In response to information provided by the competent authority, any factual error noted in the draft report has been corrected; any clarification appears in the form of a footnote.
Executive Summary

This fact-finding mission took place in Bulgaria from 6 to 9 June 2017 as part of the published DG Health and Food Safety audit programme. The objectives were to collect information on the official controls carried out at the exit point and at relevant control posts on consignments of live animals (cattle, sheep and goats) being exported to Turkey, on the animal welfare issues identified by them, or that are reported by third parties, and to assess the best place where these can be addressed.

The report concludes that the Bulgarian authorities are dealing with significant challenges arising from the large trade in cattle to Turkey: 45% of all EU exports of live ruminants by road exit the EU from Bulgaria to Turkey, with more than 5,600 consignments of mostly cattle in 2016, and continue to deal with problems which are largely not of their making.

The Bulgarian data provide reliable information on the transport conditions of cattle arriving at the exit point and on the performance of the Member States exporting live animals along this route. This data also provides better information on the non-compliances classified as "Others" in the Commission's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES). The vast majority of problems detected have their origin in other Member States, and relate to journey planning.

The data from official checks indicate that the big majority of consignments of EU cattle crossing the Bulgarian border to Turkey comply with the transport conditions. There is an exception to this: the cases where animals endure very high temperatures. These events are not recorded or reported by Bulgaria so it is not possible to get an accurate picture of the dimension of the problem.

On another issue, there is insufficient control post capacity near the border for this volume of trade. This creates problems to rest animals and to respect the need for an empty day after every six days of operation.

The Bulgarian competent authorities are taking steps to reduce the unnecessary delays at the approach to the exit point.
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1
2. Objectives and scope ............................................................................................................ 1
3. Legal Basis ............................................................................................................................. 2
4. Background ............................................................................................................................ 2
5. Findings and Conclusions ...................................................................................................... 4
   5.1 Transport Conditions ................................................................................................. 4
   5.2 Resting ....................................................................................................................... 6
6. Overall Conclusions .............................................................................................................. 8
7. Closing Meeting ..................................................................................................................... 9
**ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRACES</td>
<td>the Commission's Trade Control and Expert System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 INTRODUCTION

This fact-finding mission took place in Bulgaria from 6 to 9 June 2017 as part of the planned audit programme of DG Health and Food Safety. An opening meeting was held with the Bulgarian competent authorities on 6 June 2017. At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for, the mission were confirmed by the mission team and additional information required for the satisfactory completion of the mission was requested.

The mission team comprised two auditors from DG Health and Food Safety and one national expert from a Member State and was accompanied throughout the mission by representatives from the central competent authority, the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency – Българската агенция по безопасност на храните – BFSA).

2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objective of the fact-finding mission was to collect information on:

- the official controls being carried out at the exit point and at relevant control posts on consignments of live animals (cattle, sheep and goats) being exported to Turkey;
- the animal welfare issues at the exit point that are identified by the official controls, or that are reported by third parties, and to assess the best place where these can be addressed.

This information and the results of official controls were analysed to identify measurable criteria arising from official controls at the Bulgarian exit point and control posts, that reliably indicate the performance of the Member States exporting live animals along this route.

The scope of the fact-finding mission included:

- Controls on the welfare of live animals (cattle, sheep and goats) at the point of exit from Bulgaria into Turkey via land, and at Bulgarian control posts used for this trade, and the results of these controls;
- Facilities available for resting the animals;
- Procedures available (for veterinary checks and enforcement, handling animals, communicating results of controls);

The main legal requirements are included in:

In pursuit of the objectives, the following meetings were held:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meetings with Competent Authorities</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competent authority Central</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Opening and closing meetings.
- Visits to the competent authority carrying out official controls at the exit point with Turkey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exit point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Visit to a control post where consignments of animals destined for Turkey are unloaded to be rested, watered and fed.

3 **LEGAL BASIS**

The fact-finding mission was carried out in agreement with the Bulgarian competent authorities.

EU legal acts quoted in this report are provided in Annex 1 and refer, where applicable, to the last amended version.

4 **BACKGROUND**

Enforcement of animal welfare requirements during transport remains a challenge. Between 2012 and 2013 there was a sudden drop in exports to Turkey, but this trade has been increasing significantly in recent years. The number of live ruminants exported to Turkey in 2016 (more than 290,000) has surpassed the numbers for 2011 (more than 280,000).

The Commission have received several reports of long delays of live animal transports at the EU land border with Turkey. In response to these reports, complaints from non-governmental organisations and after meeting with EU national contact points for animal welfare during transport, the Commission services wrote to all Member States in June 2016 urging them to improve official controls in this area. The letter emphasised the importance of proper planning of long distance journeys, with particular focus on adequate contingency planning, temperature requirements and the provision of sufficient water, feed and bedding for the duration of these long journeys.

DG Health and Food Safety planned a series of activities for 2017 and 2018 to identify activities that are suitable and effective in improving animal welfare during long distance transport to non-EU countries and to share it with all Member States. This fact-finding mission to Bulgaria is an integral part of this project.

According to data recorded in the Commission's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), nearly 45% of all EU exports of live ruminants by road exit the EU from Bulgaria to Turkey. In 2016 there were more than 5,600 consignments – mainly cattle:
Consignments of cattle departed from 14 Member States; the main exporting countries were the Czech Republic (25.2%), Germany (17.7%), Hungary (15.8%) and Slovakia (15.3%):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Of Origin</th>
<th>Number of Consignments</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Consignments (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>7.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1,419</td>
<td>25.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>6.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>17.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>15.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia (Slovak Republic)</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>15.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A previous audit to Bulgaria (report reference nr: DG(SANCO) 2012-6454) concluded that official checks at the exit point were carried out in a generally satisfactory manner.

From the results of checks reported by this exit point in TRACES, monthly compliance with animal transport rules has varied from 96% compliance in 2015, down to 65% in 2016 when the only control post in Bulgaria was closed due to the outbreak of lumpy skin disease. The type of animal welfare non-compliances reported indicated that this situation had resulted in "exceeded travelling times" and "other" (unidentifiable) non-compliances.
5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 TRANSPORT CONDITIONS

Audit criteria

Regulation 1/2005 requires that vehicles for long journeys must have:

- A ventilation system capable of maintaining temperatures within the vehicle between 5°C and 30°C, with a 5°C tolerance.
- Drinkers, so that each animal has access to water which is appropriate in quality.
- Partitions adapted to the type, size and number of animals.

In addition such vehicles shall carry a sufficient quantity of appropriate feedingstuff and animals shall be provided with appropriate bedding. Space allowances shall at least comply with the figures laid down, and sufficient space provided to ensure adequate ventilation. Animals shall be handled and transported separately where they are of significantly different sizes or ages or are with or without horns.

Where animals are presented at exit points, official veterinarians shall check that the animals are transported in compliance with this Regulation.

Findings

1. In the summer 2016, the Bulgarian contact point for animal welfare during transport notified its counterparts in other Member States not to send animals by road through Bulgaria to Turkey for a period when temperatures were expected to be well above 30°C for most of the day. Despite this warning, 72 trucks in a 12-hour interval arrived at the Bulgarian exit point during this period. The competent authority indicated that due to this high workload and to minimise delays, officials only processed the documents, whereas normally they check physically 100% of consignments.
2. The competent authority records in TRACES the non-compliances detected following the categories provided in the system and it sends the information to the authorities at the place of departure. Records kept at the exit point provide useful further clarification, especially for the category "other".

3. Using both the information collected from TRACES and the records held at the exit point, the non-compliances detected in 2016 concerning transport conditions can be grouped as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of non-compliance</th>
<th>Number of non-compliances</th>
<th>Percentage of total consignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problems with water and/or feeding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent/insufficient/dirty bedding</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate/broken drinking devices</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overstocking and/or mixing of animals of different categories</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. The Bulgarian contact point informs his counterparts of all the above types of deficiencies. The authorities also report consignments with unfit or dead animals; these cases have been minimal. The competent authority collects photographic evidence when deemed necessary to substantiate problems for which the legal requirements are vague.

5. The authorities at the exit point do not report consignments with cases of abortions or new-born animals. They do not record or report cases when animals arrived in temperatures above 35°C.

6. One or more of the above non-compliances were detected in 44 consignments originating from nine Member States. A considerable number of these non-compliances were detected in transports originating from Hungary (43%), accounting for 2% of all consignments departing from Hungary and transiting through the exit point.

7. The authorities reported few cases of "driver negligence" to other Member States. These were cases where they found multiple problems, e.g. insufficient height, drinking troughs leaking resulting in a muddy floor. The official in charge of the exit point considered that insufficient driver training was actually the root cause of many of the problems detected and indicated the intention to inform contact points in other countries more systematically in future when drivers are insufficiently skilled in dealing with live animals.

---

1 Mainly: Non-Compliance Of The Means Of Transport; Stocking Density Exceeded; Watering And Feeding Not Fulfilled; Mishandling Or Negligence To The Animals; "Other"
8. When officials find serious deficiencies, they return the vehicle to the nearest control post that is in operation. The competent authority is trying to increase deterrence by establishing a system to fine drivers/transport companies on the spot.

9. As communication through national contact points did not always give satisfactory results, Bulgaria has also involved the Chief Veterinary Officers in all communications with other Member States on problems found with long distance transport of animals.

Conclusions on transport conditions

10. The official checks at the exit point provide valuable and reliable information on the transport conditions, as they cover the immense majority of consignments and officials keep detailed records of their findings. However, Bulgaria does not record cases where animals endure temperatures over 35°C which makes it impossible to get an accurate picture of transport conditions at the border².

11. The use of photographic evidence to substantiate problems for which the legal requirements are vague helps impress on the corresponding contact point in the other Member State why certain standards have been considered insufficient or inappropriate. The fact that Chief Veterinary Officers receive the information on the Bulgarian findings should help improving acknowledgment and co-operation from other Member States.

12. Warning on extreme weather conditions is not sufficient to stop Member States sending animals by road when temperatures are above 35°C. The absence of records and communication of cases when this happens is a missed opportunity to document the facts and make Member States and transport companies accountable of related animal welfare problems.

13. The competent authority's proposal to introduce sanctions on the spot has potential to help reduce recurrent problems.

² In their response to the draft report the Competent Authority noted that "From 01.06.2017 to 31.08.2017 BFSA have notified by its national contact point of the Republic of Bulgaria on animal welfare during transport a total of 22 cases related to transport of animals at temperatures above those considered as maximum acceptable during transport, i.e. in violation of the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. Three notifications were in July and the other 19 were in August. For all consignments notified in August, the competent authority at the exit point has taken corrective actions by channelling those trucks back to the nearest control post."
5.2 Resting

Audit criteria

Regulation 1/2005 defines travelling time limits and rest periods for animals on long journeys.

Findings

14. The competent authority records in TRACES exceeded travel times, as this is a category of non-compliance defined in the system. Other non-compliances with journey times are recorded as "other". Official internal records give a more complete picture regarding travelling and resting times. For 2016, non-compliances for this area were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travelling time exceeded</th>
<th>Improper planning of the non-EU part of the journey</th>
<th>Incomplete Journey Log</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>264</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. One or more of the above non-compliances were detected in 788 consignments originating from 12 Member States, in particular from Czech Republic (242 consignments accounting for 17% of the Czech exports), Slovakia (143 consignments accounting for 16.6% of the Slovak exports) and Hungary (101 consignments accounting for 11.3% of Hungarian exports). For Romania, 74 out of 182 consignments – 40.7% of their exports – had one or more of the above non-compliances.

16. In 2016, almost 5% of consignments exceeded journey times. A higher number of consignments (c. 12%) had not adequately combined the journey to the exit point with the leg of the journey in Turkey to the final destination.

- The majority of these non-compliances (715 consignments) occurred when there was a lumpy skin disease outbreak and there was no available control post close to the exit point to rest, water and feed the animals. In 2015, when a control post was always available, only 1.6% of consignments were reported to have exceeded travelling times;
- When the control post was operational the authorities returned the livestock vehicles which had either exceeded or would soon exceed the journey time to the nearest operational control post to rest, water and feed the animals. 49 trucks were sent back to the nearest control post between April and May 2017.

17. There are two control posts close to the exit point in Bulgaria:

- At the time of the visit, there was insufficient capacity at control posts in Bulgaria (for the volume of animals arriving at the border) as the larger control post was suspended pending court procedures. The competent authority indicated that the
operator refused a verification control by officials from the central and local authorities.

• The smaller control post opened in March 2017 and is planning to expand. It operated beyond its capacity on several days and is not respecting the animal health requirement to remain empty every six days (Point A.5 of the Annex to Regulation (EC) No 1255/97).

• The operator of the operational control post has a booking system in place to help avoid problems with exceeded capacity. Despite this, there are a number of transporters who arrive unannounced at the control post expecting to rest, water and feed their animals.

18. At the exit point, there was a priority lane for animals which is no longer in operation. The authorities informed that the Chief Veterinary Officer was working with several other Ministries to solve this problem which can add up to four hours to travel times due to trucks with live animals being stuck in traffic jams.

Conclusions on resting

19. Official checks detect exceeded journey times and take corrective measures.

20. The insufficient current capacity at control posts in Bulgaria seriously limits the possibility to allow unplanned animal rests, either from vehicles arriving without a booking or those returned from the exit point.

21. The current absence of priority lane for animals on the road to the exit point adds unnecessary delays when traffic is heavy.

6 Overall Conclusions

The Bulgarian authorities at the exit point provide a reliable indication of the performance of the Member States exporting live animals along this route. This data also provides better information on the non-compliances classified as "Others" in the Commission's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES). The vast majority of recorded problems have their origin in other Member States, who need to increase their efforts to prevent such problems occurring by ensuring better planning of journeys up to the final destination in the non-EU country.

The data from official checks indicate that the big majority of consignments of EU cattle crossing the Bulgarian border to Turkey comply with the transport conditions. There is an exception to this: the cases where animals endure very high temperatures. These events are not recorded or reported by Bulgaria so it is not possible to get an accurate picture of the dimension of the problem.

The Bulgarian authorities are dealing with significant challenges arising from the large trade in cattle to Turkey; 45% of all EU exports of live ruminants by road exit the EU from
Bulgaria to Turkey, with more than 5,600 consignments of mostly cattle in 2016, and continue to deal with problems which are largely not of their making. The Bulgarian competent authorities are taking steps to reduce the unnecessary delays at the approach to the exit point, but actions have not yet been sufficient to ensure control post capacity for this volume of trade and to respect the need for an empty day after every six days of operation.

7 CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 9 June 2017 with representatives of the competent authorities, at which the main findings and preliminary conclusions of the fact-finding mission were presented by the mission team.

---

3 In their response to the draft report the Competent Authority noted that it "continues to take measures through official correspondence and planning to repeat the working meeting(s) with the other responsible authorities empowered to take actions to eliminate or reduce the unnecessary delays in approaching the exit point, in order to finally solve the problem." Furthermore, the "business operator of the operational control post has taken the necessary actions to increase its capacity," and "The EC has been notified of the expanded capacity on 21.07.2017 and the information is published on DG SANTE's website for the approved EU control posts. At the same time, all the EU MS’ National Contact Points on AW have been informed for the change of the control post’s capacity.”
### ANNEX 1 – LEGAL REFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Reference</th>
<th>Official Journal</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>