



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Crisis preparedness in food, animals and plants
The Director

Brussels,
SANTE/G5/DS/iv(2021) 3727401

Subject Animal transport during summer 2021

Dear colleague,

Animal welfare is a high priority for the Commission and transport of animals is of huge importance.

As the competent authority, you are primarily responsible for the implementation and enforcement of EU legislation on animal transport¹. The purpose of this letter is to remind you of the risks to animals in the case of exposure to extreme temperatures when they are transported over long journeys during the summer months (particularly from June to early September.)

Vehicles designed for long journeys are equipped with ventilation and water supply. Increasing space allowances may also mitigate, to a certain extent, the risk of heat stress. However, in recent years, temperatures in summer time in Europe have been so high that such measures were rarely sufficient to prevent animals from serious suffering.

Furthermore, conditions deteriorate when animals are waiting in stationary vehicles, especially when animals are exported outside the Union by road (waiting for customs clearance) or by sea (waiting for loading onto a vessel). In this context, I wish to remind you that some EU exit points, by road or by sea, do not have facilities or services to take care of animals in such circumstances (no water, no feed and no facilities to unload the animals). The same often applies after the EU exit point by road before animals are allowed to enter into a third country.

Therefore, I would urge you to ensure that the necessary measures will be in place in time for this summer, to ensure that animal transport from your country will comply with the EU rules, with a particular focus on extreme temperatures.

In this framework, I would like your services to be extremely vigilant when approving journey plans. In particular, organisers must take into consideration the weather forecast when planning the journey. Your services should firstly verify that the organiser has done this and secondly evaluate if the forecasted weather conditions of the entire journey until the final destination will not cause unnecessary suffering to the animals.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 (OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p.1)

To : CVOs of the 27 Member States and CVO UK(NI)

I am aware that several Member States already developed good practices. Some of them were presented during an ad hoc meeting between the national contact points on animal transport organised by the Dutch authorities in May 2021. Some of these practices are summarised in Annex and I encourage you to implement them.

Furthermore, I suggest that you raise awareness on this risk among business operators and strongly encourage them to suspend or substantially reduce the transport of animals over long journeys during summer time.

My services will continue to facilitate a timely and harmonised implementation of the animal welfare rules through regular contacts with national contact points and EU stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]
Bernard Van Goethem

Annex I – Examples of good practices used to prevent heat stress during animal transport

Before the journey

Many of the Member States competent authorities are **using a reference website to verify weather forecast**. The use of well-recognised internet information to check the weather forecast combined with the planned route allows them to decide if the planned journey indicates compliance with the legislation.

The majority of Member States competent authorities have established **external temperature forecast of 30°C as the upper limit for approving journey plans** (unless vehicles are equipped with active cooling systems).

The majority of Member States applies this procedure for all animal exports to third countries and a good number of them for intra-EU journeys.

After the journey

Many Member States carry out **targeted retrospective checks on transports to third countries done in summer** with forecasted temperatures close to the 30°C limit.