

EUROBULLETIN

MONTHLY NEWS BULLETIN ON DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS
AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

JULY 2007

Farm animals

EU MEAT PRODUCTION

On 31 July, the Commission published its "prospects for agricultural markets and income 2007-2014", medium-term projections concerning several parts of the agricultural markets, including meat production.

The report foresees that the overall meat consumption will increase from an estimated 84 kg/head in 2006 to around 86.7 kg/head by the year 2014. The EU-27 will continue to be a net exporter of pork meat, while increasing competition from low-cost producing countries would lead to the EU becoming a net importer of poultry meat at the end of the forecast period. Beef production, on the other hand, is expected to fall as a consequence of the CAP reform and the declining dairy herd, leading to an increase in beef import.

The report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/caprep/prospects2007a/index_en.htm

RUMINANTS FEED

On 10 July, the European Parliament adopted in Plenary Session an own-initiative report by the UK Conservative Struan Stevenson which calls on the Commission and the Council to lift the ban on feeding fishmeal and fish oil to ruminants.

The report, previously adopted in the Fisheries Committee, addresses the issue from the perspective of industrial fisheries and the production of fishmeal and fish oil. According to the report, there is "no evidence to support a total ban on fishmeal on the grounds that it may transmit BSE or other TSEs". This would also be a way to use the excessive amount of marine discards in EU waters.

In January, EFSA had issued an opinion at the request of the European Parliament, which concluded that the risk of TSE in fishmeal was remote (c.f. Eurobulletin February 2007).

The report as adopted by the European Parliament is available at:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2005-0155&language=EN&mode=XML>

POULTRY LABELLING

Mid-July, the European Commission decided to send a Reasoned Opinion to Italy over its legislation setting out a specific compulsory labelling system for poultry meat and poultry meat products.

The Italian legislation requires poultry meat to bear a label indicating the Member State of origin of the meat, as well as the date of import if appropriate. According to the Commission, this measure contravenes EU rules on food labelling and the marketing of poultry, and could cause market discrimination and hamper the internal market and other trade.

Italy claims these labelling measures were taken so that, in the event of an avian flu outbreak, poultry meat could be rapidly traced and withdrawn from the market. However, the Commission found no justification for the Italian rules as strict EU veterinary legislation should ensure that any poultry meat placed on the EU market is safe.

Common Agricultural Policy

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

On 25 July, the European Commission rural development committee approved the rural development plans for 2007-2013 of the following Member States: Ireland, Slovenia, Poland,

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Northern Ireland and the following German Landers: Bavaria, North-Rhine Westphalia, Saxony, Hessen, and Brandenburg.

In the Irish programme, one of the objective of measure 121 for on-farm investment is "to promote higher standards of animal welfare and protection of health and safety on Irish farms". More concretely, eligible investments include "*investments which improve animal welfare standards including the conversion of sow housing to meet new EU animal welfare standards, the installation of rubber mats on slats/cubicle beds, etc.*" For pig welfare, the grant can represent 40% of the investments, and eligible investment can not be more than €300,000 per holding.

No other measure is aiming at improving animal welfare as such in the Irish programme, but some aspects of measure 214 on agri-environmental payments have the potential to favour better animal welfare. They include the promotion of conversion to organic production standards and mixed grazing systems.

The Irish rural development programme for 2007-2013 is available at: <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/index.jsp?file=cap/CAPruraldevelopment06.xml>

The programme for Northern-Ireland includes animal welfare under the following measures:

- measure 111: Vocational training and information actions; which covers various topics including cross-compliance issues such as animal health and welfare.
- measure 121: modernisation of agricultural holdings; with the aim of improving the competitiveness of farms through improving animal health and welfare among other means.
- measure 122: agri-environment; with support for an organic farming scheme

The Northern Irish programme is available at: <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-dard-rural-development/nirdp-2007-13-approved-programme.htm>

The programmes for Slovenia and Poland are not yet available in English and will be analysed for their animal welfare content as soon as an English version becomes available.

The German framework programme includes animal welfare as an objective, but the Landers decide which measures they include in their regional programmes. An analysis of the regional programmes will be published after all the regional programmes are approved in the Autumn.

International Trade – WTO

A new paper on agricultural modalities was tabled by the chair of the Agriculture Committee on 17 July, as an attempt to reach an agreement under the Doha round.

The paper tried to narrow the gaps between WTO members on market access, domestic support and export competition, confirming the intend to phase out all export subsidies by 2013, with a reduction of 50% to be reached by 2010.

The paper was discussed at an informal agriculture committee special session in Geneva on 24 July, and many members expressed concerns, although it seems that they have also expressed the will to progress in the negotiations.

Many WTO members have questioned the overall balance of the talks. Market access remains the most difficult area, with a lack of precision on sensitive products rules. On domestic support, the main discussion was on the linkage between these commitments and new market access for agricultural and non-agricultural products. For export competition, the principal issue is the question of whether to discipline or abolish monopoly export authority. Negotiations should restart from 3 September.

Wildlife

BIODIVERSITY

On 31 July, Polish Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski ordered the suspension of works on the contested highway running through protected wetlands in Poland. This last minute reversal follows the Commission's announcement the day before that it had asked for urgent measures to be taken by the European Court of Justice. The Polish authorities had indeed previously announced that the works would restart on 1st August, after a suspension during the breeding season.

The Commission had taken Poland to the ECJ in March 2007 over the planned construction of the roads (c.f. Eurobulletin March 2007). It had then frozen the procedure after Poland's promise to find an alternative solution.

The continuation of the road works would have caused irreversible damage to natural areas protected under the Wild Birds and Habitats directives. The concerned areas are part of the EU's Natura 2000 network of protected nature sites. They are a unique habitat for eagles, wolves, lynx and endangered aquatic warbler.

WILD BIRDS AND HABITAT

On 18 July, the European Commission announced it was sending Bulgaria a first written warning in two separate cases over the country's failure to properly transpose EU environmental laws into its national legislation.

In the first case, Bulgaria will receive a letter of warning for failing to properly transpose the EU directive on the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna.

The directive requires Member States to designate protected sites as part of the Natura 2000 network, the EU network of protected areas. The Bulgarian legislation does not correctly define sites, habitats and species. In the second case, the Commission will send a first written warning for failure to transpose correctly the directive on the conservation of wild birds, particularly the requirement on information and research for key conservation issues.

If Bulgaria does not give adequate reply to those letters within two months, the Commission will send a Reasoned Opinion. If Bulgaria fails to comply with it, the Commission may then bring the case to the ECJ which can open an infringement procedure.

CLIMATE CHANGE

On 3 July, the Commission held a high level conference to publicly present its green paper "Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action" (COM (2007)354) and launch an EU-wide debate on further action, which includes an internet consultation lasting until November.

As far as animals are concerned, the Green Paper recalls that approximately 20-30 % of European plant and animal species are likely to be at increased risk of extinction if increases in global average temperature exceed 1.5-2.5°C. Animal health is also likely to be affected through impacts on living conditions, and could bring an increase in transmissible infectious diseases. Many animals, notably aquatic ones, are highly sensitive to water temperature variations and will be affected by climate change.

The responses to the public consultation will feed into the development of a Communication on adaptation to climate change to be issued by the Commission by the end of 2008.

More information, including the Commission Green Paper, is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/2007_07_03_conf/index_en.htm

The public consultation web page is available at the following address: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/consultation.htm>

BIOFUELS

On 5-6 July, the European Commission hosted a high-level conference on biofuels trade. Keynote presenters included Commission President José Manuel Barroso and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs insisted that a real global market of biofuels should be based on rigorous sustainability principles. The developments of biofuels will indeed have substantial impacts on the environment, including risks for biodiversity. NGOs have regretted their low inclusion in the debate and have criticised potential effects of biofuel development on food prices, deforestation and biodiversity.

For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/energy/biofuels/index.htm

Marine Wildlife

EUROPEAN MARITIME POLICY

On 12 July, the European Parliament adopted an opinion on a future European Maritime Policy. The Parliament expresses strong support for the Commission's Green Paper of June 2006 which foresees an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to the sustainable development of Europe's oceans, seas and coastal areas.

In particular, the opinion identifies the contribution which the oceans can make both in understanding and mitigating climate change and in dealing with the impact of global warming on marine ecosystems and maritime activities, as a key test of any future maritime policy.

However, the Council's common position adopted on 23 July opposes the Parliament's opinion on several points, notably concerning implementation deadlines and the question of determining "good environmental status".

The year-long public consultation on the Commission's Green Paper on a future European Maritime Policy closed at the end of June. The Commission is currently preparing a Maritime Policy package in which it will present its analysis of the opinions put forward by stakeholders and citizens during the consultation. The Communication and Action Plan will be published in October 2007.

For more information, see the Commission web page on the European Maritime Policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/post_green_en.html

FISHERY CONTROLS

On 13 July, the Community Fisheries Control Agency (CFCA) adopted an operational plan for joint multi-national fishery controls in the North Sea and adjacent areas. This was presented by the Commission as the start of an innovative and coordinated effort to combat over-fishing and save endangered cod stocks.

This joint deployment plan for the North Sea will pool resources (inspectors, control vessels, aircraft, etc), from seven coastal Member States and use them to ensure more effective and uniform control of fishing activities. The focus of the plan is the monitoring programme for the recovery of cod stocks, which was established in 2005. The inspections and surveillance activities will concentrate on fishing vessels using gear types that are likely to catch cod either as a targeted fishery or as by-catch.

The plan, which consists of seven cross border inspection and surveillance campaigns, will run until the end of the year. Similar plans will be put in place in the other EU fishing areas. They will notably concern red tuna protection, Baltic Sea fishing and illegal fishing.

For more information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/cfca/index_en.htm

OTHER FISHERY NEWS

By-catches

The European Commission met with European fishing nets manufacturers on 4 July, as part of its policy aiming at reducing by-catches and discards. The subject of the discussions focussed on the way to improve fishing gears. Some manufacturers indeed encounter difficulties implementing some technical measures like screen devices, which aim to improve selectivity and reduce discards.

Anchovy fishery

During a visit to Brussels on 11 July, French Prime Minister François Fillon asked the European Commission to reopen the anchovy fishery in the Bay of Biscay. Commission President José Manuel Barroso explained that the closure decision had been taken on the basis of scientific findings (breeding stocks being currently well below sustainable levels). Therefore, France needs to provide new scientific evidence justifying such a reversal. France has only 10% of the anchovy fishing quota in this zone. Spain has 90% of the quota, but does not appear to be seeking a reopening of the fishery.

Infringement to fisheries measures

On 25 July, the European Commission published its annual Communication on the reports sent by the Member States on serious infringements to the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in 2005 (COM (2007)448).

The Communication concludes that the situation has not really improved compared to the previous year. There has been a slight increase of 8% in the number of infringements detected, from 9,660 in 2004 to 10,443 in 2005. The main concern of the Commission is that both detection rates and the level of sanctions applied by Member States remain far too low to provide an effective deterrent to those prepared to break the rules. There are also wide differences between Member States in the financial penalties imposed for the same type of infringement.

The Commission therefore calls on the Member States once more to put in place a system of sanctions which will provide a genuine incentive to comply. The system should include dissuasive financial penalties and administrative sanctions, such as the suspension of the entitlement to fish or carry out a professional activity.

The Communication is available at:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0448en01.pdf

Health

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FEED

On 20 July, EFSA (the European Food Safety Authority) issued a statement "on the fate of recombinant DNA or proteins in the meat, milk or eggs of animals fed with GM feed". This follows a request by Commissioner for Health Markos Kyprianou after a one-million-signature petition asking the EU to create a compulsory label for meat derived from animals fed on Genetically Modified feed was sent to the Commission.

The EFSA report concludes that recombinant DNA fragments or proteins derived from GM plants have not been detected in tissues, fluids or edible products of farm animals like broilers, cattle, pigs and quails. Concretely, this means the prospect of an EU move in the direction of a label is improbable.

The EFSA Statement is available at:
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/gmo/statements0/efsa_statement_dna_protein_gastroint.html

AVIAN INFLUENZA

New outbreaks of Avian Influenza of the H5N1 type were detected this month in Czech Republic and France. In the Czech Republic, two cases were confirmed within the 3 km protection zone around the infected area of Norin. Another case was confirmed in the French department of Moselle at the beginning of the month. However, an Austrian case was finally found to be a false alarm. Those cases follow last month's outbreaks in Germany and the Czech Republic (c.f. Eurobulletin June 2007).

At the 16 July Agriculture Council, Commissioner for Health Markos Kyprianou indicated that the strain was similar to the one found in the Middle East and Kuwait, but different from that isolated in the United Kingdom and Hungary in 2006 and early 2007. He called on the Member States to step up their measures for prevention to prevent the virus spreading.

In the beginning of July, the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) discussed a case-study on the use of preventive vaccination against Avian Influenza, which exhibited no adverse effects in laying poultry.

FVO reports

ANNUAL REPORT 2006

The Food and Veterinary Office published its 2006 Annual report. The report reflects the FVO audit and inspection work in the areas of food safety, animal health, plant health and animal welfare.

Inspections are the main activities of the FVO. In 2006, 13% of all 255 FVO inspections concerned animal welfare. (5% for laying hens, pigs and calves; 4 % for slaughter; 2% for transport; and 2% for on farm inspections and others). 14% of inspections concerned animal health.

Inspections on farms have highlighted a general progress by the Member States in improving national inspections. Steps have also been taken to ensure that no new unenriched battery cages have been brought into use following the EU wide ban, applicable from January 2003. However, the implementation of other EU requirements for pig welfare has generally not been sufficient.

Concerning the new EU Member States, some progress occurred in Bulgaria and Romania concerning transport and slaughter of animals and animal welfare on farms. More effective control systems have been set up, staff working on animal welfare at central level has been increased and guidance and training on this topic has been improved.

Three missions dealt specifically with animal welfare at the time of slaughter and, as it has been proposed to revise the current EU requirements on this topic, national measures additional to the current requirements were also assessed. The Netherlands and Denmark have adopted legislative measures which go further than EU requirements on the issue of religious slaughter.

The FVO Annual report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/annualreports/ann_rep_2006_en.pdf

INTRA-COMMUNITY TRADE IN LIVE ANIMALS

The FVO issued five reports on missions carried out to evaluate the measures and control systems put in place to give effect to EU requirements concerning intra-community trade in live animals of the bovine, porcine, caprine and equine species. Central authorities, assembly centres, staging posts, collection centres, slaughterhouses and farms were inspected.

Italy

The FVO mission took place from 20 to 31 March. The report highlights a lack of supervision within the official control system of intra-community trade in live animals, and notably a lack of communication between the competent authorities involved. The system in place for animal identification, holding registration and movement controls is generally satisfactory, although some shortcomings were identified.

The FVO report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5904

Poland

The FVO issued the report of its mission carried out in Poland from 20 to 30 March 2006. The report concludes

that the systems to identify animals and to establish their health status are in place. However, the supervision of these systems is not fully effective in detecting or resolving problems. Serious shortcomings in the control of animals entering intra-Community trade exist, notably concerning the issuing of health certificates. The results of veterinary checks are not recorded in an appropriate manner.

The FVO report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5895

Spain

The FVO carried out a mission to Spain from 21 to 31 March 2006. The report concludes that the Spanish control system in place for intra-Community trade for live animals does not fully comply with Community requirements. Deficiencies were noted in particular concerning the shortage of documented procedures, sheep identification, the use of TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System) and certification.

The FVO report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5907

Ireland

The FVO published a report from its mission to Ireland from 24 April to 5 May 2006. The report concludes that a clear system on control for intra-Community trade in live animals has been established by the central authority. However, some deficiencies were noted, in particular concerning the derogation for slaughter sheep trade between Ireland and Northern Ireland; discriminatory checks for arriving cattle, the limited use of TRACES; and the absence of animal welfare checks on the road.

The FVO report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5910

Germany

The FVO carried out a mission in Germany from 4 to 15 September 2006. The report concludes that, although the responsibilities of tasks are well defined by the competent authorities, documented procedures have not been established for all official controls to be carried out, in particular controls on arrival and dispatch of animals. The required details of certificates issued to accompany animals which were dispatched to other Member States were often not entered in the TRACES database.

The FVO report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5898

OTHER FVO REPORTS

Slovenia — Border Inspection Posts

The FVO published the report of its mission to Slovenia which took place between 22 and 26 January 2007. The overall objectives were to evaluate the import and transit control system in place for products of animal origin and

live animals. The report highlights some improvements since the last visit in 2004, notably at the legislative level. However, shortcomings remain, in particular concerning the supervision of free zone warehouses, the implementation of veterinary procedures, the follow-up of the transit consignments and the performance of some veterinary checks.

The FVO report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5866

Portugal — Ovine and caprine identification

The FVO carried out a mission to Portugal from 2 to 8 May 2006 in order to evaluate the system for identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals. The report concludes that the delay in implementing the EU legislation prevents the achievement of full compliance with the ovine and caprine identification system requirements.

Greece — Ovine and caprine identification

A similar mission was carried out in Greece from 9 to 13 October 2006. The report concludes that the legal framework for an identification system exists but its implementation is compromised by the inadequate power of the veterinary authorities to impose sanctions.

The FVO report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5937

Research animals

PRIMATES WRITTEN DECLARATION

By 15 July, the European Parliament Written Declaration on Primates in scientific experiments had reached the symbolic number of 300 signatures. The lapse date for signature by the majority of MEPs (393) is 6 September (for more information, c.f. Eurobulletin April 2007).

For more information, see our special page on the Primates Written Declaration, which includes an updated list of signatories:
<http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/policy/primates.htm>

COSMETIC TESTING IN TRADE

On 5 July, the European Commission met with the US Food and Drug Administration to discuss the need for increased communication to allow easier trade of cosmetics between the two parties. New confidentiality arrangements aim to provide further co-operation on animal testing of personal care products and cosmetics.

Both parties said that they wanted to work together to find alternatives to animal testing of personal care products in an effort to harmonise regulations on both sides and cut out animal testing altogether. Initial cooperation between the two regions was developed earlier this year (c.f. Eurobulletin May 2007).

Currently, animal testing is outlawed for finished personal care products in the EU and animal testing for cosmetic ingredients must stop once alternative options have been introduced. This has presented market problems between the EU and the USA, which has less stringent regulations with regards animal testing.

However, the move towards greater co-operation in this area should help to ensure that regulations are more uniform. According to Commission vice-president Günter Verheugen, the agreement "represents an important step towards our goal of accepting each other's alternative methods to animal testing".

COSMETICS

At the end of June, the Scientific Committee on Consumer Products (SCCP) adopted a preliminary report on the risk assessment of nanomaterials. This follows a request of the European Commission, with a view to prepare an opinion on the "Safety of Nanomaterials in Cosmetic Products".

One aspect of the report provides a review of the applicability of currently available risk assessment methods to nanomaterials in cosmetic products. It is noted that the 7th amendment to the Cosmetics Directive imposes animal testing since 2004 on finished cosmetic products and from 2009/2013 on ingredients. However, at present there are no in vitro methods that have been validated using nanoparticles as reference compounds.

Interested parties may comment on the report on-line before 6 September 2007.

For more information, see:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_sccp/sccp_cons_04_en.htm

ECVAM WORKSHOP

ECVAM, the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods, issued in July a report from a workshop on the potential of physicochemical and immunochemical assays to replace animal tests in the quality control of toxoid vaccines.

A toxoid vaccine is one that has been treated to destroy its toxic properties but retains the capacity to stimulate production of antitoxins, used in immunisation.

The objectives of the workshop were: to review the state-of-the-art of physicochemical, biochemical and immunochemical tests for the quality control of diphtheria and tetanus toxoid vaccines; and to identify possibilities for and limitations to their use in the regulatory framework, i.e. for replacing the use of in vitro tests.

The report concludes that monitoring the consistency of successive batches during production of vaccines, by using in vitro tests that are alternative methods to animal testing, is an accepted approach. The appropriate stake-

holders must be involved in the elaboration of the guidelines to ensure that the best methods and techniques are incorporated.

The ECVAM report is available at:
<http://ecvam.jrc.it/publication/Workshopreport61.pdf>

UK STATISTICS

On 23 July, the UK Government released its statistics concerning animal research for 2006. The figures reveal that the number of procedures carried out on animals rose by 4% to a 15-year high of 3.01 million. This represents around 10,000 procedures a month, which makes the UK the most active country in Europe for animal experiments.

This also corresponds to a 5% increase in the number of animals used in these procedures compared to 2005. The rise is almost entirely accounted for by increases in the number of mice and fish used. The use of genetically modified animals — mostly mice — has more than quadrupled since 1995, accounting for 37% of all procedures in 2006. The only positive trend in the official figures is the decrease by 10% of the number of tests carried out on monkeys and other non-human primates.

The majority of procedures involved mice, rats and other rodents (83% of the total number of procedures), while 9% concerned fishes, 4% birds and less than 1% cats, dogs, horses and non-human primates.

Whereas the majority of animal experiments was previously conducted by drug companies, it appears that Universities now dominate animal experimentation — 45% of all procedures. Commercial interests such as drug companies now arrive in second place with 35% of procedures.

The statistics are available at:
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/spanimals06.pdf>

Other news

SEALS

On 17 July, the Dutch Government made the historic decision of banning trade in seal products. The Netherlands becomes the second EU country to ban trade in seal products in 2007, after Belgium in January (c.f. Eurobulletin December 2006-January 2007). The country had already banned the killing of their own indigenous seals, the grey and harbour seals, in 1969. The trade in products from harp and hooded seals had still been authorised until this decision.

The European Parliament had adopted in September 2006 a Written Declaration calling for a ban on the trade in seal products at the EU level (c.f. Eurobulletin August-September 2006). A few months later, in March 2007, Commissioner for Environment Dimas had said before the European Parliament that the Commission would

make a legislative proposal on this subject after the release of an independent study by EFSA (the European Food Safety Authority).

National bans already exist in Belgium, the USA, Mexico, Croatia and Italy, and will soon be adopted in Germany.

ACCESS TO EU DOCUMENTS

On 18 July, the European Court of First Instance's Advocate General delivered his opinion on a decisive case concerning access to EU documents, which was triggered a few years ago by IFAW (the International Fund for Animal Welfare).

This case concerns an appeal brought by the government of Sweden against the judgment of the European Court of First Instance on the refusal of the European Commission in 2002 to give IFAW access to certain documents. IFAW had requested access to documents on the German Mühlenberger Loch project, which was affecting a protected area under the Habitats Directive. IFAW based their request on Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, which gives European citizens and organisations the right of access to EU documents.

In its opinion, the Advocate General supports the appeal of Sweden and suggests that the Court of Justice should set aside the judgment of the Court of First Instance against IFAW. The Court will deliver its judgment in three to six months time. In most but not all cases the judges follow the opinion of the Advocate General.

This has been seen as an important case in determining whether the new Regulation 1049/2001 allows the Member States a veto power, without providing any justification, over access their documents held in the European institutions. Without direct link with this case, a Commission consultation, which ended at the end of July, will be the basis for possible amendments to the Regulation.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE

The Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) that will draft the final version of the so-called Reform Treaty aiming at putting the EU back on the tracks opened on 23 July. The mandate of IGC, as agreed during the June European Council, is quite precise. This should allow the IGC to provide a final draft quickly, normally for an approval by Member States at the October European Council. The objective is to provide the EU with a new text solving the current institutional blockages, notably for what concerns the repartition of votes.

As far as animal welfare is concerned, the Protocol annexed to the Amsterdam Treaty will not be brought into question. The animal welfare article that was present in the draft Constitution will probably be incorporated in the final text.

For more information, see the web site of the IGC:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=1297&lang=en

OFFICIAL JOURNAL

Farm animals and fisheries

Commission Decision of 9 July 2007 amending Decision 2006/415/EC concerning certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza of the subtype H5N1 in poultry in Germany (OJ 10-07-08, L180, pp. 43-44)

Commission Regulation (EC) No 807/2007 of 10 July 2007 amending Annex II to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs (OJ 11-07-08, L181, pp. 10-12)

Council Regulation (EC) No 809/2007 of 28 June 2007 amending Regulations (EC) No 894/97, (EC) No 812/2004 and (EC) No 2187/2005 as concerns drift nets (OJ 11-07-08, C158, pp. 1-2)

Council Directive 2007/43/EC of 28 June 2007 laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production (OJ 12-07-08, L182, pp. 19-28)

Commission Decision of 13 July 2007 amending Decision 2006/415/EC concerning certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza of the subtype H5N1 in poultry in the Community (OJ 14-07-08, L184, pp. 19-28)

Commission Regulation (EC) No 838/2007 of 17 July 2007 fixing the export refunds on beef and veal (OJ 17-07-08, L185, pp. 7-10)

Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 (OJ 20-07-08, L189, pp. 1-23)

Council Regulation (EC) No 865/2007 of 10 July 2007 amending Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy (OJ 24-07-08, L192, pp. 1-3)

Laboratory animals

Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the 'Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market' COM(2006) 388 final — 2006/0136 COD (OJ 27-07-08, C175, pp. 44-46)

Commission Recommendation of 18 June 2007 on guidelines for the accommodation and care of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes (OJ 30-07-08, L197, pp. 1-89)

Trade

Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council banning the placing on the market and the import of or export from the Community of cat and dog fur and products containing such fur COM(2006) 684 final — 2006/0236 (COD) (OJ 20-07-08, C168, pp. 42-43)

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Answered in July 2007

Endangered status of the griffon vulture - P-3368/07 - Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)

Over-fishing of bluefin tuna by France and Italy - E-3287/07 - Robert Kilroy-Silk (NI)

Seabird bycatch plan - P-3193/07 - Catherine Stihler (PSE)

Castration of piglets - E-3040/07, E-3039/07, E-3035/07, E-3034/07 - Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), Kathalijne Maria Buitenweg (Verts/ALE),

David Hammerstein (Verts/ALE), Paulo Casaca (PSE), Karin Scheele (PSE), John Bowis (PPE-DE) and Neil Parish (PPE-DE)

EU action to reduce seabird by-catch - E-3032/07 - Caroline Jackson (PPE-DE)

Dolphin bycatch - E-3000/07 - Catherine Stihler (PSE)

Possible effects of genetically modified plantations on the collapse of bee colonies - P-2993/07 - Jamila Madeira (PSE)

Cannibalism amongst livestock - E-2974/07 - Robert Kilroy-Silk (NI)

Measures to save the albatross - E-2970/07 - Richard Corbett (PSE)

Mediterranean blue fin tuna - E-2887/07 - Catherine Stihler (PSE)

UK and Hungarian avian influenza investigations - E-2730/07 - John Bowis (PPE-DE)

Certificates of professional competence for drivers transporting breeding animals - E-2689/07 - Paulo Casaca (PSE)

Failure to protect bluefin tuna - E-2676/07 - Robert Kilroy-Silk (NI)

Use of European aid for barbaric killing of dogs and cats - E-2632/07 - Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)

Ban on imports of wild birds - E-2601/07 - Thomas Ulmer (PPE-DE)

EU subsidies for bullfighting - E-2586/07 - Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE)

Stray animals - E-2583/07 - Nikolaos Vakalis (PPE-DE)

Culling of stray dogs in Romania and Bulgaria - E-2481/07 - Graham Watson (ALDE)

Bird hunting in Malta - E-2447/07 - Mary Lou McDonald (GUE/NGL)

Animal welfare and international trade relations - E-2404/07 - Cristiana Muscardini (UEN)

Banning the import and sale of dog and cat fur - E-2343/07 - Robert Kilroy-Silk (NI)

Halting illegal hunting of wild birds in Malta (Resolution P6_TA(2007)0074) - E-2072/07 - Anne Van Lancker (PSE)