

Protection of animals during transport

Training of personnel and enforcement agents

ABSTRACT

Each year, millions of live animals are transported by road, sea, rail and air within, and to and from, the European Union, for a number of reasons, such as slaughter, fattening or breeding. To protect their welfare during those journeys, the EU adopted Regulation 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport. An evaluation of the regulation showed that, when correctly implemented and enforced, it had a positive impact on the welfare of animals. However, in some areas weaknesses persist, largely owing to insufficient implementation. In light of these conclusions, and bearing in mind its 2012-2015 animal welfare strategy, the European Commission developed guidelines for handling animals during transport, to be disseminated and used for training of transport personnel and enforcement agents. Despite these measures, however, in recent years, repeated breaches of the rules, resulting in accidents and severe animal welfare crises, have been highlighted by EU and national control bodies and by animal welfare organisations.

On 19 June 2020, the European Parliament set up the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT). The work of the committee focused on investigating how EU rules are being implemented by Member States and enforced by the European Commission. It held public hearings with the participation of stakeholders, representatives of national authorities, and experts. Insight from these debates fed into the committee's report and recommendations to the Council and the Commission.

This briefing is one of four requested by the ANIT committee to provide research and analysis following the results of a questionnaire sent out by the committee to Member States. It focuses on one of the topics investigated by the committee, namely how Member States organise training for personnel handling animals during transport and for staff tasked with enforcing the rules.



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Background

In 2019, over 1.6 billion live animals (ovines, bovines, poultry and pigs) [were transported](#) across the EU and beyond its borders. Conditions during such journeys vary, depending on many factors, such as the size of the consignment, the means of transport (road, rail, sea, air), the design and equipment of the vehicle; the time of year (temperature), and especially the duration (journeys to third countries can sometimes last days). With insufficient attention and care, the transport of animals, especially over long distances, can cause serious welfare concerns. Evidence, such as [scientific opinions](#) by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), shows that animals transported alive are exposed to stress at loading and unloading, they can suffer from hunger, thirst, exhaustion, and a lack of space and rest during transit.

The EU has laws in place to protect animal welfare during transport. [Regulation 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport](#), which entered into force in January 2007, applies to all live vertebrate animals transported in connection with an economic activity within, to and from the EU. The regulation lays down conditions and requirements for transport (stocking densities, rest periods etc.), as well as measures to be applied to ensure compliance with them, such as: inspection and approval of means of transport; transport authorisations; checks by competent authorities before long journeys and at any stage of a long journey; training of staff for competent authorities; training and certificates of competence for transporters and staff of assembly centres; checks at exit points and border inspection posts; inspections and annual reports by competent authorities; infringement measures and penalties. As pointed out in Recital 14 of Regulation 1/2005, poor welfare is often the result of a lack of education, therefore, training should be a prerequisite for anyone handling animals during transport and should be provided only by organisations approved by the competent authorities. The regulation therefore lays down requirements for training of personnel handling animals and staff who control and enforce compliance with the provisions.

Implementation of Regulation 1/2005

An assessment of the impact of the regulation and of its implementation was undertaken by the Commission in 2011 ([report](#) and [study](#)). It concluded that it had beneficial impacts on the welfare of animals during transport but that there was still room for improvement. It noted that the enforcement of the regulation remained a major challenge, partly because of differences in interpretation of the requirements by Member States. The report stressed that poor compliance with the rules and a lack of enforcement can have severe negative impact on animal welfare, pointing out certain recurring examples, such as: transport of unfit animals; overstocking of vehicles; vehicles of inappropriate internal height; animals not receiving enough water and animals being transported longer than the maximum allowed travelling time.

Similar observations were put forward by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in its 2018 [special report](#) on the implementation of animal welfare legislation. Regarding animal welfare during transport it concluded that weaknesses still persisted in some areas (in particular compliance with rules on long distance transport and the transport of unfit animals).

The EPRS [European implementation assessment of Regulation 1/2005](#), published in 2018, drew similar conclusions, namely that the overall implementation of the regulation has improved, but that a number of issues had still to be resolved, including the impact of training, education and certification.

Despite the measures taken, significant problems causing animal suffering during transport still occur, as reported by [NGOs](#) and [mass media](#). The Commission has conducted several [audits](#) in this area in recent years, revealing animal welfare problems and low levels of compliance. In 2020, in the ['farm to fork' strategy](#), it announced its intention to revise the animal welfare legislation, including legislation on animal transport, to align it with the latest scientific evidence, broaden its scope, make it easier to enforce and ensure a higher level of animal welfare.

European Parliament position

The European Parliament has expressed serious concern for animal welfare in general and for the welfare of animals during transport in particular. In 2012, it adopted a [resolution](#) on the protection of animals during transport. In another [resolution](#), on the implementation of Regulation 1/2005 (2019), Parliament acknowledged the progress made, but expressed concern over reported breaches of the rules. It called on the Commission to disseminate and promote best practice for the Member States regarding the transport of livestock among all actors.

On 19 June 2020, Members [approved](#) the setting up of the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport ([ANIT](#)). The committee was tasked with the investigation of alleged violations in the application of EU law in relation to the implementation by Member States and enforcement by the Commission of Regulation No 1/2005.

Among other issues, the committee investigated the way Member States organise training for personnel who handle animals in the transport process and for staff tasked with controls and enforcement of the rules of Regulation 1/2005. To this end, the committee launched a questionnaire directed at Member States in which they were asked to provide information on the kind of training they have in place and to give details on the organisation of this training.

By the end of June 2021, eight Member States had replied to the questionnaire (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden), representing slightly under 30 % of EU Member States. Although this sample does not cover all EU Member States and does not give sufficient information to present a comprehensive overview or to draw conclusions on prevailing tendencies, the findings from the survey can nonetheless provide input for Members in their consideration of the committee's report and recommendations to Council and the Commission.

Staff and enforcement agent training in Regulation 1/2005

Regarding staff training, Article 6(4) of Regulation 1/2005 requires that transporters entrust the handling of the animals to personnel who have received training on the relevant provisions of Annexes I and II to the regulation. These annexes cover technical rules for: fitness for transport; means of transport; transport practices such as loading, unloading and handling; watering and feeding intervals; journey times and resting periods; additional provisions for long journeys; space allowances; and the journey log.

According to Article 17 of the regulation, training courses must be available for transporter and assembly centre personnel. The competent authority of the Member State issues a certificate of competence for drivers and attendants of road vehicles transporting animals, as well as a certificate of approval for means of transport by road used for long journeys (Article 18).

Annex IV to the regulation further elaborates on the training required, stipulating that training courses must include at least the technical and administrative aspects of EU legislation concerning the protection of animals during transport, in particular: general conditions for the transport of animals (Article 3), transport documentation (Article 4) and Annexes I and II; animal physiology and in particular drinking and feeding needs, animal behaviour and the concept of stress; practical aspects of handling of animals; the impact of driving behaviour on the welfare of the transported animals and on the quality of meat; emergency care for animals; and safety considerations for personnel handling animals.

Regarding enforcement agents, Article 16 of Regulation 1/2005 requires that staff of the competent authority be trained and equipped to check data recorded by the recording equipment for road transport and by the navigation system.

Training in Member States: Findings from the survey

Type and organisation of training

In the questionnaire sent out by the ANIT committee, Member States were asked what kind of training they have in place for personnel handling animals and for enforcement agents, and how the training is organised (see box, right).

All eight responding Member States have training courses in place, as required by Regulation 1/2005. The level of detail covered in the replies varied. Four respondents gave a detailed description of the organisation and content of the courses, others provided a succinct overview. While the duration, frequency and the entities responsible for delivering the training differ, in all Member States courses and certificates have to be approved by competent authorities.

In terms of individual responses from Member States, the following points can be noted:

Austria: according to the national law on animal transport, the implementation of courses in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation 1/2005 is authorised by a chamber of commerce, a *Land* chamber of agriculture or labour, a chamber of labour, or a training institute of one of these institutions or the labour market service respectively. There are different procedures in Austria for obtaining the certificate of competence: training can be provided by a school or a similar institution, or via an education institute at *Land* or national level. The certificate is issued by district administrative authorities or by training institutes.

People who transport animals, attendants, and also people who deal with animals at assembly centres, must demonstrate the successful completion of a course that covers the content of Annex IV of Regulation 1/2005, totalling at least eight hours, as well as practice in handling animals for animal transport of at least 80 hours under the supervision and guidance of a person who is in possession of a certificate of competence. People who can provide evidence of at least one year of relevant experience, in particular through work in the context of agriculture, have to complete a course of at least four hours, which imparts the knowledge of Annex IV of Regulation 1/2005. People who carry out long journeys must complete an additional course of at least four hours covering the provisions of Regulation 1/2005 pertaining to long journeys.

A course is considered to have been successfully completed once the trainee has passed an examination, which must be approved by an examination committee consisting of examiners who are themselves in possession of a certificate of competence or who have received training.

Belgium: in Belgium, there are courses for drivers and attendants to obtain the certificate of competence. For enforcement agents, training on transport legislation is usually combined with training on slaughter legislation, since the majority of inspections take place at slaughterhouses.

Training for the certificate of competence is available on the internet; there are also some agricultural training centres that provide courses. The duration of these courses is usually one day. In order to obtain the certificate of competence the drivers and attendants must pass an exam with a list of questions per species (cattle, horses, small ruminants, pigs, poultry).

Bulgaria: in Bulgaria, there are authorised training companies and organisations approved by the central competent authority. Trainers must have qualifications in the specific area. The duration of the course depends on the topic.

Finland: one-day training courses for competent authorities are held twice a year and a common one-day course for competent authorities and operators is held almost every year. Training for animal handlers is organised mainly by schools specialised in the field. Duration, frequency, location

Question:

What kind of training do you have in place for personnel handling animals, and enforcement agents?

How is this training organised (i.e. duration and frequency; location; species covered; characteristic of the final exam; who are the trainers)?

and animal species vary depending on the operators' knowledge. Exams are currently organised by the central competent authority, but in the future will be organised by schools.

Germany: the legal requirements for the expertise of people involved in animal transport depend on the exact activity. While drivers may require a certificate of competence, this is not the case, for example, for the transport of fish or for people who only load or unload animals or look after them at assembly centres or control posts. Accordingly, the training needs of these people and possibilities for recognition of their professional education and training differ. In general, such training in Germany is provided by official veterinarians or by bodies to which this task has been delegated by the respective competent authority.

A manual contains detailed content of the training required to obtain the driver's certificate of competence. The duration of the training is normally at least 15 teaching units of 45 minutes each. The examination consists of a written (multiple-choice) and an oral part that takes place in the presence of an official veterinarian.

Official controls of animal transport are carried out by official veterinarians and, in consultation with them, sometimes also by the police or other official bodies. Further training in this area concerns, for example, the cooperation of different authorities during transport controls or the evaluation of records on temperature and location.

Netherlands: training for the transporter and assembly centre staff is organised in cooperation between an organisation representing livestock exporters and importers, and a training institute. The training institute offers training courses for livestock traders and transporters. Training of assembly centre staff takes one day and the certificate is valid for a period of five years.

The Ministry of agriculture and food quality is closely involved in both the training and the examination in relation to certificates of competence for drivers and attendants. There are specific training courses and exams on poultry and for livestock, such as pigs and cattle. There are no specific rules regarding the duration of the training.

Training of enforcement agents: all official veterinarians of the competent authority, working in slaughterhouses or in the live animal trade field, receive specific training on the relevant legislation and work instructions and complete an internship with experienced colleagues. The training programme consists of several modules that are given at a central location. There is a written exam at the end of each module. In the first four to five months of this course the veterinarians do an internship at one or more slaughterhouses. During this period they are also trained on the subject of animal welfare with respect to the transport of live animals, slaughter and related operations. When official veterinarians are working in the live animal trade field they have to follow an additional training programme, which includes the subject animal welfare during transport. Other inspectors of the competent authority, for example those conducting road-side checks, also receive training about relevant legislation and work instructions. They start by working in duos with experienced inspectors; this period's duration depends on their previous experience and relevant knowledge.

These courses cover all relevant animal species, with the exception of very rare species.

Portugal: training courses for drivers and staff handling the animals are organised by private training entities that are certified by the competent body of the Ministry of agriculture, under the supervision of the veterinary competent authority. The authorities responsible for animal welfare on transport controls have specific training, given by the veterinary competent authority.

The veterinary competent authority establishes the training programme procedures, namely the qualification requirements of the trainers, trainee admission conditions, training programmes, duration, etc. For each training course the private training entity must submit the necessary documentation, so that the course can be approved. Training courses are monitored and supervised by the competent body of the Ministry of agriculture, to ensure compliance with the established rules. There is a final evaluation test, in which the veterinary competent authority participates as president of the jury overseeing the evaluation.

The duration of the training depends on the type of course (for example, 18 hours for courses to be attended by drivers that carry out short distance transport and 22 hours for long distance transport). The species covered are those mentioned in Article 17(2) of Regulation 1/2005.

Sweden: in Sweden, there are training courses for the personnel handling the animals (for certificates of competence) and guidelines on controls for the enforcement agents. The certificates of competence are issued for the transport of different species: poultry, horses, bovines, pigs, goats and sheep. The courses on poultry and horse transport are one-day courses; the courses for pig, goat, sheep and bovine transport are two-day courses. The courses have taken place online for the last year, because of the pandemic.

Training for long journeys

In the questionnaire, Member States were also asked whether they have instructions, training courses or checklists on controls as per Articles 14 and 18 of Regulation 1/2005, which concern long journeys. Article 14 requires the competent authority of the place of departure to carry out checks to verify that the transporters indicated in the journey log have the corresponding valid transporter authorisations, valid certificates of approval for means of transport for long journeys and valid certificates of competence for drivers and attendants, and that the journey log submitted by the organiser indicates compliance with the Regulation. Article 18 concerns the certificate of approval for means of transport by road used for long journeys.

Question:

Do you have instructions and training or checklists on controls according to Article 14 and Article 18 of Regulation 1/2005?

Not all responses from the eight Member States were conclusive on whether they have such checklists or not. Four Member States replied that they do have checklists.

In terms of individual responses, the following points can be noted:

Austria: a checklist is available and is intended to serve as a practical aid to affected persons in their daily work. The use of the checklist during inspections is not mandatory.

Belgium: training for inspectors is organised every few years, but there is no set frequency.

Bulgaria: there are standard operating procedures.

Finland: for Article 14, there are instructions for controls of journey logs but no checklists. Regarding Article 18, there is a checklist for regional competent authorities for the approval of means of transport by road.

Germany: a manual contains requirements, checklists and practical advice on measures to be taken by the competent authority prior to a long journey. The same applies to the official procedure for the approval of road transport vehicles. In addition, some higher level authorities have issued specific requirements for the control and approval of long journeys to distant third countries.

Netherlands: the training course for the certificate of competence is available on the internet. There are also some agricultural training centres that offer courses. The duration of these courses is usually one day. In order to obtain the certificate of competence, drivers and attendants must also sit an exam with a list of questions per species. Training for inspectors is organised every few years, but there is no set frequency.

Portugal: in Portugal, there are control manuals, work instructions, checklists and training courses on these topics.

Sweden: there is a checklist and a guideline for controls.

Conclusion

Member States provide training on compliance with the rules on animal welfare in transport, as required by the provisions of Regulation 1/2005. The duration and the frequency of the training courses, as well as organisational aspects and division of responsibility, vary considerably

The EPRS [implementation assessment](#) on Regulation 1/2005 noted 'mixed' findings regarding the impact of training, education and certification on animal welfare. Based on literature research, the authors concluded that 'training, education and certification on animal welfare during transport are necessary ... and may lead to positive changes'. Even if training 'does not guarantee a high level of animal welfare', 'all stakeholders need to be trained and need to work with good equipment for a better animal welfare'.

Parliament recalled those findings in its 2019 [resolution](#) on the implementation of Regulation 1/2005. It called on the Member States to provide awareness-raising and information activities regarding the fitness of animals for transport, 'including solid, regular and mandatory training courses, education and certification for drivers, transporters, traders, assembly centres, slaughterhouses, veterinarians, border agents and any other operator involved in the transport of animals in order to reduce the high levels of fitness infringements'. It also called on operators to provide for the thorough training of drivers and attendants in line with Annex IV to the Regulation, so as to ensure the correct treatment of animals; and on the Commission to support training activities aimed at drivers and transport companies.

MAIN REFERENCES

[Regulation \(EC\) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations, European Implementation Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, October 2018.

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Baltussen et al., [Study on the impact of Regulation \(EC\) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport](#), 2011 (at the request of the European Commission).

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eprs@ep.europa.eu (contact)

www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu (intranet)

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