

**COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY ON THE PROTECTION OF
ANIMALS DURING TRANSPORT (ANIT)**

**PUBLIC HEARING ON
“RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRANSPORT OPERATORS
AND OTHER PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS
(INCLUDING BEST PRACTICES)”**

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Presentations by experts:

Romain Bardy, CEO, Bardy Bresse

Cristina Bungardean, Head of Controls, Romanian Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety
Authority (ANSVSA)

Tea Dronji , Veterinarian and Project Manager, AWF/TSB Animal Welfare Foundation

Caroline Rowley, Director, Ethical Farming Ireland

Michael Gore, Managing Director, Belgian Federation of Slaughterhouses (FEBEV)

BRUSSELS

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1-002-0000

IN THE CHAIR: TILLY METZ*Chair of the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport**(The hearing opened at 9.02)*

1-003-0000

Chair. – Good morning everybody, I hope you are all doing fine. So let's start. We have three hours this morning and also, as usual, we have some experts and today we are speaking about responsibilities of transport operators and other private stakeholders, including also speaking about best practices, if they are.

So, the adoption of the draft agenda. The agenda can be adopted if there are no objections. I don't see anybody raising their hand. Then the minutes of the following ANIT meeting are adopted with no objections, so the meeting of 25 February.

Welcome again. Like for the previous meetings, we will work today on the mixed format again with Members here in the room but also connected from their respective workplace. The meeting, as I said already, is dedicated today to the companies and private stakeholders.

We invited indeed six experts, there are only going to be five, one was not able to come but said it only yesterday. We asked for a replacement but he couldn't give us one. So that's a little bit of an issue that we have: only five experts today but that gives us a little bit more time for an exchange.

They will share their experiences on the enforcement of the Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 from the perspective of the private stakeholders such as transport operators and other actors and intermediaries. This hearing will attempt to provide insights on the challenges faced by the stakeholders as well as common cases of non-compliance with the Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.

Again, as for the last meetings, some instructions for an optimal functioning of this mixed meeting. We can use today interpretation in French, German, Italian, Dutch, English, Danish, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, Hungarian, Slovak and Romanian. Let me remind you that the interventions by telephone or audio connection are not interpreted as the interpreters need to see your face. So, you also have to take your mask off if you are connected remotely. Like usually, please speak slowly and avoid reading your notes, the interpreters will appreciate it. And, as always, don't forget to push the 'speak' button.

Please be reminded that Members present in the room must wear their face mask, including when speaking, except the Chair. Sorry, I'm taking advantage here, I don't like this feeling but it is indeed easier to speak and to breathe, but you know that. So I'm sorry for that, and I think the measure is going to be extended even after 25 April so that we have to wear masks in the room. Yes, so I'm sorry for that, honestly.

Let's start. Responsibilities of transport operators and private stakeholders, including best practices. First of all, we welcome the five experts all participating in our meeting via remote connection. We have Mr Romain Bardy, CEO of Bardy Bresse. We have Dr Cristina Bung rdean, Head of Service in the General-Directorate for Official Controls, National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority from Romania. We have Dr Tea Dronji , veterinarian and project manager, Animal Welfare Foundation. We have Ms Caroline Rowley, Director of Ethical Farming Ireland and we have Dr Michael Gore from the National Belgian Federation of slaughterhouses.

So, as I said, we also invited Mr Elvidas Spikioladis, who apologised yesterday as he unfortunately cannot join us this morning. He was also from a private company, just to inform you.

The experts, you will have the floor for a presentation for seven minutes followed by a debate with our Members. Thank you in advance for respecting the speaking time and the timetable, even if we have three hours, is nevertheless limited. After the presentation, we will have a round of questions and answers starting by the coordinators. Normally we are all connected fine this morning.

So please, Mr Bardy, I give you the floor for seven minutes. You have the floor. Good morning and welcome to the ANIT Committee.

1-004-0000

Romain Bardy, *CEO, Bardy Bresse*. – First of all, I would like to thank you for today's exchange. Transporters aren't often given the floor, so I will take this opportunity to briefly express the feelings of a French transporter of live animals.

First of all, it is important to differentiate between transporters and exporters. I have been stressing this since 2015 at the working meetings I have attended. A live-animal transporter provides a transportation service; it does not trade animals. The authorities often confuse the two, thinking that transporters transport their own animals. There is certainly a commercial relationship between the person who exports or has his animals transported and the transport company, which in 60% to 70% of cases, I think, is a service provider. It is important to stress this, as a service provider has not only a performance obligation, i.e. an obligation to do work properly, but also a role that goes beyond animal delivery. For example, in my case, for animals of high genetic value, animals have something else to provide once they've been transported: not necessarily slaughter; they could be used for breeding, calving, or something else. So it is very important to distinguish clearly between a transporter for hire and a transport company transporting its own animals.

Since 2015, following the entry of new countries into the European Union, we have seen the emergence of transporters that could be considered low-cost. As a result, all the efforts made by companies like mine have been undermined by the fact that, along the way, new operators have begun to offer their services. I think the situation has got worse in the last three or four years. All the efforts made by companies from the first countries to join the EU have been undermined. In fact, this is often evident in videos criticising animal transport: they very rarely feature companies that have been established for a long time.

I have been in this business since the 1990s and I've seen the changes made to improve animal welfare, including progress with equipment and the establishment of transit centres for unloading animals during transport. So I am certain that the transport of live animals has made a huge leap forward in terms of animal welfare. However, every time there are newcomers – and not to lump all Eastern countries together – we have seen the arrival of operators who, unfortunately, mostly come from new emerging countries and who, perhaps owing to a lack of training or simply out of thirst for new markets, have dragged transport in this area down, meaning that today some companies view the transport of live animals as nothing more than a commercial activity. It is not a vocation for them, as it is for some transport companies. But I am quite certain that if you do not do this transport work as a proper vocation, the result will only ever be disastrous.

We have seen an almost 50% drop in rates for our services. I don't know who's responsible for it, but by having this level of competition for transport of this kind, it is difficult to make our customers understand that there are rules now. Personally, I think the 2005 regulation is

complex but very detailed and satisfactory. I think enforcing it properly would already be a vast improvement and it does not need to be overhauled, as some may claim.

1-005-0000

Cristina Bung rdean, *Head of Controls, ANSVSA*. – Good morning! It's good to be back. I wish to thank Parliament and the Committee for the invitation. My name is Cristina Bung rdean. I represent the Romanian Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority, and along with my colleagues I will express our viewpoint on Regulation No 1/2005.

As stated in the introduction, the issue of well-being is a matter of general interest and has been on the agenda of many Member States in recent times, as can also be seen from Member States' agendas during their presidencies of the Council of the European Union.

Like other states, Romania has shown great commitment to improving animal welfare standards. It held a seminar on this topic where experts from other Member States shared their experience. Good practice – what we want to happen and what we see happening – is becoming common practice.

Precisely to improve matters, Romanian has amended its legislation at national level on many occasions in recent years. The latest amendments were adopted by the Romanian Parliament last year in the form of a law that introduces major changes for both road and maritime transport and makes improvements, with it being mandatory to follow best practices. National legislation has been adopted in support of these standards, with the most recent being the act adopted last year on the authorisation of vessels used in maritime transport, which, in addition to involving experts from other competent authorities – the Romanian Naval Authority and independent authorised inspectors – also limits the length of time for which authorisations are valid. In Romania, the period of validity is now three years for maritime transport, for sea-going vessels. The process is already underway – two such vessels have been authorised under the new regulations – and will certainly continue this year when the validity of other such vessels expires.

However, we feel that we have to learn from previous incidents and tighten up measures. This has resulted in the development of new procedures and guidelines, such as the procedure for responding to incidents at exit points, amending existing guidelines, as in the case of checks on animal well-being at border inspection posts, and also amending the rules on penalties. A project is being developed to support the implementation of these new regulations.

Last but not least, we believe that all the efforts Romanian has made will certainly continue, and must be supported, to ensure things improve. As the speaker before me said, there are several actors involved in the transport of animals: the organisers – be this the breeder, the exporter, the holding centre owner or the transporter – are the ones who in practice are authorised under Regulation No 1/2005 and it is they who are directly involved in the activity – and the competent authorities, clearly. We feel that responsibilities should be clearly laid down in law for each of these actors, according to their activities in the transport of animals.

Similarly, in the case of training requirements, as the level of training of those involved was mentioned, it may be that a more uniform approach would iron out any discrepancies that may still arise.

Another issue we cast a critical eye over in the legislative act concerns the possibility of extending the list of species currently subject to regulation, and why not, as domestic animals could also be regulated when it comes to transfers of ownership and trade. There may already be requirements, they exist, but not everything is covered in the way that it is for other species.

We would also consider that linking the provisions of this act to provisions contained in other acts, such as those whose scope covers hauliers and the journey and rest times with which they are required to comply under other existing legislation, may help to eliminate case of differing interpretations. In practice, little by little, as the rules are brought together, things can be improved and the discrepancies liable to arise will be eliminated.

Thank you. This was what I wanted to say.

1-006-0000

Caroline Rowley, *Director, Ethical Farming Ireland*. – Madam Chair, thank you for the invitation. I'd like to take the opportunity to talk about my experiences and observations of the live export industry from Ireland.

The first responsibility of all transporters, exporters and the competent authorities is to ensure that Regulation (EC) No 01/2005 is fully adhered to, particularly in regards feeding times for unweaned animals as they very vulnerable. There's a responsibility to ensure that all the needs of animals are met and health and welfare is maintained throughout the whole journey, right up until the final destination.

Ireland is at a disadvantage geographically because we're an island. But that's no excuse for compromising welfare. The regulation has been set for a reason, and we cannot pick and choose what to comply with as it suits us. The export of unweaned calves from Ireland has not been conducted in line with the regulation as calves are going between 24 and 30 hours with no feed.

Chapter 5 of Annex 1 states that journey times should not exceed eight hours, however there is a derogation. Longer journey times are permitted. Unweaned calves must after nine hours of travel be given one hour rest where they're given water and if necessary feed. They can then be transported for a further nine hours, after which they must be unloaded and fed.

Feed for unweaned calves is milk replacer, and it's not possible to feed them without unloading as they have to be fed individually. There are normally around 300 calves in each truck over three tiers and it's not possible for the truck driver to reach them all. The ferry journey alone from Ireland to Cherbourg is 18 hours, add a couple of hours either end and we're now looking at 24 hours with no feed, but often more.

Transporters have a responsibility to carry out the journey time in the shortest possible time with no unnecessary delays. However, it is common to see trucks at the ferry ports four or five hours before the ferry departure time. I've seen journey logs showing that calves were loaded at 12:30 midday and the ferry didn't leave until 10 o'clock that evening. It's best practice to feed calves three hours before loading, as they have to relax to digest the feed. So that would mean a gap of 11.5 hours with no food for the calves before they even got on the ferry. And in this particular instance these calves must have gone, at least 31 hours with no feed, which is far in excess of the 19 hours set out in the regulation.

At 15 to 21 days old calves have very little body fat in reserve to tide them over during the long journey. They've underdeveloped immune systems, and irregular feeding and stress of transport means that they cannot regulate their body temperature effectively, which further compromises immunity. Article 3 of the regulation states that no person shall transport animals in a way that will cause any injury or undue suffering to them. There's no doubt that leaving a 15-day-old calf over 30 hours with no feed will cause harm and suffering.

I don't know what the mortality rate is as the department haven't been able to give me the figure, but I have seen video evidence of deceased calves at the lairages in Cherbourg. I've seen drone footage taken by one of the main transporters in Ireland that showed a pile of dead calves

on the ground next to one of the transport trucks. The driver was inside, sweeping out the truck, laughing, smiling, waving at the camera. It was obviously completely normal for this to happen.

I've also seen video evidence of terrible abuse and mistreatment of calves as they arrived at the lairages in Cherbourg. NGOs Eyes on Animals and L214 have carried out two investigations, one at each lairage in Cherbourg, and on each occasion horrific abuse is uncovered and deceased calves were observed.

My question is why didn't the truck drivers intervene? Where were they when this abuse was going on and why wasn't it reported? Transporters have a responsibility to highlight any incidents they encounter to the appropriate authorities,, it should not be up to NGOs to highlight these issues.

I have heard a claim by a prominent Irish exporter that they are using a slow-release feed for calves that takes 17 hours to ingest, as if this is some kind of justification for breaching the regulation around feeding times. There's no evidence that such feed exists or that it would be suitable for 15-day-old calves. But anyhow it's irrelevant. The regulation is there for a reason and must be adhered to, and sanctions have to be applied for non-compliance against the organisers, the transporters and ultimately the competent authority for approving these journeys.

There are some transporters who are taking responsibility and acting accordingly. Hunland is a major transporter of livestock based in Hungary. They have just announced that they would no longer transport unweaned calves. They say you should not transport hungry unweaned calves that you cannot feed. In our opinion, unweaned calves should not be transported over nine hours. They have stated that if they get any requests to transport unweaned calves over long distances, they were now decline.

I have read claims that the mortality rate is low during calf exports, but I haven't seen any figures myself. However, it must be noted that death is not the only indicator of poor welfare. I've seen footage of calves arriving at Cherbourg visibly weak and exhausted, with runny noses and shrunken stomachs. There has been a lot of talk about a study conducted by Wageningen University in the Netherlands on the antibiotic usage in farms as if it is an indicator of low mortality and good health and welfare of the Irish calves.

The study was on antibiotic usage and it was conducted between 2013 and 2015, which is before the calf exports from Ireland boomed. It did state that Irish calves required 30% less antibiotic usage than other calves from other countries, but that's not a good indicator of good welfare from Ireland.

One explanation for the lower antibiotic usage is that calves born in spring generally require less antibiotics than other calves born later in the year. And in Ireland nearly all the farmers follow compact calving, where the majority of calves are born in spring. It's therefore disingenuous to use this study as justification for continuously breaching the regulations around feeding requirements for unweaned calves.

With regard to sea journeys, there can be no guarantee of welfare. The vessels are all very old converted cargo vessels. I've seen marine surveyors' reports that showed excessive corrosion and stability issues, yet the vessels were still approved for use. I've seen evidence of certificates of approvals being granted before the final inspections were completed or before the reports were submitted. I've also seen certificates of approval granted beyond the times recommended in the marine surveyors' and veterinary reports.

I've seen lame bulls loading on the vessels at the docks. I've even seen a loading report where the vet stated that there was a lame bull but he couldn't get to him in time, so he was let go on the vessel anyway. I've seen evidence of bulls having their tails pulled, bent backwards. I've seen them hit around the head with sticks and paddles. I've seen evidence of bulls with horns in a pen mixed with bulls without horns, which is a breach of the regulation.

And one of the major problems is that vessels are often leaving in stormy conditions, despite the fact that the majority of them have stability issues, meaning that if they hit winds of gale force six or above they will roll and pitch excessively. And this is happening all the time from Ireland.

In fact on Sunday, two shipments left. They are currently on the way to Libya and in the afternoon when they left they both hit winds in excess of 27 knots. The captains of the vessels have to get a 96-hour weather report, so they know what conditions are ahead and they should not be leaving when it is predicted that there will be storms, but it's happening all the time.

Despite some claims by some stakeholders, vets do not travel with the shipments outside the EU. And there is no documentation up until the final destination. In 2020 there was one shipment where a vet was on board, but he got off at a Spanish port, and in 2019 that was the same. When they do travel, they're not going up to the final destination.

I don't know what happens to animals once they disembark at the destination port because that's where the paper trail ends. However, there are shipments to Libya and Turkey in the summer months when temperatures are in excess of 40 degrees. Once unloaded the cattle are normally loaded onto open trucks not suitable for transporting livestock and they may travel like this for several hours in excessive heat. The competent authority is responsible for ensuring the regulation is enforced right up until the final destination, which would be the farm or the feed lot, but this isn't taken seriously. I have asked for documentation for this part of the journey but was told I would have to go to the local authority in Libya.

It's unacceptable that sea journeys are considered to be rest time. We recently had a situation where there were two livestock vessels traveling from pillar to post for months on end with very young bulls on board. The vessels are not floating barns. The animals have to deal with high noise levels, no daylight, no fresh air, high humidity and ammonia fumes that get worse as the journey goes on. They have no fresh water, it's desalinated and just like all mammals, they suffer from motion sickness. This is not rest time.

As far as recommendations go, I think we need to have harmonisation amongst all the Member States, and we need central databases where we can access information such as on the authorised transporters' sea vessel certification, sanctions and detentions, and that kind of thing. A vet must travel on every shipment for the whole journey and a time limit must be introduced. If a vet doesn't want to travel to Libya, there shouldn't be a shipment to Libya.

Unweaned animals shouldn't be transported for more than four hours. But I think first of all, what we really have to do is start by fully adhering to the existing regulation in all aspects, and those responsible for breaches must be sanctioned, whoever they are. Complaints to the Commission must be taken seriously and dealt with and competent authorities must also be sanctioned where there is continued non-compliance, as we are seeing here in Ireland.

1-007-0000

Tea Dronji , *Veterinarian and Project Manager, AWF/TSB Animal Welfare Foundation.* – Madam Chair, dear Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased and happy that we are all here today working together with the attempt to solve the long-lasting problems that induce undue suffering in animals during transport.

The aim of today's discussion is the role of the transporter and its impact on the welfare of animals during transport. Transporters are directly responsible for the welfare of animals during the transport and all the related operations. They are responsible for compliance with transport practices specified in the regulation. They need to transport animals that are fit for the intended journey on adequate transport vehicles that are suitable for the species and category of the animals transported. The transporter also guarantees that animals are entrusted to trained personnel with sufficient knowledge to safeguard the welfare of the animals.

A transporter can also play the role of organiser. They can transport animals by road, air, rail or by ship. Besides all of that, the transporter needs to ensure that the animals are transported on clean and disinfected vehicles and that the animals do not, at any stage of the journey, come in contact with animals of lower health status. And most of all, the transporter authorised for long journey needs to have a feasible contingency plan that takes into account all contingency situations that can occur during the transport on a specific route. So, we can see that the regulation puts a huge burden of different responsibilities on the shoulders of the transporter, and yet it does not require any specific training for them.

In the last ten years, the Animal Welfare Foundation spent almost 300 days in the field. We performed 79 investigations and investigated 826 road and 42 sea transport vehicles that were operated by 170 transport companies. The transported animals originated from 17 Member States and 90% of the animals that we inspected were exported outside the European Union. In total, 89 of the transport companies were found to violate the regulation, out of which 47% of transporters were found to repeatedly violate the regulation. 84% of all the documented animal consignments were in violation of at least one requirement of the regulation.

As explained before, the transporter is responsible for transporting animals in accordance with the requirements of the regulation. The most frequent violations that were documented and are linked to the transporters are: space above the heads of the animals, allowing them to stand in their natural position was found inadequate in 100% of lamb transport, 78% of calve transports and 24% of bovine exported to Turkey. 44% of animal consignments observed at the Turkish border were overcrowded, meaning that the animals had no space to move and reach the drinking devices inside the road transport vehicle. 50% of animal consignments exported to Russia between December 2018 and March 2019 had temperatures en route reaching minus 10 degrees and lower: meaning that the temperatures inside the animal compartments are very likely lower than 5 degrees Celsius.

As a contrast, when we measure temperature inside animal compartments on the Turkish border, we found that 96% exceeded the allowed 30 degrees Celsius. Drinking devices were not adequate for the species and category of animals transported on 47% of the road transport vehicles. 41% of animal consignments had inadequate bedding. This figure also includes leakage of animal faeces and litter from the vehicles. 46% of road transport vehicles had inadequate partitions, meaning that the partitions were constructed or positioned in a way posing the risk of injuries to animals inside the vehicles.

Already in 2014, the Animal Welfare Foundation started looking into the transport of animals by sea. Some of the main non-compliances that are still persisting are: the incorrect planning of the estimated time of the journey and the final destination and the missing transport for the sea part of the journey.

Even though we welcome the efforts of the Commission issuing different recommendations, such as network documents, animal transport guidelines, establishing an animal welfare platform, these recommendations are not legally binding and, thus, are of little use to Member

States' competent authorities. Some Member States implemented them in their national legislation as higher standards and it resulted in unfair competition.

Therefore, we ask Members of Parliament to work towards the establishment of a system that will clearly define the conditions and modalities for the commercial transport of animals. Like for example, clear legal requirements for the authorised Type 2 transport by sea and provision of a valid certificate of approval for vessels when requesting the transport authorisation.

For the transporters, depending on the mode of transport: to comply with all related regulations such as MARPOL and legislation on drivers' working hours. For the competent authorities: to apply the regulation and only authorise transporters with feasible contingency plans for a particular mode of transport and to only approve journeys that have clearly defined transporters for all parts of the journey involved. To stop the export of live animals to third countries until a feasible working system is in place to make sure EU regulations are followed.

At present, Europe still allows the export of animals, even if they are transported in a way that violates the provisions of our own European legislation. How can we then expect transporters from third countries to meet the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 if we in the European Union ourselves are not respecting the very requirements that we have legislated?

1-008-0000

Michael Gore, *Managing Director, Federation of Belgian Meat (FEBEV)*. – Chairman, committee members, good morning and thank you for participating in this hearing today. Our federation consists of some 130 members who are active in the red meat sector. The poultry sector is therefore not part of our federation's activities. We were created in 2004 from a merger of two other federations.

It is important to note that the entire meat production chain in Belgium today represents some 90 000 jobs.

As mentioned, we are active in the red meat sector. This means that we represent slaughterhouses, cutting plants and companies that trade in meat of the type you can see on the screen. The issue we would like to raise with the committee today is our heat protocol. We have been looking for ways to deal with the changing weather and more extreme conditions that we have experienced in recent years.

We are indeed experiencing hotter and longer summers, and temperatures are continuously rising as well. Within our federation, discussions have been taking place for some time about how we could tackle these challenges. In doing so, we had to consider three elements: it is not only about animal welfare, but also about the welfare of the people in our establishments and that of the official representatives of the inspection services.

In order to find out what the current state of affairs was, we checked the mortality figures during transport from the producers to the slaughterhouses, as well as the mortality figures once the animals were delivered to the slaughterhouses, taking 2019 as the reference year. In doing so, we relied on the official figures that we received from the Belgian Federal Food Agency.

The results indicated that no seasonal differences could be identified. However, we could observe that the mortality rates were slightly higher during the transport phase than when the animals were stabled in slaughterhouses. So, we did not have an immediate indicator to enable us to take clear steps in terms of when to adopt additional measures in the context of these temperature differences.

What indicators can we put forward to identify additional measures to improve the transport of animals during such weather conditions?

We did the following: we placed the slaughterhouses that are members of our federation on a map of Belgium, together with the weather stations of the Royal Meteorological Institute (RMI), in order to identify which measuring points could be relevant based on the location of our farms.

In addition, we requested all 2019 meteorological data for the weather stations in the regions where our slaughterhouses are located. We made a detailed analysis of the data per weather station for the period from June to September 2019 in order to extract the warmest days and to see how we could take further steps.

However, we found that the standard deviation between the different stations remained relatively small, except closer to the coast, where the standard deviation was a little lower.

So we made an analysis of the temperature differences, based on the days and the location of the slaughterhouses. We came to the conclusion that if we take one measurement point as the reference point, we can actually use it to determine the measures for the whole of Belgium. We did not include the measuring point near the coast because of the small temperature difference. We therefore opted for the worst case scenario. As a starting point to initiate measures, we used the RMI's colour code, taking as reference the municipality of Uccle, which is centrally located within Belgium.

Based on the colour codes that the RMI establishes daily and weekly, specific actions were undertaken, either at slaughterhouse level, or at transport or producer level. If the colour code is green, no extra measures are required. In the case of colour code yellow, however, additional measures are required. Colour code yellow is clearly defined. This is a heatwave, when there are five consecutive days with a maximum temperature of 25 degrees or more and three of those days with a temperature of 30 degrees or more, or when the temperature exceeds 32 degrees for at least one day. For such cases, we have adopted a number of measures at the slaughterhouse level in order to adjust the planning so that waiting times at slaughterhouses can be reduced as much as possible.

A second element is the organisation of the slaughtering itself. In Belgium, slaughtering is governed by law and has to start at a certain time. In the event of a heat wave, we have to request derogations at federal level, whereas animal welfare is a regional competence. So we have to make a number of agreements at federal level so that we can organise transport at cooler times of day. And measures are requested to monitor the climate within stables and barns.

At the level of the transporters, the measures are currently partly in line with the regular measures that are taken.

In fact, at code yellow, slaughterhouses are, by and large, the controlling factor, based on the organisation of their slaughter planning and the monitoring of the waiting time within stables and barns.

Now let's take a look at colour code orange. This is also very clearly defined, at least at national level.

In this case, the same measures are taken at slaughterhouse level as for code yellow, but with the additional criterion that the animals must also be given water or extra ventilation.

This option is therefore left open (whereas with code red this option is removed). At the transport level, we adopt the elements from code yellow, but we also check the loading density and stop transports between certain hours, in this case between 2pm and 7pm.

In the event of code red, additional measures must be taken at the slaughterhouse level. At the transport level, the measures from the previous colour codes are maintained, but no transport is allowed between 12 pm and 8 pm.

The problem we have identified is that, in the past, we had to reapply for a derogation for every warm day that fell under these colour codes.

Thanks to this plan, we have obtained a systematic derogation for the duration of code yellow, orange and red at national level, but this competence is organised regionally. For us, a level playing field is of course important, just as it is at European level. We must therefore carry out the necessary work at national level so that the regions, at their level... *(the chairman interrupted the speaker and asked him to finish)*

We tested this system in 2020. It proved to be a functional tool. The key, of course, is communication. We are dealing with transporters, producers and slaughterhouses. So this all requires a deal of communication, also with our governments, both federally with the Food Agency, and regionally, where the Flemish Minister of Animal Welfare saw our efforts as a step forward in improving animal welfare during transport.

1-009-0000

Chair. – Thank you very much for your presentation. It is certainly important to analyse temperature, knowing that it is only one factor that has influence on animal welfare, a very important one, and the analyses were certainly interesting in that case.

Let's go to the coordinators, we have three minutes per coordinator, and we start with Mr Daniel Buda from the EPP. Please, you have the floor.

1-010-0000

Daniel Buda (PPE). – Madam Chair, I wish to thank our experts today very much for their presentations.

I would start from back to front, so to speak, with Mr Gore, concerning what is meant by the way in which slaughterhouses are organised. His was a very interesting and very important presentation for us, and I would like to ask whether there are a given number of farms assigned to a slaughterhouse in such a way that there is a correlation between the capacity of farms, on the one hand, and the capacity of slaughterhouses to slaughter their animals on the other? This is one question, and I am also interested in who organises the transport of those animals. Does the slaughterhouse itself organise this, and does it have its own transport fleet, or does it get operators from the net or private operators?

Returning to the first speaker, Mr Bardy, I noted something interesting as regards what is meant by a 'low-cost' transporter. I am interested in how we have arrived at this situation of having such low-cost transport, and would like to ask him whose fault this was. Has there, in a sense, been neglect on the part of the French authorities, who authorised this animal transportation and transporters that fail to comply with the standards, because that is the situation here, or are we are talking about unfair competition, which we face in various facets of the agricultural sector, as then we are surely talking about something else.

I also noted that in his view, as an actor in this field, so to speak, the regulation would be sufficient were it to be properly applied at Member State level. At the same time, I would ask like to ask what the mortality rate is for transported animals in the case of breeding stock. That is one the one hand. On the other hand, I would like to ask Cristina Bung rdean whether, as we have had this change in legislation in relation to the transport of animals, there is now a

requirement for a veterinarian to be present throughout the journey for transport by sea, because this for me is something very important to know.

Turning to Caroline Rowley, I understood, of course, that there is a problem with the transportation of calves and that this transportation takes place at a very young age. However, I would like to ask her whether in her capacity she has had discussions with farmers and the state authorities to find mechanisms for keeping calves on the farm until they are of weaning age? Or what solution does she see for ensuring that calves are not, so to say, subject to transport? Because at the moment we are simply criticising and not coming up with concrete solutions.

I would also like to ask Tea Dronji about the solutions she has, because I understood very clearly that she wants to stop the transport of animals to Libya. I would ask her whether she has identified other outlets for farmers from the European Union? Because here we are talking about millions of animals being transported every year, and we can't just say that we are closing a transport route. What are we putting in its place?

1-011-0000

Carmen Avram (S&D). – Thank you Madam Chair. I have first a question to Mr Bardy. The uneven enforcement of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 has unfair competition implications for transport companies that do their best to respect this European directive – the high standards of welfare for animals during transport. Because spending on training of the personnel, choosing the transport routes according to the best available resting points on the way, investing in modern and safe trucks and so on – all this put huge economic pressure on a responsible transporter.

So, Mr Bardy, in your opinion, which should be the most important ANIT recommendations in order to be sure we have a fair and even enforcement of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005?

To Dr Tea Dronji : thank you for your detailed answers to my questions. From what I understand, the main challenge lies on the organisers' shoulders, when it comes to the journey. So, if there is a mistake, than all the other actors will multiply the errors. How can Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 be revised so that organisers will be better equipped and at the same time more aware and liable for their role?

Ms Rowley, I found your presentation a bit surprising, given the fact that during the last hearing we heard an Irish expert in unweaned calves telling us about the new milk replacer, with a digestion of 17 hours that prevents animals facing starvation during transport – not to mention that some other experts explained that proper rubber nipples would allow the unweaned animals to be fed. Also, Ireland is a good-practice example.

So, I wanted to ask you if you are aware about this state-of-the art technology?

And I will switch to Romanian.

1-011-0500

Thank you very much, Ms Bung rdean for your answers to the written questions. I would like to return to my question, and would be grateful if you could elaborate. You say that the authorities are encountering problems when calculating transport times. Are these difficulties linked to flaws in the TRACES software or to the lack of, or inaccuracy of, the information provided by the transport organisers?

Secondly, what improvements did you see after the new legislation on animal welfare during transport entered into force in Romania? I ask because it is important to hear if there are good

and concrete results, since many audits carried out at European Union level mention a lack of technical knowledge among the veterinarians conducting checks on vessels. Thank you.

1-012-0000

Asger Christensen (Renew). – Madam Chair, we've had many hearings here in our committee in the past few months, and it is increasingly clear to us that we have problems with animal transport throughout Europe, but also with animal transport to third countries. It has shown, at least, that there are huge differences, and a distortion of competition when it comes to the way in which animals are transported. This is detrimental to animal welfare, and we must put a stop to it.

We had a good presentation today. I have some questions for the speaker. It looks like the 2005 regulation is not being implemented properly across the EU countries. If it were implemented, do you think we would have fair competition on a level playing field, and would it be possible to maintain animal welfare standards during transport?

I also think we have a major task on our hands in having the transport data verified, in other words making the data visible. I also think there are many transports for which there is no data available at all, and that is also something we need to look at.

There is a third area that I see as a major task: how will you help improve transport to third countries, whether it's by car or on skis? That's a real challenge. How do you think that task can be accomplished? Mr Buda was right when he said that we are transporting a lot of animals out of Europe. And if we're going to face up to that, then we're going to have to make sure we're transporting those animals in a manner that meets welfare standards.

1-013-0000

Rosanna Conte (ID). – Madam Chair, thank you to all the experts present today, with whom I am happy to be able to discuss the responsibilities of transport operators and, more generally, the latest developments in terms of animal welfare.

I am particularly pleased to see that best practice has been included on the agenda for this hearing. Indeed, while the ANIT committee was set up to shed light on shortcomings relating to animal welfare during transport, we cannot forget that most European transporters do comply with the rules and can set the example in order to improve practices in third countries, too.

We often hear, from many sides, that there is a need to radically amend the 2005 regulation, without bearing in mind that there is no more comprehensive legislation in the world than that in Europe, as far as animal transport is concerned. This does not mean there is no room for improvement, but it must be done in a balanced way. In this regard, I particularly agree with Mr Bardy when he says that we need to think about how to enforce the regulation, rather than drastically changing it by imposing further red tape on transport operators.

For example, in order to make transport faster – particularly with due regard for the animals being transported and in keeping with the push towards digitalisation of recent years, and especially recent months – the relevant forms could be computerised across Europe. This could facilitate controls whilst at the same time avoiding blockages along the route, so as not to harm the animals that it is our intention here to protect.

1-014-0000

Caroline Roose (Verts/ALE). – Chair, private operators have a very important role to play, as they are the ones in direct contact with the animals.

I have questions for all the speakers, Could each of you please explain what training in animal welfare transporters receive in your country or at your company? What is the minimum level

of training? How long does it last? Have any continuous training mechanisms been established so that training can be kept up to date?

I have a question for Ms Dronji . You talked about Turkey and Russia, but are there any significant differences between the two?

Mr Bardy, I have already had the opportunity to speak with you, and during these exchanges, you talked to me about the role of clients, traders and intermediaries using the services of transporters. We often forget about them. They are often more concerned about cost than about animal welfare. You said that companies are being undermined: do you believe you are losing business to competing transporters who do not comply with EU animal-welfare rules? Have you ever been pressured by clients or potential clients not to comply with EU animal-transport rules? For example, have you already been asked to follow unrealistic journey logs? At the moment transporters are the ones who are penalised for failing to comply with the law; to make sure the law is followed, should liability for clients be introduced? If clients were sanctioned, they would no doubt be more mindful of compliance with transport rules and less mindful of cost. You also talked about low-cost transporters. What kind of infringements do they commit?

Mr Gore, do you have any figures on the origins of animals slaughtered in Belgium? Are many animals reared in Belgium but slaughtered elsewhere, sometimes at the other end of Europe? You often talked about temperature during transport, but shouldn't preference be given to transporting carcasses or meat over live animals when they go to the slaughterhouse? In recent years, the European Commission has relied on an approach based on guides, recommendations and best practices. As a result, transporters can choose whether to follow them or not. Systems of this sort usually lead to unfair competition between transporters who choose to follow them and lose business and transporters who choose not to follow them. To make the situation fairer, should provisions contained in these guides be incorporated into legally binding texts that all transporters have to comply with? Lastly, have you noticed any differences in checks and sanctions among European countries? Do you think that introducing a harmonised sanctions regime would limit these infringements?

1-015-0000

Peter Lundgren (ECR). – Good morning everyone and thanks for the floor. I realise, in some way, we already have many good rules in place. The problem is: how do we make sure that the compliance is there with the rules? That is a major problem, as I see it, and we are now trying to create more legislation in this area and if there is no compliance it's absolutely no use at all, and that is a big problem, as I see it.

So, Mr Bardy, I have a question for you. The systematic breach of the regulation in certain areas and some Member States leads to unfair competition, resulting in an uneven playing field between transport operators in the different Member States, which in turn can lead to a race to the bottom. Regarding animal welfare standards during transport, the sanctions levels can be more than 10 times higher in some Member States than in others. And we need to develop a harmonised EU sanction system in order to ensure that penalties are effective, proportionate and dissuasive, taking into account repeated infringements. How would it, in your view, be possible to align sanctions across Member States to create a level playing field, which is fair for all operators in the EU?

And I also have a question to Mr Gore from FEBEV. In the Brussels Times of 18 October last year, we could read that in Belgium, veterinary inspectors from the Federal Food Safety Agency are present at slaughterhouses from half an hour before work starts until the last animal has passed through the process. They are concerned with not only animal welfare but also with hygiene and food safety.

However, if the federal inspectors notice an infringement of animal welfare rules, they have no power to act, then it often takes weeks before the complaint is dealt with. Here we can see a good system for animal control but it's failing when it comes to acting on infringements. What measures do you consider, Mr Gore, have to be taken to change this problem and what can other countries learn from this?

1-016-0000

Anja Hazekamp (The Left). – Chairman, before I begin my presentation, I would like to make an observation. I am extremely angry. The purpose of this committee of inquiry is to establish the truth about animal transport. When I read the answers of the Romanian representative, I can only conclude one thing: she is lying.

I do not say that lightly. Nor do I say it for the heck of it. She says that there were no problems with the transport of the 60 000 sheep on board the *Al Shuwaikh* to the Persian Gulf;

the temperature was not too high; the facilities on the ship were in order; mortality was only half a percent; and that there were no welfare problems on board, neither during loading nor unloading at the final destination.

Dr Bungardean, I was in Midia when this ship was loaded. I saw there that the sheep arrived in overcrowded trucks with insufficient head room. I witnessed the cruel mistreatment of the animals during loading.

For hours and even days, animals were dragged along the gangway by their ears, horns and legs. They were beaten with sticks and kicked. I was threatened and intimidated by the exporter. I tried in vain to report this to the police. I filed a report to the authorities in Constanta, at your office.

There, I was told that there are no animal welfare rules at all at sea.

Before you say that this is all wrong, let me warn you.

I have not only seen this. It is all recorded on film: everything. And there are tons of images from Animals International inspectors that were taken on arrival in Kuwait. In temperatures of up to 52 degrees Celsius, the animals that had survived the weeks-long journey were brutally unloaded. They were placed in small caged areas without any shelter and dropped dead on the spot. Many hundreds of carcasses were shovelled together with shovel trucks. So if you say there were no problems, I will gladly send you all the photos and videos we took. But I am afraid there is little point in that, because you are perfectly aware of the pictures, of course. In any case, I have no more questions for you.

I still have a few questions for the other experts. Dr Dronjic, I regularly hear from people who themselves export animals that their animals are transported first class. The *Animal Welfare Foundation* itself is often on the road inspecting animal transports. I am therefore curious to know how often you come across these first-class transports. How often do you see trucks on the road that are actually equipped with climate control and cameras among the animals? Or are these posh means of transport used only for super deluxe breeding stock and sport horses? We also know that sea transport is not a first-class means of transport. With all your experience in the field of maritime transport, could you please indicate the extent to which the Animal Transport Directive is being complied with here and the welfare of the animals on board?

Finally, one question to *Ethical Farming Ireland*. You replied to our written questions that it is simply impossible to export calves from Ireland in compliance with EU law.

Ms Rowley, what do you think of Ireland's plans to transport 10 000 young calves to the Netherlands by air this spring? These animals are also being transported without their mothers while they are still dependent on milk, only to be fattened up in the Netherlands, slaughtered and then re-exported to other countries, such as China. Because in the Netherlands, we hardly eat any veal and almost all of this meat is intended for export.

Fortunately, there is hope for the animals. This week, a study commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture was published which concluded that calf-fattening farms have no future in the Netherlands. The end is thus in sight for the transport of the 800 000 calves that are dragged to the Netherlands every year.

1-017-0000

Romain Bardy, *CEO, Bardy Bresse*. – Firstly, I want to be comprehensive in my answer because the questions all overlap somewhat. Transporting animals properly comes at a cost, so to come back to low-cost transporters, we know perfectly well and without any hypocrisy that the transport of live animals is in any event partly a business matter. Transporters are an important link in this chain, as they come at a cost, so low-cost transporters have come about purely because of a cost problem.

Secondly, I would like to say to everyone that, although we are talking today about bad practices for certain types of transport, rest assured: we are pointing out solely what is done badly. Work that is done well is highly unlikely to make it into newspapers or other media formats. As far as I am concerned, every form of transport should be treated the same way. Just because we transport animals to slaughterhouses, they should not be transported less well than animals with a high genetic value.

I also believe that this constant hypocrisy of always stigmatising the transporter must come to an end. If there are problems during transport, it may be because the transport was poorly prepared, but more often than not, it is because the animals were not loaded properly. I would like to sound the alarm very loudly here: some people have managed to film overloaded trucks and suffering animals because the vet who was supposed to be present when the animals were being loaded was not doing his or her job. Transporters have a commercial role with the people who deliver the animals to them; an advisory role: they must explain to exporters that this is not a good practice, but nowadays we cannot shy away from the fact that there is competition. If Bardy does not agree to a transport request because we think the conditions are not good enough, tomorrow morning, any Tom, Dick or Harry will be able to take it on. So transporters are sick of having to police loading. When animals suffer during transport because there are too many of them and therefore they do not have enough space, it is because an authority did not do the job properly to begin with.

I would also like to go back to the Ireland problem. There is a calving season; if they are being transported, it must be out of necessity. Transporters cannot take animals from a farm and head to Spain without anyone knowing. Everyone knows what the transport times are, everyone knows what the journey times are, so I don't see why people are offended that there are calves on trucks. Maybe the work is done badly, maybe there are things that could be improved, but to make out that transporters are the only ones responsible for the bad work and that they initiated the shipment is completely wrong, in my opinion.

I am here to defend my profession, I am here to defend transporters from other countries. I am not here to blame low-cost transporters: they are simply people who wanted to enter the market but had not really received the right training. You should know that currently a Member State cannot discipline a transporter from another Member State: blacklisting a company is banned. I know that in France, there have been problems with transport companies in the past, but it has

not been possible to ban them from French territory. The Commission has not provided a solution and transporters who do their work badly are not really punished, as the country in which the offence was committed does not have the right to penalise them. I think that is one of the first points to improve.

As far as temperatures are concerned, I am the grandson of a farmer. In our company, I would point out, my drivers receive initial training from the competent authorities in my country; but it is now impossible for them to hit the road without having received in-house training. The certificate you get from a training course does not make you a good transporter. The only thing that makes someone a good driver is experience, which is why in my own company we have developed in-house training.

To address the more general problems, there should be instructions at some borders to make sure that lorries do not wait for the requisite customs or veterinary documents for hours. As one of the speakers said earlier, I think coordination could be better at European and even extra-European level, perhaps through the digitisation of documents, to prevent unnecessary waiting. We spoke earlier about lorries carrying calves that arrived three or four hours before the ferry was due to leave: that is a shipping company requirement. Care must therefore be taken not to always stigmatise the transporters, who also have economic and practical realities to deal with in the exercise of their profession. Of course, there are emergency plans: this is still transport we are talking about, a mechanical activity. It is up to us to deal with problems and solve them in the best possible way for the animals. I think we should not forget that this is what more than 80% of European transporters and companies do.

1-018-0000

Chair. – I consciously gave Mr Bardy a little more time firstly because he did not use up all his speaking time when he first spoke, but also because he is the only representative of a company here. That is why I consciously gave him a little more time.

1-019-0000

But I'm coming now to the next speakers and they have a maximum of four minutes per expert. So I give the floor to Dr Cristina Bung rdean and there was a strong reaction to your presentation with Ms Anja Hazekamp, so you have the opportunity to answer and to react. Please, you have the floor for a maximum of four minutes.

1-020-0000

Cristina Bung rdean, Head of Controls, ANSVSA. – In response to Mr Buda, the current legislation stipulates that an official veterinary doctor must be available for journeys of over ten days and when the temperature on lading is over 35 degrees, but amendments have been drafted to the regulation to the effect that an official veterinary doctor has to be present irrespective of the temperature or duration.

In response to Ms Avram's question on what difficulties have been encountered in planning, most of the time these were due to the correlation between the planning of a journey or what the system provided to determine the maximum number of hours to be met by a driver and the rest periods laid down in the regulation on the work of drivers in general. As regards the improvements brought about by the new legislation, the participation of maritime experts has helped the tasks of veterinarians, in the sense that all technical requirements, stability and other vessel plans that do not fall within the animal welfare and accommodation sphere are taken over by the experts from the Romanian Naval Authority and by independent experts, authorised engineers.

1-021-0000

Tea Dronji , Veterinarian and Project Manager, AWF/TSB Animal Welfare Foundation. – Madam Chair, I would like to state at the beginning that having just four minutes, maybe I will not have the time to answer all the questions verbally but I will prepare a written answer.

I will start with the question from Mr Buda, who asked how could we then deal with all the animals that need to be exported, he cited Libya as an example. Here I would like to give back this question and say to the European Commission that we should establish a system that would shift the export of live animals to the meat and carcass trade and also to the semen and embryo trade to third countries.

Then, I have here the question from Ms Avram. She was asking about the organisers' role. I completely agree with her. The organisers, according to this regulation as it is now, are not required to have any training but they have a huge – the biggest – responsibility, to organise the whole journey. We have also seen that for example when a journey involves different modalities of transport, for example road and sea vessel transport, that there is always a lack of an organiser for the sea part of the journey. So the organisers need to put a very big emphasis in their training and also in establishing an overall organiser who then needs to organise the road part of the journey and also the sea part of the journey.

And that should be all organised by one organiser, and that is extremely difficult to do because, for example, in a port there can be 40, 50 or 60 trucks. That means the road transport vehicles are then joined to one single sea transport vehicle and so to organise the stages so that the trucks are not waiting in order to be loaded onto the vessel or for example that the ports have housing equipment that would keep the animals while the vessel is being loaded. All that still needs to be tackled and resolved, which adds up to a big animal welfare impact on the transport of the animals.

Then, I have Mr Christensen's question, in which he asked what could be done in different Member States in order to apply the regulation exactly. So, here, I think that what would be the best is to establish a group of experts – I will tackle different questions here – for example, we have seen from our investigations that the authorisation of the sea transport vessel is very problematic, because it is done by different experts who have different standards. We already suggested to the Commission in 2014 that it would be very good to have a group of specialised experts, who would then with their knowledge, inspect the vessel. And then on the basis of their report the competent authorities from different Member States – depending on where the transporter would apply for the vessel authorisation – would issue the certificate.

There should be also much clearer requirements: for example, what are the requirements to have a plausible watering system for the unweaned animals. What would this be? How should it be constructed? etc. So clear instructions, with a clear checklist for the competent authorities laying down what it means to be suitable and what it means to be unsuitable

Also, there is an urgent need to have more official controls en route in the Member States. As we are traveling around the Member States cooperating with different competent authorities, we see that not a lot of Member States have on en-route inspection teams. For example, like the Member State of Slovenia, they have their own mobile units of veterinary inspectors.

For Ms Roose's question, what training should the transporter receive? I am not a competent authority. I cannot answer this question of what are the different training requirements are according to the Member States. But I can say from my 22 years of experience on the road that you can see from the attendant if he or she is well trained because you can see how he or she are handling the animals. How they respect their job. How they are fulfilling the requirements that they are supposed to fulfil.

But also here I would like to say that at the end, the regulation right now requires just for the attendants and the keepers of the animals to have training, but those are the people on the road transporting the animals for example, the attendants ...

The Chair cut the speaker off.

1-022-0000

Caroline Rowley, *Director, Ethical Farming Ireland*. – There was a question about what the solution is with regard to calves in Ireland. The problem is we are just producing too many dairy calves and there's no overnight fix for that, but that's something that has to be addressed seriously.

So, as a first step, we would like to see the age raised to two months for unweaned calves because they're much better equipped to deal with the journey at that age. Farmers may need support to keep the calves for that long but, really, we shouldn't be producing animals that we cannot take care of. So, there's no overnight fix but that's what we have to do, we have to reduce the herd.

There was a question about this slow-release feed. I have heard about that, I've done some inquiries. Nobody seems to know about these slow-release feeds. Calves over 28 days can be given a slow-release once-a-day feed as long as they have constant access to dry feed. Obviously a 15-day-old calf cannot consume dry feed, so the 17-hour slow-release feed isn't really going to stop them having feelings of hunger.

Secondly, the rubber nipples were introduced last year. First of all, I've seen trucks without the rubber nipples on the water dispensers and these are just for water, they're not for feed. You cannot put milk replacer in the water system in trucks. I know in Germany there were some experiments done on a truck but the vets decided it just wouldn't work. The suckle motion of the calves doesn't allow them to feed from the systems in the truck.

There was a question about transporting calves by plane. I think from an environmental and an animal-welfare point of view that's completely absurd. The most stressful part of the journey is the unloading and loading for the animals and the calves would have to be loaded on to trucks, transported to the airport, unloaded, loaded into pens on the plane. They'd have to deal with excessive noise, turbulence, changes in air pressure, it would be extremely stressful for the calves and then at the other end they've got all the unloading and loading again and transport by road. There would be a huge amount of welfare issues.

I know that, in Australia, they have a weight lift limit of 150 kilos for flying calves, which is around four or five months old. You cannot transport 15-day-old calves by air. I don't think there are any other specific questions for me, so I think that's it.

1-023-0000

Michael Gore, *Managing Director, Federation of Belgian Meat (FEBEV)*. – Chairman, to answer Mr Buda's question: transport and interaction with the slaughterhouses is indeed done on the basis of capacity and planning. On Fridays, we have to inform the Food Agency of our slaughter schedule for the following week so that we can provide for inspection.

There is no slaughter without inspection. So the transport is organised on that basis, as well as on the basis of the capacity of the stalls at the slaughterhouses.

To answer Ms Roose's question: to the best of my knowledge, there is indeed initial training for transporters. Unlike training for animal welfare officers, which is valid for five years in our country (with further training), I do not know of a similar initiative for transporters.

For them, there is currently a one-time qualification, at least in our country.

What is our position on the transport of carcasses as opposed to live animals? That is a difficult question for us to answer. As a federation of slaughterhouses and meat processors, we are of course in favour of meat. But then again, we are in a much wider playing field. I think other stakeholders are better placed to paint a fuller picture.

To answer Mr Lundgren's question about compliance:

we are faced with a fragmentation of competences. At the federal level we have the Food Agency. Since 2014, a number of competences, including animal welfare, have been regionalised. As a result, the Food Agency can make observations in slaughterhouses but - as you rightly state - cannot actively intervene. Therefore, the findings or shortcomings must be reported back to the regional animal welfare service, which then initiates the appropriate sanction. This is also a problem for us, because an observation is accompanied by an information form and it is only at the level of the regional service that it is determined who is responsible for the infringement: producer, transporter or slaughterhouse? NGOs in our country take advantage of this to blame it all on the slaughterhouses. So that is a problem.

On the other hand, a few months ago, a separate animal welfare inspection service was set up in Flanders. As a result, separate inspectors now come every day to specifically monitor animal welfare in the slaughterhouses. But the final assessment and follow-up of findings is done by the administration and not by those involved on site.

1-024-0000

Herbert Dorfmann (PPE). – Thank you, Chair. Yes, all in all I believe – as a general preliminary remark – that the further we go in our work in this Committee, the more we see that unweaned animals are one of the fundamental problems. And there I ask myself already whether, for example, unweaned calves should really be sent on a journey across Europe that lasts for days or whether other possibilities can't be found here too.

But I have a few specific questions. We have spoken less today about possible technical ways of monitoring animal consignments. Compared to when the current laws were enacted, we have nowadays a completely new set of possibilities – satellite cameras. How could these mechanisms or these technical possibilities be made mandatory too, just to have better monitoring, and centralised monitoring too so there is no need to go to where the lorry is?

Then – and this too has already been mentioned – driver training: here too, I think, it is rather strange that a firm decides for itself whether or not it wants to train its drivers. That should also be regulated at EU level. There are Member States that make provision for regular further training, others don't. Here, I believe, we could also easily make provision for uniform regulation and uniform further training at EU level.

What we must once more look at a bit more precisely, I believe, are the laws on the driver's driving and rest times and the laws on prescribed rest periods for the animals. Sometimes they are completely different, and it is somewhat absurd that we can have, so to speak, a lorry with a driver – and an attendant and animals – and that we have here completely different rest periods. So here too, I believe, we need to take a closer look at this again.

1-025-0000

Isabel Carvalhais (S&D). – Madam Chair, I would like to thank all the speakers for being here, for their contributions and for the data that they are providing us with.

My first question is for Mr Brady. You are well aware of how important it is for us in this committee of inquiry to know the views of those of you working on the ground directly in animal transport who hold many of the responsibilities for effective compliance with the legislation.

Therefore, based on your long experience of working in animal transport, could you tell us how you think the rules should be or, in other words, which provisions of the 2005 regulation should be clearer and more simplified so as to facilitate compliance and thus to safeguard animal

welfare? What fundamental changes do you think should be made to ensure that there is a level playing field among operators and that those who abide by the rules are not disadvantaged – as you mentioned – particularly as regards action by the competent authorities?

My next question: what type of training, whether regular or not, with what content and for what duration, do you give your drivers and those directly dealing with animals to ensure they have the requisite, updated skills?

In her presentation, Dr Bung rdean referred to Romania's recent adoption of national legislation on maritime transport including additional provisions that are stricter than those in the 2005 regulation. She has already mentioned some aspects here, but would she perhaps like to expand on which points of the 2005 regulation needed to be supplemented by these additional provisions, and what other of the regulation's provisions would benefit from a review?

1-026-0000

Marlene Mortler (PPE). – Thank you, Chair. Many thanks too, to all the experts for their observations. Distortion of competition, best-practice/worst-practice: we have heard examples of these again today. And my thanks go to Dr Dronji for her remarks. You said that firms are directly responsible, or to be precise, the regulations place the responsibility on them. Could you elaborate once more on your idea of how this responsibility could be made more visible and also more transparent in the future?

Secondly, Mr Bardy: you said that transporting animals costs money. And you spoke of how transport costs in low-cost fields have fallen in recent years by around 50 %, and you said that a lot of things have got worse in this field. But you also said, on the other hand, that in your view a lot of things have improved in the animal protection field. To sum up: those firms that work correctly – and I count your firm in with them – are in many respects penalised simply because they have higher costs, because they provide training, because they do more than the others do. What has to happen, for – let's say – the black sheep in the transport sector to be eliminated or brought up to the level of your firm?

1-027-0000

Emma Wiesner (Renew). – Madam Chair, dear colleagues and dear panellists, this is my first time speaking in ANIT meeting. I would like to start by expressing my strong commitment to take part in this very important work. To me animals are sentient beings and we need to treat them accordingly. So it is an honour to be here in this committee and to take part in this meeting today.

To enable animals enjoy their five freedoms as stated in Article 13, the 2005 Regulation must be fully and equally implemented and I have so much to say, but I will try to be brief, before asking my question.

Firstly, the rules that apply on animal transport within the EU must also apply for transport leaving the EU to third countries, with no exceptions. Secondly, to reduce the systematic infringement of EU law during animal transport, we need to be able to enforce the rules and we need to strengthen the incentives for Member States to monitor the sector and sanction non-compliance. Illegal practices must have consequences. And thirdly, we know that longer journeys do harm and have more negative impact on animals' well-being, and I don't need to mention examples or show you pictures, we all have seen the evidence of the harm that long journeys can do.

And my question relates to that: in Dr Dronji's response to my written question she wrote that longer the longer violations persist, the longer the journeys, the more it affects the animals. So my first question is, to the other panellists, do you share her view on that, and what are your views on the maximum duration role? Because my idea is that we need to harmonise the

loading, the transportation times, we need to include the loading and unloading, and we need to restrict the duration of animal transport to eight hours.

What is your view on that? And also I strongly support the shift to transporting more semen and embryos, carcasses in meat production, instead of the animals, so my question to Mr Bardy is: how would such a shift affect the transport operators? And also to Mr Gore: how would shifting to increased transport of meat and decreased transport of animals impact your sector and how would that impact the slaughterhouse industry?

1-028-0000

Maria Noichl (S&D). – Thank you very much. I am pleased that I may ask a short question too. What I would like to know first is the following: when transporting animals by sea, several consignments, several different lorry loads of animals, are all mixed up together on the cargo ship. How, in your view, can it be ensured that the journey logs for each individual group of animals would be kept properly at all, despite their all being mixed up, right up to their arrival at their end destination? That is my first question.

And I would like to phrase my second question in general terms: we all know how expensive, high-priced jump horses are transported. So we know exactly what animals need to be transported in good conditions. I have the impression that people simply arrange expensive and good transport for expensive animals while for cheap, or even very, very cheap animals very cheap transport is arranged. I believe that our task as a committee is to make sure that there is a minimum standard for all animals.

I would like to know how you see the connection between the kind of transport used and the price of the animal? Perhaps this is what makes unweaned calves such an issue, because they are naturally – in monetary terms – the cheapest animals, often worth no more than a few euro, and therefore nothing much is invested in transporting them.

1-029-0000

Julie Lechanteux (ID). – Chair, Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations contains a number of standards which, on paper, look to be satisfactory. While it is not always easy to hold transporters or other private participants in the sector responsible, it is primarily the chain of custody that is not working properly. The recent case of the vessel *Karim Allah* is a good example of the difference between what the law provides for, compliance with it and the checks needed to apply it. In this case, the difference very quickly becomes obvious. *Karim Allah*, sailing under the Lebanese flag, left Spain on 18 December last year for Turkey, with 895 calves on board. Once it arrived in Alexandrette, it was refused access by the Turkish authorities because the Spanish health documents did not clearly show that the cattle did not have bovine bluetongue. On 31 December, the vessel left Turkey and headed for Libya; in Tripoli, the captain's access request was rejected again; the same thing happened in Tunisia. The journey ended on 6 March when the vessel returned to its Spanish port of departure, Cartagena, and all the cattle were slaughtered. A nightmarish three-month journey that should never have happened: the 2005 regulation was designed to prevent this kind of situation from happening. It provides for an inspection of vessels during loading and unloading to ensure that they are properly equipped for the quantity and type of animals to be transported, but also, and above all, that the animals are fit to undertake the journey. If not, they must be unloaded, watered, fed and allowed to rest. Well, I think all these requirements have gone to pot, as shown by this additional demonstration of inefficiency. So I ask you: when are you going to finally put the requisite means in place to monitor the transport chain and to enforce these texts?

1-030-0000

Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg (Verts/ALE). – Pleased to be here too in this room dealing with such an important topic. Mr Bardy, Ms Dronji, Ms Rowley, in the past four hearings we were made aware of the inefficiency of the sanctions system. It appeared that the lack of

harmonisation between our countries and the absence of adequate dissuasive penalties enabled breaches of EU legislation on animal transport to remain unpunished even when repeated.

DG SANTE in the report underlines that there is no generalised use of actions, such as suspension or revoking of licenses, increased control or restriction in activity. This causes inequalities and an absence of a level playing field for companies. We have heard that several times and so my question will be the following: do you know about companies which have repeatedly breached the regulation on animal welfare during transport and remain today operating within the EU? Do we need such a blacklist, like Mr Bardy mentioned? What would be the main solution, to lower the overall allowed transport time? Please be really honest with us.

To Ms Bungardean, in a previous meeting we have seen from different experts about transports getting authorisation in neighbouring countries when the country of departure was refusing authorisation and the Commission audit of the port of Midia showed that Romania was authorising more than the half of the shipwrecks carrying EU animals to third countries. So, there is poor-quality reporting of checks and, in this context, how can you, as port authorities, ensure that the vessels meet the requirements of EU legislation? How can we see whether or not things are developing in a better way than the Commission observed? I would like to have your personal opinion about this practice transporting of living animals in EU third country.

And my third question to Mr Gore, are you aware in your presentation that animals are just numbers and graphs? I've seen no animal at all. What about the mental health of the transporter? They are seeing and feeling the suffering of these sentient beings as well. Apart from the fact that they are used to this in a way, we know that splitting rationality off from feelings doesn't work for human beings at the end and they are suffering as well. Do you monitor the mental health of your workers on the ground? That would be my question.

1-031-0000

Mazaly Aguilar (ECR). – Madam Chair, I would like to address my comments to Dr Gore.

Dr Gore, I would like to know your views on how the sector has taken initiatives on animal welfare labelling through voluntary agreements.

I would also like to know your views on the investments that producers have had to make in recent years on animal welfare issues and what economic impact these continuous changes in standards are having.

Dr Gore, in your view, what does the meat producing sector need in order to be able to adapt to the requirements arising from the 'From Farm to Fork' strategy?

And finally, how do you think the sector can be made profitable with these new restrictions and obligations?

1-032-0000

Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez (PPE). – Madam Chair, I would like to thank all the rapporteurs for attending the meeting with this committee and for the clear presentation that each of them has given.

My question is for the entrepreneurs who have first-hand contact with the reality of the sector, such as CEO Bardy Bresse.

Often, in Parliament, we propose a series of measures, new laws that impose additional burdens on businesses and workers, and which often increase production costs. An increase, the cost of which they bear directly or which they are forced to pass on to all consumers.

As a matter of principle, I believe that legislators cannot impose bureaucratic and operational burdens on producers without at the same time providing financial support and facilities for them to adapt.

I would therefore like to know how much they think it has cost them to adapt their vehicle fleets and their transport protocols to Regulation (EC) No 1/2005?

What do they think the useful life of the investments made as a result of this new legislation should be?

And finally, do you think it would be economically viable for you, as companies, to make major changes such as those set out in this Regulation without there being sufficient support to be able to make them?

1-033-0000

Simone Schmiedtbauer (PPE). – Thank you very much, Chair. Our common aim is to have local breeding and slaughter stepped up. That is totally clear; only so would we be able to bring down the number of animals transported. But we must be honest and say that it cannot be completely avoided either. So it is all the more important that the highest standards of animal welfare apply to animal transport. And in my opinion, for this a system is needed based on routines, high standards in care and also monitoring. That is very important.

In Austria we have established a system characterised by a well-established routine. Nearly all transport of calves out of Austria is handled by the same family firm and the same – really very well trained – drivers. Animal welfare is further served by the calves always travelling on the same route, i.e. first from Austria, then to a centre in South Tyrol where they rest and are cared for. After a 24-hour break there, they continue on their way, to Spain, for example. Even the lorries are equipped as a matter of course with nipple drinking systems. That should already have become a matter of course. The animals are familiar with these nipple drinking systems from their farms back home and also from the rest and care centre en route. A model it should be easy to transfer.

And of course monitoring also has a role to play in this. So in Austria temperature data and GPS data are automatically sent to the veterinary officer and also very closely monitored. This means that a well-oiled combination of routines, high standards and monitoring guarantees that the calves do not suffer during transport.

But as we have heard also today, one thing must be clear: we cannot have a situation where individual Member States and transporters – as we have heard today from the experts – go beyond the requirements of the 2005 Regulation while others – these black sheep – simply do not keep to these rules. This means we need these rules to be applied throughout the whole EU region and we must also issue penalties when necessary. Therefore I call for uniform standards throughout the EU and also for contraventions of the rules to be duly punished.

Now my questions: how can we ensure that we have the same standards throughout the EU and that they are observed, and that measures such as, for example, the nipple drinking systems, temperature checks and also driver training become mandatory?

1-035-0000

Juozas Olekas (S&D). – Thank you to all the experts for participating and for helping us to get more insight in this topic. I have two questions for Mr Bardy and Ms Bung rdean. One the hand there is a problem with differences in sanctions and their enforcement across the EU among the different Member States. A Union-wide framework of rules regarding accountability could help

us with that, but for that we have to clarify the chain of responsibility for when the animals are transported to third countries.

Would this help in terms of accountability for violation of animal welfare standards that happen within the territory of these countries? On the other hand, we also need to have the technical possibilities to implement common control rules. Would the companies that transport the live animals be willing to use a single navigation system but also provide the direct access to the information it collects and the records, including the temperature and the live video to the state veterinary service that had approved the journey?

From my point of view, this could strengthen the accountability framework and enable the institution that approved of the journey to ensure that the transport plan is being followed.

1-036-0000

Pascal Durand (Renew). – Chair, I would like to go back to what Mr Bardy mentioned because, leaving aside the speeches that are quite common or expected from monitoring organisations and NGOs, I would like Mr Bardy to explain to us, from a practical point of view, how we could do this. I was really struck by something he said on French television: that he had lost a very important client because he refused to carry out a request which would not have been in line with the applicable legislation. The concern I have is how to do this in practice, as he said that there were carriers who would take on contracts regardless, i.e. if transporters like him refuse to disregard the law – and this is absolutely to his credit – if they are willing to lose clients and take a considerable economic risk, others will follow suit. I would like him to tell us whether he thinks there is a route out of this; I am absolutely not asking him to denounce other transporters – that is obviously not his role, nor what we are asking of him. Not all transporters are in a strong enough position to be able to turn clients down: the industry as a whole is also struggling. Not everyone can do what he has done. But does he think we can get past this? He mentioned vets' checks, that's one thing; but can we get past this without applying checks throughout the chain? He spoke of exporters, breeders and, ultimately, transporters who are only, as he said, co-contractors and who follow their clients' instructions. So, if there are transporters who do not follow the rules, in other words if, when playing football, some people handle the ball, but there is no referee to call the foul, this will cause a problem: players who use their hands will score more easily. So I would really like Mr Bardy to tell us whether, in his experience and opinion, it is possible to get out of this by carrying out checks on only transporters, or whether further checks such as those we have now on duty of care, as raised in Lara Wolters' excellent report, which our Parliament has just adopted. Should we envisage introducing the same thing for animal transport, i.e. should we look at the entire chain and penalise everyone involved in the event of negligence?

1-037-0000

Marisa Matias (The Left). – Madam Chair, I would like to thank the experts who were with us and are at this hearing and, at the risk of repeating myself, I would like to ask Mr Brady a few questions. As a transporter and an advocate of animal welfare, I would like to ask him directly where he thinks the problem lies, i.e. in the law, the failure to comply with the law, training for professionals, including drivers, the lack of supervision of routes, or the lack of veterinarians on journeys, because, I think it is actually very important for us to understand from someone on the ground exactly where the problem lies, and I would also like his view on whether the transport of live animals can be replaced by the transport of carcasses and genetic material.

1-038-0000

Colm Markey (PPE). – Thank you Madam Chair and thank you to all the presenters that presented already, and on this day I'd like to wish everyone a happy St Patrick's Day. I'd just like to express that, obviously, we're all in favour of the highest possible standards being enforced and I suppose if there's one thing about, let's say, increasing standards, sometimes that will hit hardest on the best performers. It's about ensuring that we maintain standards so

that those who are, if you like, the black sheep are brought up to the standard of everybody else and found out as opposed to raising standards for people at the higher end.

Just a number of questions, I suppose. Previous speakers at this forum have raised the spectre of wearable technologies and technology in general – let's say CCTV and GPS – as a way of monitoring things; also wearable technologies that would measure maybe stress levels in animals. Just wondering what the speakers' opinions would be as regards that and also if they have any particular independent data to indicate what figures in that regard are. And just specifically in relation to Ireland: I know we had a previous speaker from the Department of Agriculture here one previous day and he did give us figures in relation to the mortality rates of Irish transport. I think he gave a figure of 0.06%, which I think is a figure significantly lower than what it is on farms, I think, across Europe in general. So I think that's an interesting figure today.

He also mentioned the fact that in Ireland that there was a limitation on the transport of animals when weather was over 30 degrees. I think it's something that maybe should be considered, and also, incidentally, bad weather as well. And just in relation to the idea, I know there is the derogation that allows for 19 hours by sea transport and I was wondering, would it be a possibility to consider the priority access of lorries onto boats that they would be last on and first off, to ensure that 19 hours could be complied with in terms of transport?

1-039-0000

Pär Holmgren (Verts/ALE). – Good morning Madam Chair and thank you very much. First of all, many questions have been asked and answered, but I would really like still to underline the importance that chauffeurs and other staff of transport companies and their sub-contractors are really properly trained to handle animals and make sure that the legislation in place is followed, both for the working conditions of the staff and the welfare of the animals.

So could you please describe in more detail which training the staff of the companies, of the associations, have to take part of, both for official certification and internal training, and if this entails how to handle possible contradictions between labour and animal welfare legislation? How are they, for example, supposed to act if they get stuck and delayed due to a traffic jam? Could you please tell us more on how this could be improved according to your experience?

And then during this and also during earlier hearings, the absence of a level playing field regarding transport of live animals has been made very apparent. Monitoring and cooperation between the Member States aren't efficient and the sanctions are not at all applied, or if they are then often very poorly applied and this penalises companies and transporters actually trying to comply with the EU regulations. What is your assessment of the current application of sanctions? Is the system coherent, consistent and, if not, how could it be improved?

1-040-0000

Martin Hojsík (Renew). – Good morning and I'm sorry if my question's going to be something that was already partially asked. I was in negotiations between the shadows on the Argus until 10.30.

But I would like to stress something, which I'm happy also to have already heard from Emma, that really we need to be limiting the overall duration of the transport. And I would like to put to the panellists a question on whether they can imagine that it's possible to humanely transport animals overland, for 4 500 kilometres using the infrastructure mainly of the Russian Federation. Because there are live transports from Slovakia to Kazakhstan, of bovines to be precise, and this is something which I clearly see as a blatant example of something that shouldn't be happening, where there is no way we can really ensure animal welfare standards as we require. There is an ECJ ruling that the EU rules are valid when the consignment leaves EU territory.

So, this is specific, I would like to ask to Mr Bardy, what type of documentation do you request to present to prove that there will be compliance while travelling in the third countries and on arrival, and have you been ever checked while travelling in the third countries? I mean, how frequently or by whom and where and what was the outcome of the checks? And also I would like to ask Dr Dronji : how many infringements of the Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 did you register during the controls last year? Let's take last year as an example. And what were the main infringements that you were able to observe?

1-041-0000

Clara Aguilera (S&D). – I believe that all the hearings being held are very interesting. They will certainly clarify many aspects and improve the situation.

I would like to put forward two questions: I don't mind who replies as long as they think they can answer my question or that they have a possible answer to my question.

I sincerely believe that the current Regulation needs some improvements. I believe that this regulation is not being properly complied with – and this is my first question – and I believe that this regulation is not fit for the regulation of maritime transport. It is for road transport, but not for maritime transport, so I think we have work to do. I call on the rapporteurs to update the current Regulation as regards maritime transport.

And the question I wanted to ask is this: Given that we have seen some situations involving some vessels that cause problems, do you think it would be useful to draw up European blacklists of vessels that should not be allowed? In some cases, this practice is often useful. I don't know whether this could be useful in this case. I would therefore like to know your opinion.

And then there is the Court ruling and the issue to which we are referring, that is the controls in third countries on the high seas, which are no easy matter, because third countries have their own rules. It would therefore be necessary to see how this could be done – because we are not talking about a European territory or a European maritime area and it is, therefore, not so simple – so as to find a possible solution to this issue.

Finally, I would only like to say to one of the speakers – from the ID Group, I believe – that what she said about the Spanish vessels not carrying the appropriate animal health accreditation on board is not true. I invite her to include all the information. The information on animal health issued by Spain and carried by the vessels was completely legal. What Turkey questioned was the European system of regionalisation; the Commission should be asked how it is that it allows Turkey to do so and not respect our system. There was no problem of bluetongue or the like on the vessels which unfortunately found themselves in this situation. Therefore, I would ask you to make certain before speaking and saying something that appears in the press but which is incorrect..

1-042-0000

Thomas Waitz (Verts/ALE). – Thank you Chair. Yes, well, my first question goes to Dr Cristina Bungardean, you were referring to a question of a colleague of mine when it came to the shipping of 70 000 sheep on the *Al Shuwaikh* in 2019, and you were actually denying all the claims of wrongdoing there. You were denying that there were beatings and that the animals were kicked; that there were electro-shocks. You were even denying that the temperature on the way was not exceeding 35 degrees. You know, there's evidence that there was a higher temperature in the region and the question is now who is giving us wrong information here?

Is it your veterinarian on the ship that is giving you wrong information or are you giving us wrong information here? I mean we will not have the time and the means to really go deeply

into the question of who is actually spreading fake news here, but I want to say one thing clearly: we need to face the problems that are out there and it does not help at all if we try to hide what is actually happening on the place. If you can please comment on that.

Then I have three questions to Mr Bardy. I understand what your role is and, but still on the written answers that you have given, you said you don't agree with this limit of 30 degrees. Okay. I mean, it is part of the regulation, it's law. But you said: 'well a better solution would be to have less animals on the truck'. Can you explain to us why you think the temperature is going to be lower if there's less animals on the truck? I mean I'm personally in favour of having less animals on the truck but for other reasons: so they have more space to lie down and so on, and it is less stressful for the animals. Maybe you can comment on that.

You got several questions on unfair competition and why you don't think that if we would have standardised penalties and fines for wrongdoing across Europe. I think this would serve your purpose of having a level playing field, so I didn't really understand your answer there. And especially your perception that some veterinarians could be influenced by the so-called 'animal welfare lobby'. I find that quite questionable because, I mean, we're talking about a multi-billion-euro industry on one side that may put pressure on veterinarians and some civil society organisations on the other hand that do not – by far – have the means that the industry has. Maybe you can elaborate on your experience that you have had on the ground, so maybe we're missing out on some insights there?

1-043-0000

Romain Bardy, *CEO, Bardy Bresse*. – Chair, six minutes will go quite quickly because there are still quite a few questions, but I will try to be fairly concise.

From my experience, I can clearly see that there is a big difference between Member States: some export many more animals than others and, because of their geographical location, there can also be many disparities with regard to temperatures. I would recommend a systematic loading check, carried out by an independent organisation, so that transport companies do not have to police their own clients. This would also prevent them from threatening to use other, less scrupulous companies. In theory that is what vets do, but they are not always present at loadings.

I also think that companies should be blacklisted and that operators who use them should also be penalised, as it is too easy at the moment for an operator to switch transport companies and work with a less scrupulous one.

As for equipment, I don't know whether it worked, but I have uploaded photos of our lorries 20 years ago and photos of them today. Tremendous progress has been made in roadholding, the safety of the floors and access for animals to water and ventilation; lorry roofs have been insulated. Lastly, standards have really come on, and the proof is that nowadays, at certain times or on certain days in the journey, I am quite sure that animals are treated better than some people on the metro in Paris – but that's just my opinion.

In my view, theoretical training must continue to be lead and carried out by the existing organisations, but I really recommend that practical training should be given by the profession directly. The proof of this is that many people in this House today are extremely familiar with Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, but I would like to know, for my own information, how many people have ever put animals in a lorry and how many people have ever driven one: many people at this meeting today could transport animals in theory, but when it comes down to it, they would be unable to do so and could even injure themselves or the animals in a very short space of time.

As far as long-distance transport is concerned, it's like everything else: as long as transport is prepared properly and carried out by competent people, I have yet to see any problems with transporting animals over long distances. I agree with everyone: I don't really see the point in transporting animals that could end up being slaughtered and transported as carcasses. On the other hand, I fully agree with what you said about the fact that embryos could be transported, except that in order to implant six embryos, at some point, the parent breed will be needed: in this context, even if the journey is long, transport has a role to play because the parent breed is needed to implant the embryos.

Again, falling back on my experience, we have transported animals to Russia – that was a long time ago, because nowadays there are problems between Russia and France, so we don't do it any longer – and to Africa, where temperatures reached maybe a little about 30 °C, but it's possible as long as, as I have recommended, the animals are given more space and ventilation on the lorries is up to scratch. Air conditioning isn't strictly necessary, but some form of ventilation is; it's a bit like being in a car: if you open the windows, you don't necessarily need air conditioning. As I said, I am the grandson of a farmer; when it's hot in summer, animals in France don't all have parasols to lie under. The animals are in the fields, they lie around and don't get heated up for no reason. We try to reproduce the same conditions in the vehicles, even when the temperature is less than 30 °C; it's what I recommend to my clients: just give the animals space and enough ventilation and possibly provide a watering area even closer than the Commission's current recommendation. Having delivered animals to Senegal, Mali and Morocco, I can assure you this system works very well.

The most important part of our company's role in delivering genetics is not the day of delivery, but later on, when the animals are used to feed people. That's what I wrote to you in my notes: we now have feedback regarding children who have drunk milk. I think that means the result is there, so we should not always be thinking of transporting animals solely as something that causes them to suffer. There are also cases where, somewhere, they are also used for people.

With regard to transport or export as a whole, I really think there should be an arbitration police of some sort that monitors somewhat whether each party is fulfilling their responsibility. Of course, transporters have responsibilities and have to carry them out and accept when mistakes of their own doing have been made; but I think some of the professions involved in these jobs are never sanctioned, whether the exporter or – as you pointed out very clearly earlier, as did I – the Spanish authorities who let animals be sent to Turkey, only for the vessels to remain in the open sea for three months. In that particular case, the transporter is not responsible, the exporter is not responsible. We all know that the problem was with the paperwork filled out by Spain. I think it is now the Spanish administration that should be disciplined because if the only problem was with the vessel, I think these days the captain would already be in the court dock. So we have to make a distinction, separate the responsibilities of each party, but also sanction all those involved who may have made mistakes.

We talked about the Austrian model earlier, which, in my view, is one of the best models in Europe today: animals are kept in centres, inspected by vets and, I would say, prepared for transport. Animals are a bit like human beings. When you drive seriously, you have to fast beforehand. I think that these days there is a proper list of specifications to follow in transport. I think this is also what we should be working on and there should also be guidelines on this, so that animals are properly prepared for the journey beforehand, and exporters should be taught to understand that even if they are there to make a profit – because, let's face it, profit is a motive – there are things that should and should not be done with the animals. We don't necessarily need a guide to good practice, rather it's something that can also be learned.

1-044-0000

Chair. – Mr Bardy, as we are already overrunning considerably, can I ask you to send your last answers in writing?

1-045-0000

Romain Bardy, CEO, Bardy Bresse. – I have just one last little thing to say before we finish.

We have talked a lot about animals. I would also like us to talk about drivers and, as I no longer remember who said it earlier, it is very important that we look at the disparity between social regulations, i.e. drivers' rest and transport times, and animal regulations: at the moment, they are really two clashing pieces of legislation and they are not exactly easy to coordinate.

As you said, Chair, I will be available to answer further questions by email.

1-046-0000

Chair. – Thank you very much, Mr Bardy, for taking part in this hearing and for your frankness and your willingness to share your experiences.

1-047-0000

Cristina Bung rdean, Head of Controls, ANSVSA. – – I will try to respond as best as possible.

The most important change made by Romania was to establish the mandatory presence of a veterinarian during the transport of animals by sea. That is a compulsory requirement. Romania supports and encourages the transport of live animals, in compliance with animal welfare standards, and it is precisely through national legislation that higher standards have been imposed.

What standards have been imposed? I will run through these: the presence of the official veterinarian during transport by sea; an increase in the area allocated to animals during road transport; an increase in the area allocated to them during maritime transport; the requirement that a final report be provided by the ship's master on completion of the journey; and the reduction in the period of validity of authorisations to three years – these are requirements already imposed by legislation, though not the clause on irrespective of external temperatures.

When it comes to the insurance taken out by Romania as a transporting state and the authorisation of vessels, other much more drastic principles apply, as has been said. Photographs are taken for the authorisation, the ship's master is required to submit reports on the previous five journeys, and independent engineers and the Romanian Naval Authority are involved in the authorisation process. Proof has to be provided of staff training. At the same time, for every vessel operating from an exit point an inspection sheet has to be completed by official veterinarians at the exit point and by a representative of the Naval Authority. So, for each and every lading. These checks are conducted by qualified sea transport experts.

As regards exports to third countries, I would like to give the following example. Under the partnership with Libya, certain conditions are imposed by the state, and the state to which we export only authorises certain domestic operators to conduct the transport of animals by granting them a licence issued by the NCAH, a local authority.

So, once again, we are supporting the implementation of transport conducted in accordance with welfare rules, which are imposed by national legislation.

In any case, we are available to answer any questions asked.

I also want to broach the topic of the 2019 transportation mentioned by one of the speakers. Daily reports have been provided for that journey conducted in 2019 by both the official

veterinarian (a veterinarian present on board the vessel) and the master of the vessel, and there is evidence to the effect that daily records were kept on board the vessel.

Thank you for the opportunity to reply. We would be happy to provide you with any other information you require. In any event, we will provide written answers to all the questions raised during this hearing. Thank you.

1-048-0000

Chair. – Thank you very much, and I definitely think we have to go to the Midia port as an inquiry committee, because we hear such different points of view there. I give the floor to the next expert, that is Dr Tea Dronji from the Animal Welfare Foundation. You have the floor for six minutes please.

1-049-0000

Tea Dronji , *Veterinarian and Project Manager, AWF/TSB Animal Welfare Foundation.* – I would like to start with my first question, which is from Herbert Dorfmann. The question was: could we not provide such technical solution that would guarantee the welfare of animals during transport? Well, I need to say that still basic issues are not resolved, such as watering, resting times, competence of the drivers. So first, we need to ensure that the most basic problems are resolved and then, of course, with the help of the new technology we can improve the transport of the animals.

For the second question, of course we do agree that a harmonised training system needs to ensure the compliance between different regulations as you said, for example, between the social driver regulation and Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.

As for Ms Marlene Mortler, she asked if we could be more specific about the different responsibilities of the transporters and in respect of the competent authorities. So, according to our experience, there is a very urgent need to have a better communication between the competent authorities in Member States and to have a better TRACES system, because we are aware that the current system is not properly working. Not everybody that is supposed to be reporting the violations.

For example, there are Member States which are including all the proper violations found and others not. Also, there are problems about respecting, repeating and systematic violations. For example, I know out of my own road inspections that there is one road vehicle with the same exact license plate, it happened to me that I found him in severe violations three years in a row and in one year within one week I saw this vehicle twice on the road, okay.

So, there is a very big need of communication between the Member States about the violations found and also, if a transporter is refused an authorisation in a certain Member State, it is unacceptable that another Member State is issuing the same authorisation. Already now in the regulation, it is established that the Member States should communicate this between themselves and the transporter is prohibited to apply for the authorisation in more than one Member State at a time.

For Ms Noichl, what do you think about the link between the price of animals and the transport. Of course, clearly the only reasons why the long-distance transports go outside the EU are because they are still profitable and the transport is so cheap. Also, it is true that animals of a lower economical value are transported in the worst way or not always observing all the requirements that the regulation is requiring.

For Colm Markey, about our opinion about the technical use of CCTV, GPS and other systems that could help to supervise animal welfare stress levels and if there are any data, in particular independent data, that could supervise these conditions. Any technology to improve the control

of the welfare would be welcome. We are talking about very basic problems that could be easily measured, like the temperature humidity index, ventilation, space allowance, if the journey is longer than allowed, if the animals are fed and watered, if there are traffic jams.

All these things could be already addressed with the systems we have in place now. Currently there are not any independent data that would actually be supported by scientific evidence related with the measurements of the field. For example, there is not even any study of the basic measurements that analyses such temperature in any of the transport that happened until now, unless until now using vessels working in the EU level.

For Clara Aguilera: don't you think a blacklist of the vessels would be helpful? For the blacklists of the vessel I believe that the vessels that are operating right now, the average age of those vessels is 50 years old. Most of them are reconstructed vessels. So, first we need to get the same requirements for the vessels to be authorised, the same exact requirements to be adopted by all Member States and then we can talk about blacklists of the vessels. But, of course, it would help that, for example like in the Irish example, they are using just white-flagged vessels, whereas for example in other Member States, the majority of the vessels which are loading the animals in the EU ports are on the grey- or blacklist. I don't know if I forgot some other question.

For Martin Hojsík: if it is possible to transport animals in compliance of the regulation by road in the distance of 4 500 km using the Russian infrastructures and how many violations we have recorded in the last year. I need to say that, according to our experience, it is almost not possible or simply not possible to transport animals in accordance with the also ECJ ruling in the third countries, also because there is no feedback system from the competent authorities. And is practically impossible from the competent authorities inside the EU to verify if the animals were accordingly transported in the third countries.

So, there should be feedback from the third-country authorities to the EU competent authorities in order to at least attempt to supervise that transport. And, as for infringements from the last year, last year we had a lot of COVID restrictions, so we could not travel so much, but I will be happy to provide whatever statistical data we have in writing.

1-050-0000

Chair. – Thank you very much for all these answers and also for sharing your concrete experience with us. And now I give the floor to Ms Caroline Rowley, Director of Ethical Farming from Ireland, again for 6 minutes maximum. Thank you.

1-051-0000

Caroline Rowley, Director, Ethical Farming Ireland. – So first of all, I want to address a question by Maria Noichl about the sea journeys and whether with mixed loads cattle from different countries, the log book should be completed up until the final destination. How do you ensure this is happening?

Well, in my experience it's not, and this is a major problem. From Ireland, there are direct sea journeys to Libya and Turkey, but the paper trail ends when the animals disembark from the vessel. There's no documentation to cover the second leg of the journey. And, as I said in my speech, when I've asked for this documentation, I've been told I have to go to the local authority in Libya or Turkey. And also from Ireland there are overland journeys: truckloads of cattle go to Croatia and Spain, where they're unloaded from the trucks and loaded onto the sea vessel. And again, that's where the paper trail ends.

I know, for example, in October 2019 a truck of cattle went to Lebanon. They went overland down to Croatia and the journey log detailed the name of the vessel and the destination farm in Lebanon, but that was it. There was no further information and there was no further

documentation. So we have no idea what happens to these animals. We have no idea how many actually arrived in Lebanon. And this is something that absolutely has to be addressed, be it a competent authority or someone responsible for these animals right up until the final destination. So there should be documentation for these animals right up until the final destination. And at the moment, there is not.

The second question: Colm Markey asked if improved technology would help with regards to the export of calves. Well, no, it wouldn't basically. You cannot feed the calves during transit. They must be unloaded. There's no system in place that can feed calves in the trucks, and veterinary experts have said that it's just not possible. So technology wouldn't help in that respect. Colm mentioned that the mortality rate is quite low but that's not necessarily an indication of poor welfare during transport: we can't just look at the mortality rate, you have to look at other factors.

Journeys from Ireland are stopped during extreme heat – journeys by road, so if the temperatures exceed 30 degrees or minus 5 degrees, then the transporters are told they cannot go ahead with the journey. But, the sea journeys are allowed during extreme temperatures. So there are shipments to Turkey and Libya during the summer months when temperatures are in excess of 40 degrees and the animals will be continuing their journey by road, where they could be travelling for several hours in open-top trucks in 40-degree heat. So really the journey should be stopped by sea as well, during the extreme temperature months.

Prioritising livestock trucks at the ports wouldn't actually make any difference, because the journey itself is 18 hours and these calves have come from all over Ireland. Some of them have travelled for several hours before they even get to the port and even if there was a lairage at the port – in Rosslare, for example – it still wouldn't help because you've got the time that the trucks have to be inspected by a department vet at the port; they inspect the trucks and the animals, and then you have the loading time, add that to the 18 hours and then at Cherbourg, they have to get to the lairage. It's just not physically possible to transport unweaned calves from Ireland within the confines of the regulation.

I think that was about it. Just on the sanctions on transporters and that kind of thing, and if we see repeated offenses. Well, there's no transparency on sanctions. So I don't know about transporters. I do report the incidents of non-compliance to the department, but I don't know what happens to them, I don't know if the transporters are sanctioned or if they're allowed to continue.

So yes, I think we need to have more transparency in that area. And I think that's it for me.

1-052-0000

Chair. – Thank you very much Ms Caroline Rowley for your very constructive answers and I think we can take a lot out of it.

Now I give the floor to Dr Michael Gore from the National Belgian Federation of Slaughterhouses. You have the floor back for six minutes, please.

1-053-0000

Michael Gore, Managing Director, Federation of Belgian Meat (FEBEV). – Chairman, I would first like to return to Ms Wiesner's question about the transport of meat and the slaughterhouse industry's position on this.

It is difficult to answer that question as such, because we would have to make a comparison with the transit of live animals and the effective capacity that slaughterhouses have for the specific species in question.

I just wanted to point that out. So I cannot give a tailor-made answer to that. Moreover, this exercise would have to be carried out at the level of each individual Member State. I wonder how we see this in the context of free movement within the single market, which is, after all, one of the basic principles within the European playing field. I would also like to add that my competence does not allow me to pass judgment on long-distance transport because we do not represent that sector, nor are we active in it. When I talk about transport, this usually means transport for a maximum of eight hours.

Ms Lechanteux said that the regulation as such may be adequate, but that in the area of supervision, a few things may need to be refined and a harmonised approach could be desirable.

I welcome that response. From our experience, I do think that the current framework is adequate, but we need to look at how we can ensure that there is a level playing field in terms of application, monitoring and sanctions between the Member States. That, at least, is what I gather from the reactions of the various participants in this discussion. With a few exceptions, the regulation is, in my view, largely being complied with, but there are certain specific elements within the regulation that require attention. The cross-cutting issue that arises is indeed how supervision and control can be improved.

Ms Grunenberg asked to what extent we take into account the mental health of slaughterhouse workers. In this regard, I would like to refer to slide number 5 of my presentation. There, the mental health of the employees was placed alongside animal welfare and alongside the activities imposed by the government, in order to work towards a solution that could be positive in all three respects.

So I think I have answered that question.

Ms Aguilar asked about animal welfare labelling in the context of voluntary agreements within the chain. I think that is an interesting issue in itself. But it is an issue that has to be looked at in two ways. We can make agreements within the chain between producers, transporters, slaughterhouses, cutting plants and buyers (retailers, butchers...) to make clear what efforts the chain is making in the field of animal welfare. But the problem is that we lack clarity. If you start questioning consumers about the motives for buying meat in general, animal welfare features prominently in their responses.

But studies also show that when consumers stand in front of shop shelves and actually decide what to buy, price takes precedence over the guarantees that are given.

Second, we also find that animal welfare is considered inherent, both in interactions with the government and based on consumer surveys. Animal welfare must therefore be guaranteed and is an inherent part of the guarantees that the chain provides with regard to the product. The question is therefore to what extent consumers would be willing to pay a premium if the chain were to state on the label that the product meets voluntary, additional requirements. It is not a question of profitability, but primarily a question of the return on those additional efforts in the chain from producer to slaughterhouse.

So that is an interesting question, but in this case, consumer research and consumer perception should probably be weighed against the investments to be made in the chain. The key question is: what is sold at the point of sale and who is the consumer who makes the purchase at that point in time?

I would also like to comment on a possible improvement of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. This is a discussion that is currently being held at regional-authority level.

We would very much like to set up emergency procedures and plans for extreme weather conditions, but combined with the situation regarding traffic jams in Belgium, for example. After all, pre-COVID, our small country was well-known for considerable traffic congestion. We have therefore asked for priority to be given in traffic jams in order to ensure that transports of live animals can use the breakdown lanes to reach their destinations more quickly. These are all things that can help reduce transport times and limit the influence of environmental factors (such as temperature). So we are asking for that legislation to be updated and for certain issues to be addressed.

I believe that covers the comments and questions addressed to me.

1-054-0000

Chair. – So thank you very much, also for giving us your input and your perspective, knowing that we don't have all the same objectives but that there are other priorities.

I think what this morning showed again, clearly, and there came also a demand from a company, from Mr Bardy, who really asks for more controls, for more harmonised controls, in order to have a better, fair, level playing field. We need more transparency. We need harmonised standards. We need more training – that was again an important subject this morning and also a lot of the experts and the Members of the European Parliament pointed out different responsibilities. And it always comes back that the transport of animals is a symptom of our whole food supply chain with a lot of different stakeholders who are implicated and also showing a symptom of our nutrition habits, of our trade practices. Also again, of our over-production of animal products, which creates, of course, then, this dependency, also considering exports.

So, today, it was also quite astonishing that we have really different experiences, and also I would like to say different truths, different realities. So that's why really this inquiry committee is there. We need a deep and a fair inquiry and we want to contribute in a very constructive way to the revision of the Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. I'm really looking forward, as I said already today, also to our missions, when the time comes when it's possible. Also, I think it's very important that we continue working with these NGOs who go on the ground to bring us back material footage and work also together with the experts, with different experts, with different stakeholders and also with the official authorities.

And that brings me to the last point of the day: just announcing our next ANIT committee meeting will take place on 19 April at 16.45, when we are going to discuss, to exchange again with the Commission also regarding the different hearings that we had and also to go deeper in an exchange with them considering different responsibilities, among other things. So looking forward also for that.

Thank you very much to all the experts who contributed today and of course, to all the Members of the European Parliament for their very important input and the very adequate questions they raised and then of course thank you very much to the interpreters. I know also today it was not always easy. And thank you very much to the technical service who did a great job and of course to this marvellous secretariat that I have as ANIT Chair. So thank you very much, have a have a good day. Take care.

(The hearing closed at 11.59)