

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004302/19
to the Commission
Susanna Ceccardi (ID), Marco Dreosto (ID)
(9 December 2019)**

Subject: Request for clarification on the dynamics of the shipping accident in the Black Sea and on the methods used to transport the animals which died

It has been reported in the press that a cargo ship carrying around 15 000 live sheep capsized in the Black Sea off the coast of Romania: the entire crew was rescued but it is still not known how many animals died.

A number of environmental associations have criticised the method by which the sheep were transported, found to be inhumane and dangerous. Susan Schoenian, an expert on animal farms from the University of Maryland, told the New York Times that the sheep were likely to be destined for Saudi Arabia, to be slaughtered in accordance with Islamic ritual slaughter (halal): 'Why move live animals when you can slaughter them and then move meat?'

Romania is one of the European countries which exports the most livestock, but the way the animals are treated has often been criticised for its cruelty.

In view of this, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Should it not ascertain the facts of the matter referred to above, to assess, in particular, whether the sheep were transported in a manner which complied with existing legislation and respected the dignity of the animals?
2. If it were to be found that the sheep were indeed transported in breach of the law, should it not take action to urge the Romanian Government to improve its animal welfare standards?

**Answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission
(20 February 2020)**

Primary responsibility to enforce the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport ⁽¹⁾ lies with the Member States. The Romanian authorities officially approved the livestock vessel Queen Hind for export of live animals in 2019.

In accordance with Directive 2009/18/EC establishing the fundamental principles governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector ⁽²⁾ the Romanian Marine Accidents Investigation Department should investigate the causes for this capsizing. However, as of this time the Commission services do not have any news on the status of this investigation.

The Commission is working with Member States to improve the conditions of animals during transport and progress has been achieved. As part of these efforts, during the past two years, the Commission has audited official control arrangements for sea transport of livestock in four Member States — including Romania.

The Commission will continue to follow this issue closely and encourage action by Member States to prevent such incidents.

⁽¹⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97, OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1-44.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2009/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 establishing the fundamental principles governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector and amending Council Directive 1999/35/EC and Directive 2002/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 131, 28.5.2009, p. 114-127.