



24.7.2020

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 0368/2020 by Melanie Von Der Taubenmühle (German) on measures to protect the population from pandemics

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner points out that the current spread of COVID-19 has shown that dangerous pathogens can develop and spread in the animal industry. She further claims that the extensive use of antibiotics in animals is one of the most important causes for the development of antibiotic-resistant pathogens. The petitioner, therefore, calls on Member States and the EU to:

- inform the population about the risks of diseases and virus mutations in the animal industries as well as about the dangers of the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria by the animal industries;
- immediately adopt measures to protect EU citizens from pandemics, including the closure of slaughterhouses, butchers, breeding and fattening companies as well as the import ban for animal products;
- adopt strict measures against food waste and promote state subsidies for vegetable farming;
- inform about the connections between the animal industry and climate change.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 6 May 2020. Information requested from Commission under Rule 227(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 24 July 2020

The Commission is working on all fronts to support efforts to tackle the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This includes ongoing coordination with Member States to share information, assess needs and ensure a coherent EU-wide response as well as to mitigate the socio-economic impact in the European Union. A comprehensive overview of actions taken is available on its

website¹.

In that context, the Commission keeps the general public and interested stakeholders informed about specific aspects related to COVID-19: on its website, two comprehensive documents were published regarding most frequently asked questions on ‘COVID-19 and food safety’² and on ‘COVID-19 and farmed and domestic animals’³.

In the recently adopted Farm to Fork Strategy⁴, the Commission is aiming to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally friendly, reducing the use of pesticides and fertilisers and promoting organic farming.

The Strategy aims to reduce the use of antimicrobials in farmed animals. In this context, the Commission will take action to reduce the overall EU sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50% by 2030. The measures already taken in the framework of the EU One Health Action Plan⁵ to fight antimicrobial resistance resulted in a decrease by 32% of the sales of veterinary antimicrobials between 2011 and 2017. The new Regulations on veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed provide for a wide range of measures to help to achieve this objective and thus promote a One Health approach.

The Commission monitors the evolution of listed animal diseases in the EU. These diseases were identified following a review in consultation with the Member States. Council Directive 82/894/EEC⁶ (as last amended by Commission Implementing Decision 2012/737/EU⁷) requires Member States to notify outbreaks of these infectious bacterial and viral animal diseases. A summary of the current epidemiological situation in the EU for these diseases can be found online⁸.

In the area of food waste prevention, the revised Waste Framework Directive⁹ already calls on EU countries to reduce food waste at each stage of the food supply chain, monitor food waste levels and report back regarding progress made. On the basis of this Directive, the Commission adopted the harmonised methodology to measure food waste¹⁰ and the data expected from Member States in 2022 will help the Commission to propose legally binding targets by 2023 to reduce food waste across the EU¹¹. Moreover, the Commission will integrate food loss and waste prevention in other EU policies and will continue to coordinate actions at EU level to

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en

² https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/biosafety_crisis_covid19_qandas_en.pdf

³ https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/ah_covid-19_qandas.pdf

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/health/amr/action_eu_en

⁶ Council Directive 82/894/EEC of 21 December 1982 on the notification of animal diseases within the Community, OJ L 378, 31.12.1982, p. 58–62.

⁷ 2012/737/EU: Commission Implementing Decision of 27 November 2012 amending Annexes I and II to Council Directive 82/894/EEC on the notification of animal diseases within the Community (notified under document C(2012) 8518) Text with EEA relevance, OJ L 329, 29.11.2012, p. 19–22.

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/not-system_en

⁹ Directive (EU) 2018/851 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste, OJ L 150, 14.6.2018, p. 109.

¹⁰ Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597 of 3 May 2019 supplementing Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards a common methodology and minimum quality requirements for the uniform measurement of levels of food waste, OJ L 248, 27.9.2019, p.77.

¹¹ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (Text with EEA relevance), OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3–30, as amended, Article 9(6).

further reinforce actions at national level. In this process, the recommendations of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste¹² will also help to show the way forward to all actors.

Conclusion

The Commission response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been comprehensive, through measures to support the national health systems, research for treatment, diagnosis and vaccines to protect citizens' lives and fighting disinformation.

The Commission will continue to coordinate a common European response to this outbreak, taking action to support Member States to mitigate the socio-economic impact in the European Union.

The recently adopted Farm to Fork Strategy aims to reduce the overall EU sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50% by 2030.

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/fs_eu-actions_action_platform_key-recs_en.pdf