



*The tragic sinking in December of a boat transporting more than 14 500 live sheep on the shores of Romania raises many questions about the place of animal welfare in the trade and transport policies of the European Union. A great number of Members of the European Parliament have expressed their views about this concerning issue and will, hopefully, continue to fight for the protection of animal welfare during this ninth legislative term. The UEVP highlights the necessity for continuous cooperation between the European Commission and veterinarians from all Member-States in the field of animal welfare policies and welcomes the joint renewed motivation of all European institutions in the development of such policies.*

*Wishing you all a very happy new year!*

**Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President**

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## PRIORITY ISSUES

### Latest news on antimicrobial resistance at EU level

#### The AMR Roadmap co-signed by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)

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The FVE co-signed the [roadmap to tackle AMR](#) presented on 18 November 2019, during the European Antibiotic Awareness day, by the [Stakeholder Network on AMR](#).

This network, hosted under the European Commission's Health Policy Platform and led by the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) is the only civil society-led pan-European stakeholder network on AMR; it is composed of 80 organisations and individuals committed to the "One Health" approach to tackle AMR.

Tackling AMR is one of the most important health priorities of the von der Leyen Commission. This roadmap advises this institution and Member States to:

- Set targets and performance indicators to measure progress
- Help countries mobilize resources for better implementation of national AMR policies
- Close the existing collaboration gap between civil society and EU policy-makers
- Put prevention at the heart of AMR policy-making
- Tackle the environmental dimension of AMR in the framework of the European Green Deal.

### Latest updates on animal welfare at EU level

#### Council conclusions in favour of better animal welfare regulations.

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On 16 December 2019, the Council of the European Union adopted a series of [conclusions](#) asking the European Commission to develop reinforced legislations in the area of animal welfare.

As a reminder, Council conclusions are not strictly binding but are powerful in the sense that they represent the views and positions of the Member States. The European Commission thus rarely acts not in accordance with this sort of document.

The Council conclusions assess the need to develop new legislations for species which do not have specific animal welfare legislation to this day. The list includes cattle at least six months old, farmed rabbits, pullets, dogs and cats, turkeys, broiler and laying hen breeders, sheep, goats and farmed fish.

The conclusions put forward the issue of animal welfare during transport by calling for a review of the Transport Regulation and by addressing the problem of long-distance transport of live animals. The document also stresses the need to deepen the discussions about the possibility to reduce live animal transport by a shift to a meat and carcasses trade. The Council also raises problems on slaughter conditions, and encourages research on stunning.

The debate of live animal transport has been lately emphasized by the tragic sinking of a boat transporting 14 600 sheep at the coast of Romania, in the Black Sea. After a debate during the plenary session of the European Parliament (EP) of 17 December 2019, the EU commissioner for health and food safety Stella Kyriakides assured the Members of the EP that the subject of live animal transport will be part of the 'Fam to Fork' strategy.

## The Green Deal and animal welfare

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On 11 December 2019, the European Commission President and first Vice-President Ursula von der Leyen and Frans Timmermans presented their 'Green New Deal'.

The main objective of this deal is the development of a framework taking an integrated approach to fight global warming by the imposition of different measures across various EU policy domains. The main goals of the deal are the shift to a sustainable and resilient European economy, the protection of biodiversity and the achievements of the EU's 2050 Climate Neutrality target.

The deal focuses both on farm animals and farming production's methods as well as on wildlife.

The 'Farm to Fork' strategy, that is part of the deal, will try to develop a circular agriculture in Europe, a more innovative food and feed production and a better system of information on food origin, nutritional value and environmental footprint.

The Green Deal wants to make the European Union (EU) a global leader in exotic pet trade regulations by the creation of an EU-level positive list for exotic pets. Furthermore, the introduction of harmful products in the EU market will be prevented; this kind of products include, sometimes, some types of exotic pets.

The NGO **Eurogroup for Animals** welcomed the proposal and suggested that the deal should also focus on the development of stronger measures under the Common Fisheries Policy, the introduction of references concerning the EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking and animal welfare as a major contributor to climate neutrality. Finally, this organisation is concerned that the deal section on trade policy has no mention of the potential negative impact it could have on climate, animal welfare and the environment.

**Animal Health Europe**, the association representing manufacturers of animal medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in Europe, also welcomed the deal and insisted on the fact that future policies that will emanate from the Green Deal should be both science-based and risk-based in order to *"aim for true sustainability at a pace which will engage Europe's farming community and ensure we have as many tools as necessary at our disposal to protect our animals"*.

Animal welfare advocates are now waiting for the release, in spring 2020, of the Farm to Fork strategy.

## European Parliament intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals campaign against the use of animal in science.

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The Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, regrouping nearly 100 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), took part in an event on 3 December 2019 aiming at defining a strategy and concrete steps for a transition to animal-free science.

The event called 'Strategies for innovation in life sciences' was organised in the European Parliament (EP) by Eurogroup for Animals and the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It was hosted by MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP, Finland).

This event was attended by various stakeholders coming from the research sector. They were given the opportunity to present their research to the policy makers in the room in order to give them a better understanding of the existing alternatives to animal testing in science (research and education).

The Finnish scientific community is preparing an open access database on education and training that will include expertise in non-animal methods. Other outcomes of the event gravitated around the issues of how to enable

dialogue between all stakeholders, non-sufficient funding of innovative methods and the identification of next steps.

These next steps are:

- The phasing out of animal use in human and veterinary medical courses as well as in life sciences.
- The standardisation of testing and disease models in order to better identify the applications and limitations of each method.
- The development of new legislations where alternatives to animal use are available.
- The promotion of trust in human-relevant methods.

The intergroup will now try to win support from other MEPs in the form of signatures in order to present a strong case to the von der Leyen Commission.

### **End the Cage Age open letter sent to EU Commissioners.**

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On 5 December 2019, a total of 164 animal welfare organisations co-signed a [letter](#) calling the EU to improve its animal welfare legislation regarding farming animals in cages.

The letter is the result of the popular [End the Cage Age](#) European Citizens' Initiative that collected more than 1.6 million signatures from 21 different Member States.

As a reminder, a European Citizens' initiative is a mechanism giving the EU citizens the opportunity to participate directly in the development of EU policies by giving them the right to call directly on the European Commission to propose a legal act. The conditions for it to happen are that the initiative must be signed by at least one million citizens of the European Union, who are nationals of at least one quarter of the member states. Furthermore, the targeted legal area must be one where the Member States have conferred powers onto the EU level.

The letter was sent to the 3 Commissioners responsible for policy making in the sector of farm animals: Executive Vice-President **Frans Timmermans**, Health and Food Safety Commissioner **Stella Kyriakides**, and Agriculture Commissioner **Janusz Wojciechowski**.

### **Revised Official Controls Regulation (2017/625)**

On 14 December 2019, most of the revised [Official Controls Regulation \(2017/625\)](#) (OCR) became applicable in all of the European Union (EU). This text focuses on officials controls and activities ensuring the good application of food and feed law, animal welfare and health laws and plant health and plant protection products laws.

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) published, on 12 December 2019, a [press release](#) highlighting their concerns about the implementation and enforcement of the OCR. Their main concerns came from a European Commission's [report](#) on the overall operation of official controls performed in Member States (MS) between 2014 and 2016 that points out the limitation of MS staff resources for controls. Additionally, a [report](#) from the European Consumer Protection Organisation (BEUC) advances that resources allocations and inspections carried out by MS are declining.

The FVE thus:

- Calls on MS to put in place all the necessary resources to allow Competent Authorities and official veterinarians to fulfil their responsibilities (audit, inspection, enforcement).

- Calls on the EU Commission to assist MS in setting up adequate and satisfactory official controls and to monitor this closely with Directorate General on Health and Food Safety.
- Calls to keep courses through the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) Program.

**Update on the delegated regulations supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law')**

**Commission delegated regulation (EU) 2019/2035 - Registration and approval of establishments and identification and registration of terrestrial animals**

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The [Commission delegated regulation \(EU\) 2019/2035 of 28 June 2019 supplementing Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards rules for establishments keeping terrestrial animals and hatcheries, and the traceability of certain kept terrestrial animals and hatching eggs](#) has been approved by the European Council and then published, on 5 December 2019, in the Official Journal of the European Union (JOUE).

As a reminder, this delegated regulation concerning the rules relating to establishments holding terrestrial animals and the traceability of certain kept terrestrial animals advocates the status quo as regards to the identification and registration of pets. Furthermore, debates arose in the European Parliament concerning the obligation of electronic identification for ovine and caprine animals of less than 12 months old destined for slaughter after undergoing an assembly operation or after undergoing a fattening operation in another establishment (article 45 and 46). The arguments that were put forward gravitated around the welfare of the concerned animals, due to the important size of an electronic loop, and also focused on economic reasons as the use of such loops would entail additional costs for breeders.

Even though former EU commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis said, in a letter to Members of the European Parliament, that the relevant services of DG SANTE agreed to take another look on this question and to consider a possible modification of the delegated act, no modification seems to have taken place about this issue.

This regulation shall apply from 21 April 2021.

**Commission delegated regulation on Animal health requirements for movements of terrestrial animals and placing on the market of products of animal origin**

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On 17 December 2019, the Commission [delegated regulation](#) C(2019) 4058 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council, as regards animal health requirements for movements within the Union of terrestrial animals and hatching eggs has been adopted by the European Commission.

This regulation focuses on animal health requirements for movements of terrestrial animals and products of (terrestrial) animal origin within the European Union. Its main goals are to effectively prevent and control the spreading of animal diseases by their movements and to simplify the legislation by the streamlining of rules from a number of existing legal acts into one single act.

As the act has been adopted by the European Commission, a scrutiny period of 2 months has been opened in order, for the European Parliament and the Council, to analyse it. If none of the legislators objects, the act will be published in the Official Journal and will enter into force 20 days after the publication.

## **Update on the EMA activities**

### **Decisions of the Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP)**

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The Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) held a [meeting](#) from 3 to 5 December 2019.

The Committee adopted by consensus a positive opinion for application for Onsior concerning a new therapeutic indication for the treatment of pain and inflammation associated with soft tissue surgery in dogs. It also adopted by consensus a positive opinion for application for Eravac concerning the extension of the immunity duration from 9 to 12 months.

Following the close of the public consultation on the categorisation of antibiotics in the European Union prepared by the Antimicrobial Advice ad hoc Expert Group (AMEG), the CVMP adopted the updated scientific advice on this issue.

## OTHER ISSUES

### **Latest news on animal disease at EU level**

#### **Scientific report from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the overview from august to November 2019 of avian influenza.**

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On 20 December 2019, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published a 27 pages long [scientific report](#) providing a general overview of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and some low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) virus outbreaks that were detected in poultry, captive and wild birds as well as some human cases due to avian influenza (AI) virus. The analysed cases were reported in and outside the European Union (EU) between 16 August and 15 November 2019.

This report concluded that it is still of first importance to maintain a high alert level and high standard of biosecurity on poultry establishments, that no HPAI viruses related human infections were detected and that the risk of zoonotic transmission to the general public in Europe is considered to be very low.

### **Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/2090 on the measures to be taken in case of non-compliances related to VMPs and their residues.**

The [Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2090 of 19 June 2019 supplementing Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and Council regarding cases of suspected or established non-compliance with Union rules applicable to the use or residues of pharmacologically active substances authorised in veterinary medicinal products or as feed additives or with Union rules applicable to the use or residues of prohibited or unauthorised pharmacologically active substances](#) has been approved by the European Council and then published, on 9 December 2019, in the Official Journal of the European Union (JOUE).

This regulation lays down the precise measures that the competent authorities must take for specific cases of non-compliance or suspicions of non-compliance of animals and goods from the EU or third countries related to veterinary medicinal products and their residues.

This regulation applies since 14 December 2019.

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