

# EUROBULLETIN

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

NOVEMBER 2006

## Farm animals

### TRANSPORT

The European Court of Justice gave a judgement on 23 November 2006 concerning case C-300/05 on the interpretation of "travel" and journey times of animal transports.

The German federal court of auditors presented to the European Court a case opposing the cattle breeders ZVK Zuchtvieh-Kontor GmbH to the German authorities at the border inspection post of Hamburg-Jonas.

In 2000, ZVK obtained an advanced payment of refunds for the export of live bovine animals to Egypt, which the German authorities later claimed back with the argument that ZVK did not comply with the requirement of a maximum journey time of 14 hours without rest.

ZVK argues that the journey time has to be calculated from the moment the vehicle left the place of departure, the duration being then less than 14 hours. Yet, the German authorities believe that the travel time also includes the time taken to load and unload animals, which the ZVK has not taken into consideration.

The European Court declared that the time taken to load and unload animals must be fully taken into account when calculating travel times. Hence, ZVK indeed did not respect the EU requirements for animal welfare at transport.

The judgement of the Court is available online:

[http://curia.europa.eu/jurisp/cgi-bin/form.pl?lang=en&Submit=Submit&alldocs=alldocs&docj=docj&docop=docop&docor=docor&docjo=docjo&n\\_u\\_m\\_a\\_f\\_f=C-300%2F05&datefs=&datefe=&nomusuel=&domaine=&mots=&resmax=100](http://curia.europa.eu/jurisp/cgi-bin/form.pl?lang=en&Submit=Submit&alldocs=alldocs&docj=docj&docop=docop&docor=docor&docjo=docjo&n_u_m_a_f_f=C-300%2F05&datefs=&datefe=&nomusuel=&domaine=&mots=&resmax=100)

### JOINT COE-OIE-EU CONFERENCE

At a workshop hosted by the Council of Europe (CoE) on 24 November, the CoE, the EU and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) discussed a joint declaration on "Animal Welfare in Europe: achievements and future prospects".

Participants included senior government and veterinary representatives from 50 countries discussing best practice solutions and animal welfare guidelines in co-operation with the EU and OIE. The aim was to bridge the gap between animal welfare legislation and its practical application.

The joint declaration commits the three parties to greater co-operation on all animal welfare aspects and to efficiently assist countries in their implementation and development of animal welfare laws, standards and guidelines at national level.

For more information on the joint declaration: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/joint\\_dec\\_aw\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/joint_dec_aw_en.pdf)

### COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

#### Voluntary modulation

At their meeting on 14 November, the European Parliament rejected a Commission proposal (COM(2006) 241) to allow Member States to use voluntary modulation (transfer of funds from the CAP direct payments) to increase their rural development budget. The Parliament fears that voluntary modulation will distort competition, as farmers will receive 20% less of direct aid in Member States using this possibility. The European Parliament is asking the European Commission to withdraw its proposal. The Commission is expected to formally refuse to reject it and the Parliament will then have two months to present another report, which will be considered as

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the European Parliament official opinion.

This would allow formal adoption of the proposal early next year. The German Presidency is planning to put this item on the agenda of the February Farm Council.

### Transparency

On 8 November, the Commission published on its website a page with links to Member State websites containing information about beneficiaries of payments under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to further improve openness and access to information. This step is part of the European Transparency Initiative (ETI). Full transparency should be ensured with the publication of all beneficiaries of CAP payments in line with the Commission's proposals introduced in the Financial Regulation. The Council has agreed to start this process from 2009, and discussions are still ongoing with the European Parliament.

Green Paper on Transparency:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006\\_0194en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0194en01.pdf)

Webpage: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/funding/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/funding/index_en.htm)

## FVO

### INSPECTION PROGRAMME FOR 2007

DG Health and Consumer Protection published its inspection programme on food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health for 2007. A total of 272 inspections are planned, with an update of the programme to be presented in June 2007. The majority of inspections, around 56% of the total amount of controls, will take place in the enlarged EU.

Food safety will make up the main part of the programme with around 72% of inspections to be carried out in this field in 2007. A number of food safety inspections will also cover animal health and welfare aspects.

Around 25 inspections will cover animal health. They will look at the eradication and control of certain animal diseases and at animal health conditions during intra-community trade of live animals.

Concerning animal welfare, there will be approximately 18 controls (less than 7% of the total of inspections). These inspections will focus, amongst other things, on welfare conditions during transport, especially of slaughter horses. They will also look at welfare conditions on farms, with special focus on pigs, calves and laying hens as well as at welfare conditions during slaughter.

The inspection programme for 2007, also including a list of the type of control in each Member State, is available online: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/inspectprog/2007-year\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/inspectprog/2007-year_en.pdf)

## REPORTS

### Border Inspection posts (BIP)

The FVO carried out a mission in the Netherlands from 20 to 29 March 2006 to evaluate the import control system in place for products of animal origin and live animals.

The FVO visited two of the seven approved BIPs in the Netherlands, one port in Vlissingen and one in Rotterdam.

The FVO report concludes that the control system in place complies in many areas with the requirements laid down in the EU legislation. There is also a highly organised ISO accredited system in place that administers import controls and a good co-operation between veterinary services and customs.

However, the report also indicates some shortcomings in the Dutch BIP control system. In relation with the CITES entry points, despite the establishment of a National CITES list which brought some improvements, there are still inconsistencies between the European Commission list of CITES entry points and the BIP list. The risk of this shortcoming is that CITES consignments may not go through veterinary checks as required.

TRACES, the Trade and Control Experts System, is not fully applied yet for processing imports as the national VGC system still prevails. The Dutch BIPs do not monitor incoming TRACES messages and in some cases these messages are inconsistent with the information provided by the Common veterinary entry documents for products of animal origin.

The full report is available online:

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act\\_getPDF.cfm?PDF\\_ID=5469](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5469)

### Animal welfare on farms

The FVO carried out a mission in Slovakia from 26 to 30 June 2006 to review the control system in place concerning animal welfare on farms.

The FVO verified whether EU animal welfare legislation applicable to calf, laying hen and pig farms was implemented. The report concludes that the control system to ensure the implementation of animal welfare requirements in pig, calf and laying hen farms is quite comprehensive with, however, some deficiencies remaining.

The training organised by the competent authority did not always involve all veterinarians or all sectors so that it had a limited effect on the quality of inspections.

There is also a difference in the level of supervision on pig farms between the regions. Consequently the official veterinarians from the regions with a lower level of supervision could obviously not always detect deficiencies as efficiently as in regions with higher level of supervision.

Concerning calf farms, inspections were not carried out in a harmonised way as a consequence of the lack of practical training to the inspectors.

On laying hen farms, the quality of inspections on unenriched cages improved since the previous FVO control in 2004. Due to trainings not reaching all inspectors who are in charge of controls, some requirements were not checked adequately. In case of alternative systems, official veterinarians were not aware of how to check adequately whether the requirements of Directive 99/74/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens and applicable to all farms from 1 January 2007 are fulfilled.

The full report is available online:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act\\_getPDF.cfm?PDF\\_ID=5460](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5460)

### Animal Health

The FVO carried out an inspection in **Cyprus** from 14 to 24 November 2005 to review animal identification, movement controls, certain animal health controls and contingency plans for epizootic diseases.

Concerning animal identification, the Cypriot competent authority has not implemented the criteria recommended in the previous FVO mission for checks on bovine identification. Movements of animals could not be traced as the information in the central animal database on notifications of movements of animals was incomplete.

Regarding animal health controls, in particular the eradication of brucellosis, some weaknesses remain.

However, there was no deficiency observed with regard to animal welfare at slaughter.

The full report can be found online:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act\\_getPDF.cfm?PDF\\_ID=5412](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5412)

The FVO was on a mission in **Hungary** from 7 to 18 November 2005 to review amongst other things animal identification, movement controls, certain animal health controls and contingency plans for epizootic diseases.

The FVO reports that animal identification in general is satisfactory with the exception of the identification of pigs. Farm registers and central data base for pig, sheep and goats presented some shortcomings so that the movement controls were not considered as fully satisfactory.

Some shortcomings were also found concerning animal welfare in several slaughterhouses. In one out of 6 slaughterhouses visited, electrical goals were brutally applied to the pig heads and in another one, the bleeding of pigs took place even before the electrical stunning was actually completed.

Animal health controls showed deficiencies too. Although in several previous reports recommendations were made on Bovine tuberculosis testing, the FVO could not see any improvements.

Some contingency plans were not completely satisfactory either.

The full report can be found online:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act\\_getPDF.cfm?PDF\\_ID=5409](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5409)

The FVO carried out an inspection in **Romania** from 30 January to 3 February 2006 to gather information about the avian influenza situation in the country and to assess the measures taken by the competent authority in Romania.

The H5N1 strain remains concentrated in a limited area in Romania where it only affects backyard flocks. The competent authority has taken the necessary measures to stop the disease from spreading but due to successive changes concerning the "epidemiological unit" definition, the performance of the control and eradication measures were mitigated.

The full report can be found online:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act\\_getPDF.cfm?PDF\\_ID=5440](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/act_getPDF.cfm?PDF_ID=5440)

## Wildlife

### WILD BIRDS

#### EFSA report and opinion

The European Food Safety Authority adopted on 27 October a report and a scientific opinion on animal health and welfare risks associated with the import of wild birds other than poultry into the EU. The report looks at the risks represented by the import of wild birds for animal welfare but also for introducing infectious agents into the EU, which could spread among the EU bird populations and also represent a risk for human health. On animal welfare, the EFSA opinion states that overall mortality of wild-caught birds from the beginning of the capture procedure to arrival at the point of sale to those who keep them as pets can vary greatly depending on the species, but is generally high and can be over 70%. It adds that mortality figures for captive wild birds are very much higher than those for mortality of domestic livestock during handling, transport and keeping that occur in any other area of human usage of animals. The EFSA opinion concludes that the justification for continuing the importation of these birds should be carefully considered, because the welfare is very poor and there is no indication that measures can be put in place to adequately protect their welfare at all stages.

The report also highlights the danger of introducing serious animal diseases such as Avian Influenza Virus (AIV), Newcastle Disease (NDV) and *Chlamydia psittaci* which can cause quickly spreading animal epidemics and zoonoses. Some newly emerging diseases such as West Nile Virus (WNV) may present future threats. It concludes that the risk that a bird infected with Avian Influenza, Newcastle Disease or Avian Chlamydiosis being released from the exporting country quarantine and from quarantine in the EU can be high.

The report and opinion are on-line:  
[http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/ahaw/ahaw\\_opinions/ahaw\\_op\\_ej410\\_captive\\_birds.html](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/ahaw/ahaw_opinions/ahaw_op_ej410_captive_birds.html)

Eurogroup press release is available at:  
[http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/news/pdf/efsa\\_birdsreport\\_nov06.pdf](http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/news/pdf/efsa_birdsreport_nov06.pdf)

## Temporary ban

On 1st December 2006, the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health agreed to extend until 31 March 2007 the temporary ban on the import of birds other than poultry. The decision was taken to give more time to the European Commission to study the recommendations of the EFSA report on risks associated with the import of wild birds (see above), and to present proposals for appropriate measures for captive bird imports in the future. The SCoFCAH decision should be published in the Official Journal before the end of 2006.

# Marine Wildlife

## MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

On 14 November, the European Parliament adopted in Plenary a resolution drafted by Mrs. Marie-Noëlle Lienemann (PES, Fr) and made some amendments to the Commission proposal for a directive establishing a framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy (COM 2005/0505).

The objective of this draft directive is to secure an ecologically sound marine environment. The European Parliament adopted an amendment to shorten the timetable for implementation by the Member States so that they must achieve a good environmental status in the marine environment by the year 2017 at the latest and not in 2021 as proposed by the Commission.

Further amendments concerned the definition and initial evaluation of "good environmental status". Furthermore, the report extends the Directive's scope to the Black Sea as Bulgaria and Romania will join the EU on 1 January 2007.

The Member States will have to take measures to:

- (a) protect and preserve the marine environment or allow recovery of it or, where practicable, restore the function, processes and structure of marine biodiversity and marine ecosystems
- (b) prevent and phase out pollution in the marine environment so as to ensure that there are no significant impacts on or risks to marine biodiversity, marine ecosystems, human health or legitimate uses of the sea
- (c) Contain the use of marine services and goods and other activities in the marine environment to levels that are sustainable and that do not compromise uses and activities of future generations nor the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to natural and human-induced changes

The adopted text is available online:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2006-0482+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

## FISHERIES AGENCY

The Community Fisheries Control Agency (CFCA) adopted its first annual work programme on 27 October 2006. The work programme sets out 3 priority areas:

- protecting stocks subject to recovery plans
- Contributing to the objective of the Community Action Plan for combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing
- Reduce the impact of destructive fishing practices and discards

The CFCA becomes operational on 1st January 2007 and will start by coordinating Member States control activities in the framework of the Common Fisheries Policy. Other activities of the Agency include training of inspectors, coordinating Member States operations to fight IUU fishing and taking over some responsibilities from the European Commission regarding the EU's international obligations.

More about the Agency: [http://ec.europa.eu/cfca/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/cfca/index_en.htm)

## SEALS

The Council of Europe passed a resolution on 17 November which calls on its 46 Member States to promote initiatives aimed at prohibiting trade in all seal-derived products. The resolution also asks Canada to prohibit cruel seal hunting methods including the use of hakapiks and guns. The resolution states: "The Assembly welcomes the declaration of 15 September 2006 by the European Parliament on banning seal products in the European Union requesting 'the Commission to immediately draft a regulation to ban the import, export and sale of all harp and hooded seal products'."

More information on the resolution and amendments is available online:

<http://assembly.coe.int/Sessions/2006/Agenda/EAgenda061117.pdf>

# Health

## ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE FUND

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) created in 2004 the World Animal Health and Welfare Fund as a result of a resolution voted unanimously by member countries with the aim to assist the strengthening of capacity to tackle animal diseases and zoonoses, especially in developing countries.

On 20 October, several international organisations involved in dealing with human and animal health issues met in Paris in order to advise the OIE on funding to help developing countries to meet international standards for tackling disease outbreaks.

The Advisory Committee for the OIE's World Animal Health and Welfare Fund was represented by several high level representatives, amongst others from the World Bank,

WTO, FAO, WHO, OIE, European Commission and potential donors. The participants agreed on objectives and working procedures as well as on creating a communication mechanism for consultation between partners during crisis periods.

In this framework, the European Commission announced that it will contribute to the promotion of animal welfare activities by assisting countries with the implementation of the OIE's animal welfare guidelines.

More information on the animal health and welfare fund is available online:  
[http://www.oie.int/eng/press/en\\_061101.htm](http://www.oie.int/eng/press/en_061101.htm)

## ANIMAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

A conference on animal health "*Towards an effective, affordable and socially acceptable animal health policy in the European Union*" took place in Brussels on 7th November, organised by the Finnish Presidency. It was the opportunity to present the conclusions and recommendations of the external evaluation of the EU animal health strategy carried out in 2005 and 2006. Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection Markos Kyprianou said that the new strategy should provide incentives to farmers to focus more on prevention. The issue of vaccination was raised several times during the conference, as a preventive measure. Mass culling is no longer socially acceptable and vaccination is seen as an alternative, although the costs and trade implications were pointed out by several speakers.

Live animal transport was also discussed, for the health risk it represents and with several speakers considering that animal welfare issues are within the remit of the animal health strategy.

The European Commission should present its Animal Health Strategy around mid-2007.

More information on the conference at: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/november\\_conference\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/november_conference_en.htm)

And on the Animal Health Strategy: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/november\\_conference\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/november_conference_en.htm)

## DISEASE CONTROL

The European Commission agreed on 8 November to allocate more than 11.5 million euros for the monitoring, eradication and control of animal diseases in the prospective Member States Bulgaria and Romania.

The draft Commission decision agrees on co-funding a series of animal health programmes which are crucial to preserve animal and public health across the EU.

Tackling the current endemic Classical Swine Fever in Romania or cases of rabies in both Bulgaria and Romania, as well as monitoring the situation with avian influenza and salmonella are just some of the measures that will be co-

financed in 2007.

The Commission Decision will be adopted by the Commission in the coming weeks.

## BLUETONGUE

Due to new recent outbreaks of bluetongue the European Commission's Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health decided to extend bluetongue restriction zones in several Member States.

Germany will have its zones extended in the south and the west as well as in the Dutch border region. Since the first case reported mid-August in the Netherlands, there has been over 1600 bluetongue cases confirmed in Northern Europe.

In Southern Europe, Sardinia and Portugal have reported new cases:

Sardinia informed the European Commission on 6 November that it was affected by cases with an exotic strain of the bluetongue virus (serotype 1) which is different from the strains that have been affecting any part of Europe so far. It is believed that the new strain is from northern Africa. This led to the setting up of a 20km protection zone in Sardinia.

Portugal reported a new outbreak at the beginning of November. The virus strain reported has occurred in southern Europe for years. Portugal has already established restriction zones as it experienced outbreaks in the past but the country will now further extend them in some regions.

## ZOONOSES

On 9 November, the European Food Safety Authority published an opinion which includes a series of scientific conclusions and recommendations to prevent and reduce zoonotic diseases in the EU. Zoonoses are infectious diseases transmissible from animals to humans, which affect 380 000 EU citizens every year.

Salmonellosis (mainly in eggs, egg products and poultry meat) and campylobacteriosis (in poultry meat) are the two most commonly reported zoonotic diseases and EFSA recommends that measures be taken along the poultry chain to reduce the prevalence of these bacteria. Other zoonoses include listeriosis and toxoplasmosis, for which the EFSA recommends good manufacture, handling and hygienic practices. Antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic bacteria found in food producing animals is also seen as a public health concern. EFSA recommends mandatory monitoring of the use of antimicrobial treatments in food producing animals.

Concerning risk communication, initiatives to improve food hygiene procedures and hygienic food handling are to be targeted at food operators and the general public. The recommendations to improve the EU monitoring and

reporting system for zoonoses include:

- A common strategy on data collection, monitoring and reporting as well as the improvement of harmonization of definitions
- Mandatory monitoring of antimicrobial usage in animals
- The inclusion of data on origin of implicated food when reporting

The opinion is on-line at:

[http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/biohaz/biohaz\\_opinions/biohazahaw\\_ej403\\_zoonoses.html](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/biohaz/biohaz_opinions/biohazahaw_ej403_zoonoses.html)

## Laboratory Animals

### 7TH RESEARCH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

The European Parliament's Industry Committee (ITRE) adopted in second reading on 13 November compromise amendments on the Seventh Framework Research Programme (FP7).

This was followed on 30 November by an adoption of the programme by the European Parliament meeting in Plenary.

The Council should formally adopt the Programme at their meeting on the 5th December.

The Framework Programme, that foresees a total budget of over 54 billion Euros, should enter into force as planned on 1 January 2007.

### CHEMICALS

Discussions on the EU Chemicals Strategy (REACH) are still ongoing in second reading. A triologue meeting involving the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council took place on 30 November and 1 December, to discuss the amendments adopted in the European Parliament Environment Committee in October. An agreement was reached by representatives of the three institutions on a "package" of amendments, which should be formally adopted in the European Parliament at their meeting of 13 December.

The Council will then have to adopt the final REACH Regulation at a later meeting.

## Companion animals

### CAT AND DOG FUR

The European Commission adopted on 20 November a proposal for a Regulation banning the import, export and sale of cat and dog fur in the EU.

The proposal states that the ban aims at harmonising the Internal market and responds to the ethical concerns expressed by EU consumers as to the possible introduction

in the Community of fur from animals kept and slaughtered inhumanely. It should ensure that cat and dog fur and products containing such fur are not produced in the Community for export purposes.

It is believed that cat and dog fur is currently imported undeclared or disguised as synthetic and other types of fur from third countries into the EU, notably from China, where the rearing of cats and dogs for fur is practiced. There is no Member State in the EU which has a tradition of rearing cats and dogs for fur production.

Fifteen Member States have some legislation in place concerning the use of cat and dog fur, namely France, Italy, Greece, Belgium, Denmark, UK, Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, Latvia, Austria, Cyprus, Spain, Poland and Slovenia. Their legislation ranges from a ban on rearing cats and dogs to a ban on the import and to the labelling requirements for fur.

In order to harmonise and replace national legislations at EU-level, the European Commission proposes to ban cat and dog fur for which the primary responsibility will lie with retailers and the operators. They will have to ensure that cat and dog fur is not imported into the EU.

The proposal will now be discussed in the European Parliament and the Council according to the co-decision procedure and it is hoped that the Regulation is adopted during the German Presidency of the EU.

The Commission proposal for a regulation on cat and dog fur is available online:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006\\_0684en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0684en01.pdf)

## Enlargement

### VETERINARY CHECKS

The Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) approved in November a list of 16 new Border Inspection Posts - 8 in Bulgaria and 8 in Romania - that will start operating on 1 January 2007. The new Bulgarian and Romanian BIPs, which have already been inspected by the FVO to ensure that they meet EU standards, will control veterinary products entering the EU from third countries.

SCoFCAH also supported necessary technical changes to TRACES, the EU system for the control of animal movements and for the notification of animal diseases.

### HEARING OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

On 27 November, hearings of the new Bulgarian and Romanian Commissioner-designates took place in the European Parliament. The hearing of Ms. Meglena Kuneva, who will be in charge of consumers protection, was conducted by the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee, while the hearing of Mr. Leonard Orban, who

will deal with multilingualism, took place before the Culture and Education Committee.

Following the two hearings, the European Parliament's conference of Presidents gave a positive assessment. The votes on the approval of the two new Commissioners are scheduled on 12 December, on the basis of a motion for a resolution to be tabled by the political groups.

For more information on the hearings:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings/commission/2006\\_enlarg/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings/commission/2006_enlarg/default_en.htm)

## ENLARGEMENT REPORTS

On 8 November 2006 the Commission approved the Strategy Paper and the candidate countries' (Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey) and potential candidate countries' (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244) progress reports on their road towards the EU.

The report suggests that, after the accession of Romania and Bulgaria, no further enlargement should take place until various institutional issues are resolved.

The Communication to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2006)649) on "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006-2007", including a special report on the EU's capacity to integrate new members is available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key\\_documents/reports\\_nov\\_2006\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key_documents/reports_nov_2006_en.htm)

In the field of animal welfare, only limited progress is reported for Croatia. An animal protection law is being drafted that will serve as a framework for implementing legislation in the field. For Turkey, the report states that no progress on animal welfare can be reported, while animal welfare is not mentioned in the progress report for Macedonia, but some progress are identified in the veterinary field.

Progress report on Turkey:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2006/Nov/tr\\_sec\\_1390\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2006/Nov/tr_sec_1390_en.pdf)

Progress report on Croatia:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2006/Nov/hr\\_sec\\_1385\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2006/Nov/hr_sec_1385_en.pdf)

Progress report on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2006/Nov/fyrom\\_sec\\_1387\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2006/Nov/fyrom_sec_1387_en.pdf)

## News

### GERMAN PRESIDENCY

On 1st January, Germany will take over the Presidency of the Council of Ministers for the first half of 2007. Council meetings will take place as follows :

#### Agriculture and Fisheries:

8 & 29 January (Brussels)  
26-27 February (Brussels)  
19-20 March (Brussels)  
16-17 April (Luxembourg)  
7-8 May (Brussels)  
11-12 June (Luxembourg)

#### Environment:

20 February (Brussels)  
28 June (Luxembourg)

#### Competitiveness:

19 February (Brussels)  
21 May (Brussels)

#### European Council:

8-9 March (Brussels)  
21-22 June (Brussels)

## National news

### BELGIAN BAN ON CAT AND DOG FUR

On 16 November, the Belgian government adopted a law to ban the commercial production and trade of cat and dog fur and derived products, proposed by the Minister of economy, Marc Verwilghen.

### UK ANIMAL WELFARE ACT

The new UK Animal Welfare Act received Royal Assent on 8 November. For the first time, owners and keepers will have a legal responsibility to care for their animals, as the new law introduces a new welfare offence. Owners will have to take reasonable steps to provide their animals with a proper diet (including water), a suitable place to live, house them with or apart from other animals as necessary, ensure they are able to express normal behaviour and protect them from pain, suffering and injury. In addition to the new welfare offence, the Animal Welfare Act updates offences and penalties related to causing unnecessary suffering, fighting, docking of dogs' tails, mutilations and administering poisons.

More information at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2006/animal-1109.htm>

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## HEALTH

- Council decision amending 90/424/EEC on expenditure in the veterinary field (OJ L328, 24.11.2006, P.57)
- Commission decision approving the plans for the eradication of classical swine fever in feral pigs and the emergency vaccination of those pigs against that disease in Bulgaria (OJ L325, 24.11.2006, p.35)
- Commission decision approving the plans for the eradication of classical swine fever in feral pigs and the emergency vaccination of those pigs and of pigs in holdings against that disease in Romania (OJ L329, 25.11.2006, p. 34)
- Commission decision concerning animal health control measures relating to classical swine fever in certain Member States (OJ L329, 25.11.2006, p.67)
- Commission decision approving programmes for the eradication and monitoring of animal diseases, of certain TSEs, and for the prevention of zoonoses presented by the Member States for the year 2007 (OJ L337, 5.12.2006, p. 46-56)
- Commission decision approving programmes for the eradication and monitoring of animal diseases, of certain TSEs, and for the prevention of zoonoses presented by Bulgaria and Romania for the year 2007 and amending Decision 2006/687/EC (OJ L337, 5.12.2006, p. 57-67)
- Commission decision amending decision 2003/56/EC on health certificates for the importation of live animals and animal products from New Zealand (OJ L338, 5.12.2006, p. 45-70)

## Written Questions

The following written questions received an answer during November 2006:

### FARM ANIMALS

- P-4974/06 by Horst Schnellhardt (PPE-DE) on the promotion of rural development and the submission and approval of Member States' operational programmes

### LABORATORY ANIMALS

- P-4625/06 by Paulo Casaca (PSE) to the Commission on the increase of funding for alternatives to animal testing in the seventh research framework programme

### WILDLIFE

- E-4264/06 by Riita Myller (PSE) to the Commission on the wild bird trade
- E-4338/06 by Caroline Jackson on the need for better bird protection in Cyprus