

**Question for written answer E-002518/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Action must be taken when equine traffickers break EU animal welfare rules

At the beginning of June, several individuals were apprehended during an international fraud inquiry. They are accused of falsifying the passports of leisure horses, which were then sold for their meat.

It is well known that there are many directives in Europe establishing very strict animal welfare rules¹. However, official checks are regrettably scarce. There are too few bodies tasked with checking the origin of equines, the veracity of their passport details, transport conditions, and even slaughtering conditions. Since checks are sporadic and fraudulent practices persist, leisure horses may be surreptitiously sent to slaughter and end up on our plates without anyone being able to intervene.

In the light of the above:

1. Is the Commission aware of this trafficking and what action does it intend to take to prevent new health scandals from happening like those which occurred in France²?
2. How does it plan to reinforce checks on cattle imports and exports within the EU and at its borders?
3. Does it intend to appoint a European commissioner for animal welfare and protection?

¹ For example, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/659 of 12 April 2018.

² Kinder and Buitoni scandals mid-March