumstances emergency measures may include, inter alia, unloading the animals and holding them in suitable accommodation until the problem is resolved, or returning them to their place of departure, and at the last resort, sending them to the nearest slaughterhouse or euthanizing them, depending on the level of risks to animal welfare. The action taken must not be likely to cause unnecessary or additional suffering to the animals and must be proportionate to the seriousness of the risks involved.

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- i Annex I, Chapter III, point 2.7 and Annex I, Chapter VI, points 1.2 to 1.5 and 2.1 to 2.3 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
  - ii Annex I, Chapter VII of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
  - iii Article 3(a) and (f) and Article 5(3)(a) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
  - iv Annex II, point 3(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
  - v Annex I, Chapter VI, point 3.1 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
  - vi For domestic equidae and pigs, see however the specific variation limits laid down in Annex I, Chapter VII, sections A and D of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
  - vii Article 11(1)(b)(iv) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
  - viii Article 15(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
  - ix Annex I, Chapter VI, point 2.2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005
  - x Article 6(9), Article 15(4) and Annex I, Chapter VI, point 4.1 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
  - xi Article 23 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.
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