

**Question for written answer E-011921/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Dan Jørgensen (S&D)

Subject: OIE Animal Welfare Recommendations

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has sent an email to certain developing countries saying that it would like the OIE animal welfare standards to be 'firmly established as the single pre-eminent international reference point for animal welfare'. The email continues by saying that the 'status will greatly simplify your trade negotiating position with respect to animal welfare and provide you with a strong counterargument to those trading partners who may seek to impose their prescriptive animal welfare requirements on you'. This shows that the OIE wishes to prevent the EU and others from requiring imports to meet animal welfare standards which are more stringent than those of the OIE.

Will the Commission make clear that it does not accept the OIE Recommendations on animal welfare as international standards which prevent it from requiring imports to meet its own standards, provided that in so doing it acts in a manner that is consistent with WTO rules?

Should the EU fail to make a clear statement to this effect it may find that, in a future trade dispute, a WTO panel will rule that the EU has previously accepted the OIE Recommendations as international standards on animal welfare and cannot later require imports to meet its own standards which are more stringent than OIE standards.

Will the Commission also make clear that:

- the role of the OIE ought to be to improve animal welfare worldwide but not to make it difficult for those countries wishing to adopt higher standards to do so?
- the OIE should recognise that WTO rules and case law allow member countries to require imports to meet standards which are higher than international standards in certain circumstances and subject to certain conditions?
- the OIE standards should be seen as minimum rather than maximum standards?