



**For the attention of:
Portuguese Minister of Agriculture Maria do Céu ANTUNES**

Cc.
Ursula von der Leyen
Frans Timmermans
Stella Kyriakides

Brussels, the 28th of January 2021

Re: Progress on live animal transport during the Portuguese Presidency

Dear Minister Maria do Céu Antunes,

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.

In December 2020, Minister Julia Klöckner wrote to us saying among other things that in various occasions her government, also within the German Presidency of the EU, repeatedly approached the European Commission demanding to amend the Transport Regulation with the aim to reduce the duration of the transports and establish other improvements.

We welcome such moves, but we also feel that after so many years of delays and huge animal suffering some additional actions should be implemented in the shortest possible time.

Within this context, we believe that a significant step to support a review of Regulation 1/2005 should be agreed during the Portuguese 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 Portuguese 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 carcasses 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, 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.

We are looking forward to hearing from you, and we wish you all the best of luck in this beginning of your Presidency.

Yours sincerely,

Signed by 48 MEPs

MEP Niels Fuglsang (S&D)

MEP Marisa Matias (GUE)

MEP Jytte Guteland (S&D)

MEP Clare Daly (GUE)

MEP Mick Wallace (GUE)

MEP Chrysoula Zacharopoulou (Renew)

MEP Martin Häusling (Greens)

MEP José Gusmão (GUE)

MEP Rosa D'Amato (Greens)

MEP Sylwia Spurek (Greens)

MEP Maria Noichl (S&D)

MEP Pascal Durand (Renew)

MEP Nikolaj Villumsen (GUE)

MEP Francisco Guerreiro (Greens)

MEP Thomas Waitz (Greens)

MEP Martin Hojsík (Renew)

MEP Veronika Vrecionova (ECR)

MEP Michal Wiezik (EPP)

MEP Eleonora Evi (Greens)

MEP Piernicola Pedicini (Greens)

MEP Fabio Massimo Castaldo (non-attached)

MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP)

MEP Ville Niinistö (Greens)

MEP Younous Omarjee (GUE)

MEP Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg (Greens)

MEP Günther Sidl (S&D)

MEP Sylvie Guillaume (S&D)

MEP Marie Toussaint (Greens)

MEP David Cormand (Greens)

MEP Christel Schaldemose (S&D)

MEP Manuela Ripa (Greens)

MEP Marianne Vind (S&D)

MEP Ernest Urtasun (Greens)

MEP Sven Giegold (Greens)

MEP Marina Kaljurand (S&D)

MEP Tilly Metz (Greens)

MEP Annika Bruna (ID)

MEP Heidi Hautala (Greens)

MEP Sarah Wiener (Greens)

MEP Mohammed Chahim (S&D)

MEP Alice Kuhnke (Greens)

MEP Pär Holmgren (Greens)

MEP Harald Vilimsky (ID)

MEP Anja Hazekamp (GUE)

MEP Peter Lundgren (ECR)

MEP Emil Radev (EPP)

MEP Caroline Roose (Greens)

MEP Saskia Bricmont (Greens)