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Dear Ministers of Agriculture from EU Member States that export live animals to Turkey

Export of live EU animals to Turkey: cruel and illegal

Investigations carried out by Eyes on Animals and TSB|AWF over the last six years on the live-animal export route from Europe to Turkey show horrendous on-going animal-suffering. It is routine practice that these transport consignments are in serious breach of EU Regulation 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport.. We are writing to request that your country put an end to tolerating this suffering and stop sending animals along this route.

Regulation 1/2005 requires that after 28 hours travel, animals must be unloaded at a control post and given food, water and 24 hours rest. Due to the large volume of animals on this route, there is not enough infrastructure to unload and rest all the animals. There is only one control post in Bulgaria and one in Romania for cattle and these are often so full that livestock trucks have to wait in line. Frequently they are even closed due to various disease outbreaks (most recent one being Lumpy Skin). Despite this, your country continues to send animals on this route without checking that there is space booked at the control posts so that the animals are being indeed unloaded in due time. This results in animals suffering from hunger, dehydration and exhaustion. In some cases animals get injured or collapse during these long journeys. In the worst cases animals fail to survive and die en route.

Long delays inside the border and at Turkish customs are the norm – on average these last around 17 hours but they can go on for several days. This has been the case since 2010 and is still the case today. Throughout this time the animals are usually left on a stationary truck with no shade as there are virtually no facilities at the border or at customs into which the animals can be unloaded for rest and care. They have inadequate access to water; there is just one water hose inside the border which often has to be shared by 20 or more trucks – recently it had to be shared by over 50 trucks.

In 2015 the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled in the *Zuchtvieh* case that when live animals are exported from the EU to a third country, the requirements of Regulation 1/2005 also apply after the animals leave the EU (i.e. they continue to apply to the stages of the journey outside the EU). The exporting Member States and the exporters regularly ignore the ECJ judgment. Under the ECJ ruling some consignments must be unloaded for a 24 hour rest break in Turkey. However, there are no control posts or similar facilities in Turkey and so the ECJ ruling is completely flouted.

Under Article 3 of Regulation 1/2005 animals must be carried “without delay” to their destination. Article 3 is always breached during the long journeys to Turkey as there are always lengthy delays at the border. Article 22.2 stipulates that if a consignment has to be detained for more than two hours, the competent authority shall ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for the care of the animals and, where necessary, their feeding, watering, unloading and accommodation. This requirement too is always broken during exports to Turkey; there are no facilities at the border into which animals can be unloaded or cared for even though the delays are nearly always much longer than two hours.

Under Regulation 1/2005 temperatures on board for the animals are also never supposed to surpass 30 degrees Celcius, and yet your country sends animals to Turkey even during the hot summer months when the temperatures at the Turkey border are above 35 degrees every day.

The exports to Turkey are illegal as they always are carried out in breach of Regulation 1/2005. Accordingly we urge you to comply with EU law by stopping to authorise the export of live animals to Turkey.

Yours sincerely