

FOUR PAWS Position paper: Transport via Road and Ship



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1. PROBLEM

Every year, at least 1.37 billion live cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, and horses are transported alive within the EU and to third countries, most of them for slaughter. Exports of live animals to third countries are particularly problematic. Crammed together in the transport vehicles, the animals suffer unimaginably on transports lasting up to weeks. They suffer from enormous heat or cold, thirst, hunger, stress, and fear: numerous animals die every year. Poultry and pigs die particularly quickly from overheating, and poultry suffer frostbite in winter. Cattle and sheep are mainly exported from Member States to third countries, but also poultry and pigs are sent on long journeys lasting over 8 hours. Transports of unweaned young animals such as calves or lambs also play a special role and are only one of the indicators for systemic problems in our agricultural system. Calves are first transported within the EU, e.g. to Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands, are fattened there, and are then exported to third countries such as Libya, Lebanon, Turkey, and Algeria.

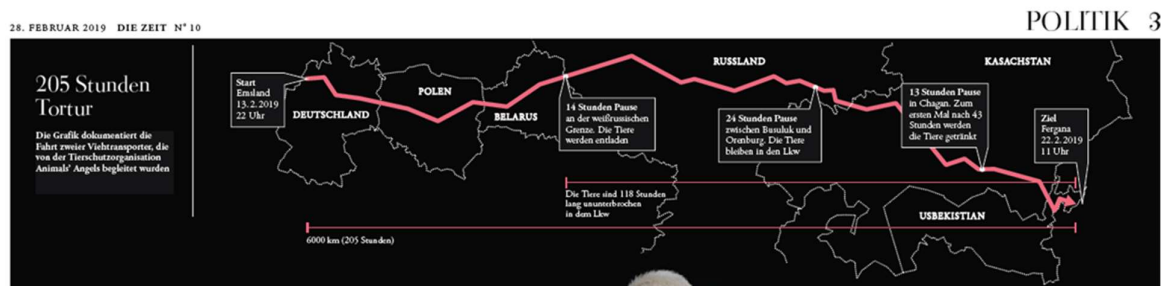
Pregnant heifers, declared as “breeding animals”, are transported for several thousand kilometers for days and weeks. Premature births frequently happen during transport. Many destination countries do not apply animal welfare standards, and it is not possible to build up breeding populations of European high-performance breeds. The animals that survive the transport are milked after they gave birth to their calf. After the lactation period, i.e. when the period during which the cows gives milk is over and the animals are no longer of any use, a cruel death awaits them. In the majority of the destination countries slaughter takes place without stunning, and cruel practices of making the animals helpless before the slaughter cut, such as stabbing their eyes and cutting their leg tendons, have been documented regularly and were published in veterinary journals.¹

Animal transports are not only carried out by road, but also by sea. For days and weeks, the animals have to endure cramped conditions on the ships. They have to stand and lie down in their excrements, as ships cannot be reasonably cleaned. Proper ventilation is missing, making transports particularly dangerous in the summer months. Many of the animals die on the ships and are thrown overboard. Reaching the destination port, completely exhausted animals are lifted off board with the help of a crane. From there, they are loaded on trucks - to be brought to their final destination, also when heavily injured.

¹ see: https://tierschutz.hessen.de/sites/tierschutz.hessen.de/files/Maisack_Rabitsch_Tiertransporte_0.pdf

2. EU LEGISLATION

Since 2007, the EU Animal Welfare Transport Regulation (Regulation (EC) 1/2005) for the protection of animals during transport has been in force². However, this does not protect animals adequately, and legislation urgently needs to be revised. When certain conditions are fulfilled on the vehicle, it is already permitted to transport pigs for 24 hours without a break, and cattle for 29 hours with only one hour's break and to repeat these periods as often as desired, the animals being on the road for days or weeks. Cattle must be unloaded after 29 hours at a certified control post (resting station) for at least 24 hours. But as there are hardly any control posts in third countries, the animals often spend the requested breaks on the trucks, instead of being unloaded. Since 2007, the Commission has received approximately 200 reports³ of infringements of the Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, so that the call for stricter rules on animal transport has continued, including from the European Parliament, that issued a motion for resolution.⁴



Source: „Jenseits der Schmerzgrenze“ ZEIT, February 2019

Although the European Court of Justice has ruled in 2015 that EU animal welfare rules on animal transport apply beyond the EU borders and have to be adhered to until the final destination, there is evidence that this is not being applied in practice. Member States must take much stronger action and stop issuing transport authorizations, if compliance with current legislation cannot be guaranteed.

3. NUMBERS

Every year, over one billion poultry and 37 million live cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and horses are transported across borders within the EU and to and from third countries. In 2015, European countries transported a total of almost 1.4 billion live animals within the EU. Member States also exported almost 238 million live animals across EU borders to third countries in the same year.

² see [EU Regulation \(EC\) 1/2005: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32005R0001&from=DE](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32005R0001&from=DE)

³ see: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0163_EN.pdf

⁴ see: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2019-0057_EN.html?redirect

Furthermore, the transport documentation often specifies only one or two drivers, although the current law requires at least three or more drivers to comply with the predefined break times for drivers.

Examples of recent incidents on transports by road:

- Example 1: Transport of cattle, standing at the Bulgarian-Turkish border for 13 days on Bulgarian territory. No unloading of the animals at a control post nearby. No infringement or sanction procedure followed this breach of legislation.⁵
- Example 2: Transport of pregnant heifers (6-7th month of gestation) from Germany to Uzbekistan (6,000 km), 205 hours in total, of which the animals stayed 118 hours on the transporter without being unloaded. The transport lasted from 13.02.2019 (Emsland, DE) until 22.02.2019, ending in Fergana, Uzbekistan.⁶
- Example 3: 320 hours from DE to Eritrea in 2020 – with no control post in the journey plan. The transport was approved by the competent German authorities.
- Example 4: Transport plans from Germany to Iran in 2020 – with e.g., only 9 hours journey time in the documents and only one indicated control post. – The transport was approved by the competent German authorities.

DG SANTE REPORT Welfare of Animals Exported by Road (2020)⁷

The DG Sante report states that it is difficult to ensure a level playing field in the application of animal welfare rules, as the export of animals from the EU to non-EU countries is complex and generally involves many actors and countries. The report states that this creates risks for the welfare of the animals. Due to the absence of cooling systems in livestock vehicles, high temperature in particular is one of the main causes of animals' suffering on transports. Transport authorizations that do not take into consideration technical limitations and weather conditions at the border and at the place of destination lead to continuous breaches of legislation. The report states that most transporters do not meet applicable EU rules when they leave the Union. The absence of agreements with EU neighbouring countries and the lack of retrospective checks, as well as the inability of Member States to ascertain the conditions of transport, lead to major concerns.

⁵ see: <https://www.arte.tv/de/videos/090636-000-A/rinder-fuer-den-orient/>

⁶ see: <https://www.zeit.de/2019/10/tiertransporte-tierquaelerei-tierschutz-landwirtschaft>

⁷ see: https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/overview_reports/details.cfm?rep_id=136

6. ACCIDENTS AND NON-COMPLIANCE ON SEA TRANSPORTS

Dramatic accidents and tragedies occur regularly during animal transport, both by road and by sea, resulting in thousands of animals dying miserably. Transport vehicles on the road are tipping over because they are overloaded with animals or because the drivers are overtired.

Examples of recent accidents on the sea:

- Example 1: In Nov 2019, the cargo ship Queen Hind capsized with 14,000 sheep on board.⁸ Together with its partner organization ARCA, FOUR PAWS was able to save 180 of the 14,000 animals. The other sheep died within days (suffocated, drowned). No vet euthanized them. Recent findings suggest that the ship was overloaded. Here is footage material of the sheep rescue that ARCA, who is partner organization of FOUR PAWS carried out (180 sheep could be rescued)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkR-RzbtOKw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byWv9zd6Alk>
- Example 2: Summer 2019: 70,000 sheep for weeks on vessel in the Persian Gulf, exposed to heat up to 47 °C on deck. Hundreds of sheep died.⁹
- Example 3: Sept 2020: Gulf livestock vessel carrying 6,000 cattle and 43 crew members sank – all of them died.¹⁰

DG SANTE REPORT Welfare of Animals transported by Sea (2020)¹¹

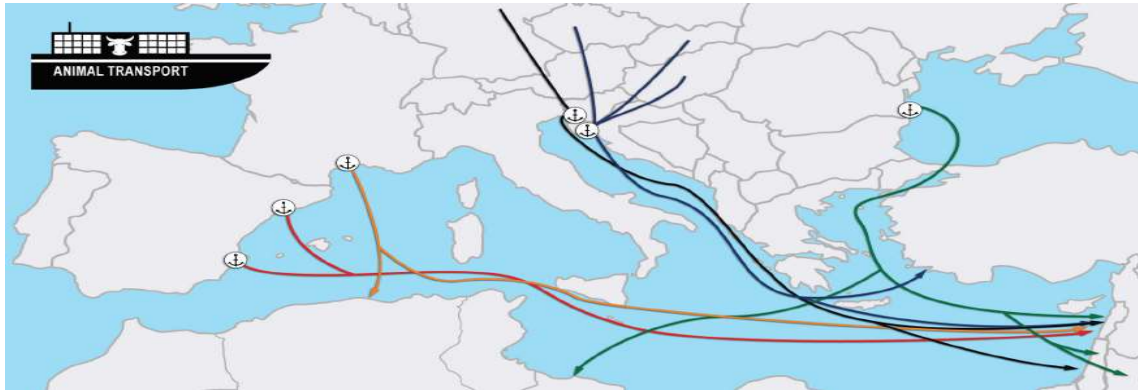
A recent report from the European Commission has officially confirmed serious animal welfare shortcomings during sea transport and that animal welfare is not guaranteed. The report concludes that the vessels on which the animals are transported are unsuitable, that the personnel who would have to inspect the vessels for appropriateness is not properly trained and understaffed, and that animal welfare is not guaranteed. In addition, the report concludes that weather conditions are not sufficiently taken into account, leading to animal welfare problems. It is confirmed that out of the existing 13 EU exit ports, only 6 have facilities nearby to accommodate animals in case of an emergency or delay. But even these do not have capacities for the necessary quantity of animals (e.g. one facility is capable of accommodating 600 animals, but some of the arriving loadings count as many as 6,000 animals). The following graph shows the routes the animals are sent on.

⁸ see: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/feb/03/secret-decks-found-on-ship-that-capsized-killing-thousands-of-sheep>

⁹ see: <https://www.europeaninterest.eu/article/romania-authorises-shipment-70-000-sheep-persian-gulf-hazekamp-insists-upon-infringement-procedure/>

¹⁰ see: <https://www.insider.com/new-zealand-ship-carrying-crew-cattle-missing-off-japanese-coast-2020-9>

¹¹ see: https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/overview_reports/details.cfm?rep_id=137



Source: Overview Report "Welfare of Animals Transported by Sea" (2020), European Commission

7. FOUR PAWS DEMANDS

- an end of long-distance animal transports
 - an export ban on live animals to third countries
 - a transport ban to countries that do not even comply with OIE standards
 - a maximum transport duration of 8 hours (4 hours for poultry)
 - a ban on transports of unweaned animals
 - a ban on animal transports by sea
 - slaughter of animals at the nearest slaughterhouse
 - a revision of the EU Transport Regulation 1/2005 to end cruel long-distance transports of live animals
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- no approvals of animal transports by veterinary authorities, when it is already evident from the transport planning documentation that animal welfare regulations cannot be met
 - no approvals of animal transports when temperatures are $< 5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ or $> 25\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$
 - strengthening controls on live animal transports
 - more sanctions in case of infringements
 - transport of meat and semen instead of live animals
 - own livestock breeding in third countries instead of importing breeding animals from the EU