

2nd meeting of the EU Animal Welfare Platform – 10 November 2017 – Brussels

The platform is composed of 75 participants: Member States, stakeholders and independent experts. The focus main agenda items focused on transport (and the Commission's decision to establish a formal sub-group of the Platform on transport) and unwanted horses.

The opening presentation was given by Commissioner Andriukaitis. He announced that the AW Platform will set up a sub-group on animal transport this meeting and a sub-group on pigs next meeting. First EU Animal Welfare Reference EC launched the call for the first centre, which will focus on pigs. The Commissioner concluded by saying that despite the limited resources, they will continue to be active in animal welfare. But we need your help, we need to work together.

Many members asked about the setting up of sub-groups. Belgium, on behalf of many Member States, proposed to set up a sub-Group on 'Illegal trade of dogs'. Denmark, on behalf also of several countries, supported to set up a subgroup on horses. Other suggestions were for goats and sheep, for rabbits, etc. For two subgroups documents were already written by platform members, namely for dogs and horses. These documents will be circulated amongst the platform members and opened for comments (attached).

Session 1. Transport

Ana Ramirez Vela presented the work the EC did in the field of animal transport. They mostly worked on transport of cattle from the UK to Turkey. Yearly, the EU presents around 250 000 cattle to Turkey. Many problems have been seen especially due to hot temperatures, slow bureaucracy and extra animal health restrictions. Compliance is improving, but main problem is high temperatures in summer. Another problem is the long administrative procedures in Turkey. Although legally the EU is required to guarantee the welfare of the animals it is exporting up to the point of destination (also in third countries), in reality proves extremely difficult.

Transport Sub-Group:

Composition: 20 persons (purely platform members).

Scope: they should promote and complement other committees such as the national transport points meeting or the transport project. Main aim is to find technological innovations, to find policy indicators, to hear about knowledge transfer and to develop tools and means to improve implementation and enforcement.

Session 2. Unwanted horses

The session was introduced by 3 presentations providing perspectives from an NGO (World Horse Welfare – Roly Owers), a Member State (Ireland – Brid Farrell) and industry (Claire Cordilhac – IFCE/EHN).

All called for setting up a sub-group on horses – EU Commission agreed on the establishment of informal sub-groups. The idea is taken forward by Denmark, working with Members State, industry and NGO representatives.