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PLIGHT OF CATTLE STRANDED AT EU-TURKISH BORDER DEMONSTRATES UTTER FOLLY OF LIVE ANIMAL EXPORTS



Jo-Anne McArthur / We Animals / Eyes on Animals . Taken in July 2018 at EU-Turkish border

Eurogroup for Animals is calling for immediate action to alleviate the suffering of 57 cattle, who have been trapped on a truck at the EU's external border for ten days, in a situation that exposes both the folly of live exports and the utter failure of EU law designed to protect animals during transport.

The cattle on board were bred and reared in France and transported to Czechia for further fattening. Despite a clear request from the European Commission to EU countries, that animals should not be exported in high heat, authorities signed off the animals for export and they were then transported onward by a Croatian company to the Bulgarian external border with Turkey. After legally leaving Bulgaria and the EU, the animals were refused entry into Turkey on sanitary grounds on 26 July. The animals then remained in legal limbo for three days without water, food or being unloaded in temperatures over 35°C.

Yesterday (29th July) the truck was returned to the Turkish authorities. Eurogroup for Animals now understands that the animals are due to be moved on today, and will continue their journey to Ankara.

Commenting today, Eurogroup for Animals Director, Reineke Hameleers, said:

"What better example could there be of the abject failure of the current law on live transport? What is happening now on the Turkish border is a travesty. The poor cattle have been pushed from pillar to post, and are suffering due to hand-wringing by officials who are either unwilling or unable to enforce basic provisions of law. All we have seen is procrastination over protection, profit over principle.

"Not only is this EU law supposed to continue to apply to animals that have left the Union, but Turkey has also transposed the same law into its own legislation. The law clearly states that any necessary action should be taken to safeguard the welfare of animals in non-compliant cases, including by unloading the animals and holding them in suitable accommodation or returning them to their place of departure.

"We now hope that the animals will finally be unloaded and given sufficient rest, shelter and veterinary treatment before any potential onward journey, or ideally before being returned. We will continue to do all we can to ensure that pressure is applied to relieve the suffering that these poor animals have endured as quickly as possible.

"Sadly, this case is not an exception. It is an extreme example of the day-to-day realities at the external border with Turkey. Cases like this are witnessed all too frequently by colleagues from Tierschutzbund Zurich and Vier Pfoten, who have done so much, alongside others, to try to help these animals.

"It is time for the Commission to take decisive action to stop Member States authorising long distance transports when temperatures are so high. It is also high time for those Member States that continue to defend the indefensible to admit what is blindingly obvious to the rest of us: That the Transport Regulation is not worth the paper on which it is written. It is broken and needs to be reopened and revised as a matter of urgency."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport regulates both the movement within the EU and their export to third countries. Article 23 of the Regulation details actions which actions should be taken in case of non-compliance. The full text of the law can be found here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32005R0001&from=EN>
- On 23 April 2015 the Fifth Chamber of the Court of Justice of the European Union gave a preliminary ruling in the case of Zuchtvieh-Export GmbH v Stadt Kempten (Case C-424/13) stating that the provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 also have extra-territorial applicability, and that they must be observed for the entirety of the journey, including therefore when a consignment has left the Union.

Eurogroup for Animals represents 63 animal advocacy organisations in 24 EU member states, the USA, Switzerland, Australia, Serbia and Norway. Since its inception in 1980, the organisation has succeeded in encouraging the EU to adopt higher legal standards for animal protection. Eurogroup for Animals reflects public opinion through its membership organisations' affiliations across the Union, and has both the scientific and technical expertise to provide authoritative advice on issues relating to animal welfare.

For more information, please visit www.eurogroupforanimals.org. Follow us on Twitter [@Act4AnimalsEU](https://twitter.com/Act4AnimalsEU) and like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/eurogroupforanimals).

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