

For the attention of:

German Federal Minister of Food & Agriculture Julia Klöckner

Cc.

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen
Executive Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans
Commissioner for Health & Food Safety Stella Kyriakides
Relevant Ministers in Member States

Brussels, the 16th of November 2020

Re: Progress on live animal transport during the German Presidency

Dear Minister Klöckner,

Like us, you are fully aware of the countless problems caused by the long-distance transport of farmed animals in the European Union, whether the animals are transported for slaughter, breeding, or further fattening.

Every year at least 1.37 billion animals are transported alive within the EU and to third countries.

Since the approval of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport, entered into force in 2007, multiple violations of this piece of legislation have taken place constantly, including unlikely transport routes, transport during extreme temperatures, overloaded vehicles, and illegal transport of unweaned animals.

It would be impossible to quantify the huge amount of suffering that the existing rules have not managed to avoid, and the cost to taxpayers in terms of infrastructure and checks that have been put in place throughout the EU to allow this activity to continue. Enforcement efforts have never been enough to ensure full compliance with this Regulation throughout the EU. The previous Commission decided to focus its efforts on enforcement only, refusing any changes of the legislation, and after 5 years the situation was virtually unchanged.

In recent statements of the Commission and the Council, the need for a review of the existing rules has been acknowledged, and the Farm to Fork Strategy includes a clear reference to such need.

The Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport of the European Parliament (ANIT) has already started operating, and we expect that its findings will valuably support this process.

Within this context, we believe that a significant step to support a review of Regulation 1/2005 should be agreed during the German Presidency too. In order to move towards the end of long-distance live transport, it is of fundamental importance to understand what the objective obstacles are to make this change happen.

The clear will of the EU citizens to see animal welfare improved through legislation must be supported by the involvement of Member States to identify a way forward that allows to achieve the desired progress while reducing as much as possible the disruption that any change is bound to generate.

Therefore, we are writing to ask you that during the German Presidency the Council gives a clear mandate to the Commission to list the obstacles member states are encountering - or would encounter - in the process of replacing live animal transport with the transport of carcases or genetic materials.

This will give all Member States the opportunity to declare clearly what problems need addressing from their point of view. Such information collated by the Commission should support the work of the Council and of the Parliament, including the ANIT Committee, in order to identify the actions that will be necessary to finally end an activity that continues to take place in contradiction with the strong commitment of the European Union on animal welfare.

Yours sincerely,

Signed by 45 MEPs

MEP Niels Fuglsang (S&D)

MEP Tilly Metz (Greens)

MEP Maria Noichl (S&D)

MEP Thomas Waitz (Greens)

MEP Anja Hazekamp (GUE)

MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP)

MEP Michal Wiezik (EPP)

MEP Martin Hojsík (Renew)

MEP Chrysoula Zacharopoulou (Renew)

MEP Veronika Vrecionova (ECR)

MEP Eleonora Evi (non-attached)

MEP Pär Holmgren (Greens)

MEP Peter Lundgren (ECR)

MEP Yannick Jadot (Greens)

MEP Günther Sidl (S&D)

MEP Marie Toussaint (Greens)

MEP David Cormand (Greens)

MEP Annika Bruna (ID)

MEP Sylwia Spurek (Greens)

MEP Sven Giegold (Greens)

MEP Manuela Ripa (Greens)

MEP Marisa Matias (GUE)

MEP Francisco Guerreiro (Greens)

MEP Sarah Wiener (Greens)

MEP Clare Daly (GUE)

MEP Pascal Durand (Renew)

MEP Caroline Roose (Greens)

MEP Mohammed Chahim (S&D)

MEP Saskia Bricmont (Greens)

MEP Ernest Urtasun (Greens)

MEP Nikolaj Villumsen (GUE)

MEP Rosa D'Amato (non-attached)

MEP Piernicola Pedicini (non-attached)

MEP Harald Vilimsky (ID)

MEP Jytte Guteland (S&D)

MEP Martin Häusling (Greens)

MEP Emil Radev (EPP)

MEP Ville Niinistö (Greens)

MEP Manuel Bompard (GUE)

MEP Margrete Auken (Greens)

MEP Alice Kuhnke (Greens)

MEP Fredrick Federley (Renew)

MEP PetrasAustrevicius (Renew)

MEP Marina Kaljurand (S&D)

MEP Christel Schaldemose (S&D)