



This month of July was marked by the re-election of Ursula von der LEYEN as President of the European Commission and Roberta METSOLA as President of the European Parliament. In the context of this institutional renewal, it will be crucial to consolidate and re-establish relationships with key political decision-makers (potentially newly elected) within the parliamentary committees that address topics of interests to UEVP and its members. Indeed, the European Parliament has published the composition of the various parliamentary committees and has voted to elect the chairs and vice-chairs for each of them. This launches the parliamentary work for the next term, which will begin in September after the summer break.

In addition, the European Commission's work has once again focused on avian influenza and African swine fever, which continue to spread in certain Member States, necessitating the adoption of new restriction and surveillance measures. The European Commission also had to take measures on new outbreaks of “peste des petits ruminants” in Greece.

Finally, in the latest animal welfare news, the opening of a new European Citizen’s Initiative (ECI) aimed at ending animal cruelty and slaughter has been launched. In addition, an EFSA opinion has positively evaluated an innovation method of stunning pigs and poultry (using nitrogen expansion foam in containers), intended to create more welfare-friendly slaughter conditions.

Volker MOSER, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Latest EU Institutional news

Re-election of the European Parliament and the President of the European Commission as part of the renewal of the EU institutions

The inaugural session of the European Parliament was held in Strasbourg between 16th and 18th July 2024. On this occasion Ursula VON DER LEYEN was re-elected as head of the European Commission for a 5-year term.

Re-elected with 401 votes out of 720 MEPs, she presented her [programme](#) for the next term of office, focusing on competitiveness, defence and security, strengthening the social model, food safety and the preservation of nature. However, her programme does not specify her intentions or priorities in terms of animal welfare, although she does mention the importance of continuing work on antimicrobial resistance.

During this week's plenary session, Roberta METSOLA was also re-elected as President of the European Parliament a 2.5-year term. In addition, MEPs held several votes to elect the Bureau of the European Parliament, the Chairs (and Vice-Chairs) of the parliamentary committees, and the Chairs (and Vice-Chairs) of the respective political groups. This enabled the allocation of key positions within the European Parliament and the composition of the parliamentary committees to be established, following the results of the European elections held from 6th to 9th June. In particular, among parliamentary committees that may deal with subjects of UEVP interest in terms of animal health and welfare, the following nominations may be noted:

- **Antonio DECARO** (S&D, Italy) who has been elected Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI);
- **Adam JARUBAS** (EPP, Poland) as Chair of Subcommittee on Public Health (SANT);
- **Veronika VRECIHOVÁ** (ECR, Czechia) as Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI).

Update on EMA activities

Meeting highlights from the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products (CVMP)

The Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) held a [meeting](#) from 16th to 18th July 2024.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for marketing authorisation for **Cepeloron**, a new product for the treatment of congestive heart failure caused by degenerative mitral valve disease in dogs, and for **Cevac Salmune ETI K**, a new vaccine for the active immunisation of chickens from 10 weeks of age to reduce faecal excretion of *Salmonella* Enteritidis, *Salmonella* Typhimurium and *Salmonella* Infantis.

The Committee also adopted a positive opinion for a marketing authorisation application for **Porcilis PCV M Hyo ID**, a new vaccine intended for the active immunisation of pigs to reduce viraemia.

The Committee adopted a positive opinion for a variation requiring assessment for **Profender** in order to add adverse reactions to the product information.

The Committee adopted positive opinions for variation requiring assessment concerning quality-related changes for: **Eluracat**, **Vectormune ND** and **Versican Plus DHPi/L4R**, **Versican Plus Pi/L4**, **Versican Plus Pi/L4**, **Versican Plus Pi/L4R**, **Versican Plus L4**.

The Committee adopted positive opinions for variations requiring assessment to align the product information with version 9.0 of the QRD template for: **Clomicalm** and **Posatex**.

The Committee shared safety information for veterinarians concerning risk in the **Senvelgo (velagliflozin) oral solution** for diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) in cats with diabetes mellitus. The Committee inform that veterinarians should inform cat owners about the risks of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) and how to monitor for its symptoms. If DKA or diabetic ketonuria is suspected or confirmed, Senvelgo treatment must be immediately stopped. Further details about Senvelgo, including product information for veterinarians and cat owners can be found [on this page](#).

The Committee has opened a **3-month consultation** on the [guidelines](#) for the directive on dossier requirements for anti-cancer medicinal products for dogs and cats. The Committee also opened a **3-month consultation** period on a [concept paper](#) on the revision of the guideline on veterinary medicinal products controlling Varroa destructor parasitosis in bees, as well as for a [concept paper](#) on the revision of the guideline on the conduct of bioequivalence studies for veterinary medicinal products.

The Committee has opened a **3-month public consultation** on two **discussion papers**. One concerns the [fate of veterinary medicinal products in manure](#) and the other is about [poorly extractable and/or non-radiolabelled substances](#).

In addition, the Committee has opened a **3-month public consultation about a concept paper** on the revision of the guideline on user safety for pharmaceutical veterinary medicinal products. The Committee has also opened a **6-month public consultation about a draft guideline** on development and manufacture of synthetic oligonucleotides.

The Committee has adopted a [Q&A](#) on standard animal weights to be used for estimating worst-case consumer exposure scenarios to complement the guideline on data to be provided in support of a request to include a substance in the list of substances considered as not falling within the scope of [Regulation laying down Community procedures for the establishment of residue limits of pharmacologically active substances in foodstuffs of animal origin](#).

The Committee adopted the following standard list used for electronic reporting of suspected adverse reactions following the yearly review and update: for the combined **VeDDRA list of clinical terms** for reporting suspected adverse reactions in animals and humans to veterinary medicinal products (non-public) and for the [list of changes to combined VeDDRA list of clinical terms](#). Noted that the Committee also adopted the revised **guidance notes on the use of VeDDRA terminology** for reporting suspected adverse reactions in animals and humans and the **non-current VeDDRA LLT terms and codes**. These lists are provisionally scheduled to be implemented in the standard lists in EudraVigilance Veterinary are on 1st October 2024.

Finally, the Committee adopted the scientific opinion for the establishment of a list of substances that are essential for the treatment of equidae, the aim of which is to help guarantee the availability of treatments for equidae.

Latest news on animal health at EU level

Publication of several implementing acts by the European Commission on new outbreaks of African swine fever

On [8th July](#), [16th July](#), [23rd July](#) and [1st August](#), the European Commission published several implementing acts about new outbreaks of African swine fever in Europe.

The regions affected by new protection, surveillance and restriction rules include:

- Italy in the region of **Lombardy** and **Tuscany**;
- Latvia in the counties of **Valmieras** and **Madonas**;
- Lithuania in the counties of **Kaunas**, **Šiauliai** and **Panevėžys**;
- Poland in the region of **Mazowieckie**, **Opolskie**, **Zachodniopomorskie**, **Wielkopolskie**, **Pomorskie**, **Zachodnio-pomorskie**, **Podlaskie** and **Swietokrzyskie**;
- Czechia in the region of **Liberecký**;
- Greece in the region of **West Macedonia**;
- Germany in the States of **Hesse** and **Rhineland-Palatinate**.

Publication of two implementing acts by the European Commission on new outbreaks of “*peste des petits ruminants*” in Greece

On [19th](#) and [30th](#) July, the European Commission published two implementing decision about new outbreaks of “*peste des petits ruminants*” in Greece.

“*Peste des petits ruminants*” virus is an infectious disease affecting caprine and ovine animals. Greece is affected by several outbreaks of the disease in its territory, in the **municipal unit of Kalambaka**, **municipality of Meteora**, **in the regional unit of Trikala and Larisa** and **the region of Thessaly**.

Regions affected by the disease will now be under surveillance, protection and restriction measures.

Publication of an implementing decision by the European Commission about new outbreaks of Avian influenza in Europe

The European Commission published [an implementing decision](#) on outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in certain Member States of the European Union.

In accordance with [Regulation 2016/429](#) laying down the legislative framework for the prevention and control of diseases transmissible to animals or humans, emergency measures must be taken in response to outbreaks of HPAI.

Following the notification by the German authorities to the European Commission of an outbreak in a poultry farm in the **Land of Lower Saxony**, located in the immediate proximity of the border with the Netherlands. The Land of Lower Saxony is now under protection and surveillance.

The implementing act also mentions the appearance of the disease in Bulgaria, without indicating any particular region.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal welfare at EU level

Publication of an EFSA opinion on the use of high-expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry

On 12th July, EFSA published [an opinion](#) analysing the *Nitrogen (high) Expansion Foam Stunning* in container (NEFS in container), an innovative method aimed at creating more respectful and cruelty-free slaughter conditions for pigs and poultry.

This opinion aims to determine to what extent this method can ensure a level of animal welfare at least equivalent to that of the methods currently authorised for pigs and poultry. To be approved in the EU, new stunning methods must ensure the absence of pain, distress or suffering until unconsciousness occurs, and that the animal remains unconscious until death.

EFSA concluded the following outcomes:

- The use of NEFS in container presents **an alternative for on-farm killing** (for situations other than slaughter), provided it is implemented correctly with specified technical conditions, staff training and the monitoring of procedures;
- NEFS in container achieves a **level of animal welfare at least equivalent** to existing approved methods;
- The foam does not enter the animals' upper respiratory tracts while they are still conscious, thus preventing stress.

EFSA has issued some recommendations:

- Ensure adequate staff training;
- Use proper set-up equipment ;
- Monitor water quality to ensure uniform foam consistency;
- Use automated control systems to ensure and maintain safety and functionality;
- Implement proper procedures:
 - Animals should only be placed in the container when ready for immediate processing;
 - The nitrogen gas and foam solution should be double-checked before use;
 - The container should be filled with foam in less than a minute to avoid potential adverse welfare outcomes for the animals;
 - The nitrogen jet stream should be directed towards the sides of the container and not towards the animals;
 - The animals should be dead before opening the container for which a reliable monitoring system is required;
 - Oxygen levels should stay below 2% throughout the process;
 - Oxygen sensors should be regularly tested and the gas system should be protected from freezing in cold weather.
- Provide available backup killing methods in case of failure;
- Avoid overloading containers, all animals should have enough space to lie down;
- Perform additional research.

The non-governmental organisation Eurogroupe for Animals [supported](#) the new EFSA report and urged the European Commission to take actions to:

- Replace outdated and less effective stunning methods with more humane alternatives;
- Ensure all animals are adequately stunned before slaughter;
- Ban the use of electric prods and high-concentration CO2 stunning for pigs;
- Prohibit the use of water bath stunning for chickens.

Feedback from the European Commission's public consultation on animal welfare during transport

Between December 2023 and April 2024, the European Commission conducted a [public consultation](#) on the [regulation on animal welfare during transport](#).

The consultation garnered 5 482 responses (with 91% coming from citizens contribution), highlighting the significant interest from civil society in animal welfare issues. Contributions also came from a range of stakeholders, including veterinarians, farmers, industry representatives, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The countries most actively involved were Germany, which contributed to 52% of the responses, followed by France, Italy, Spain, Poland and others.

The consultation highlighted several key points of interest:

- **Divergent views:** Participants, particularly between citizens and stakeholders, expressed differing views on the balance to be struck between “*animal welfare*” and “*economic and environmental concerns*”;
- **Transport restrictions:** There were concerns about restrictions on transport time and temperature, with participants noting that this regulation may not account for the varying condition across Member States, which could have a negative effect on the economy and environment in some Member States (especially southern countries).
- **Support for digitalisation:** There was general support for the digitisation of procedures, although some technical concerns were raised.

Opening of a scrutiny phase by the European Commission on a delegated act about rules for approval and recognition of disease-free status of compartments keeping terrestrial animals

On 30th July, the European commission opened a [two-month scrutiny phase](#) on a delegated regulation regarding rules for approval and recognition of disease-free status of compartments keeping terrestrial animals.

This [delegated act](#) (and its [annexe](#)) implements the [Regulation on transmissible animal diseases](#) (“Animal health Law”) by laying down general rules for the approval of terrestrial animals compartments in the EU Member States and specific rules for the recognition of the animal health status of poultry compartments with regard to avian influenza and Newcastle disease.

The delegated act provides information about:

- General requirements for granting disease-free status to such compartments;
- Responsibilities and duties of operators and managers of such compartments;
- Common biosecurity management systems for these compartments;
- Procedures for approval by the competent authority of the disease-free status of such compartments (including for compartments located in the territory of more than one Member State);
- Specific requirements for the approval of the disease-free status of compartments keeping terrestrial animals as regards the category A diseases.

As a reminder, the scrutiny phase allows the Member States and the European Parliament to monitor delegated acts proposed by the European Commission and to make observations or objections if they consider that they do not respect the principles or exceed the powers conferred on the European Commission.

Opening of a new European citizens' initiative on cruelty-free animal slaughter

On 24th July, the European Commission [registered](#) a new European citizen initiative (ECI) about animal welfare called “[Stop Cruelty Stop Slaughter](#)”.

The initiative calls for:

- Incentives for the production of plant proteins (including plant-based milk and egg substitutes) as well as cultivated meat;

- Plans to gradually decrease the number of farm animals by 50% annually and progressively phase out all animal farms.

The initiative calls for compliance with the Paris Declaration and the Lisbon Treaty, which recognise animals as sentient beings with an inherent right to exist. It highlights the risks posed by factory farming and slaughterhouses, which are potential sources of pandemics and health issues as salmonella and avian influenza. The initiative advocates a gradual reduction of factory farms, followed by a decrease in free-range farms and slaughterhouses.

The initiators of these European Citizens' Initiative (ECIs) **have six months to begin collecting signatures, and one year to obtain at least one million signatures from at least seven Member States**. If this threshold is reached, the European Commission will be required to examine the request and provide a justification for its decision to accept or reject it.

