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FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION  
CARRIED OUT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM  
FROM 12 TO 16 FEBRUARY 2001  
IN ORDER TO VERIFY COMPETENT AUTHORITY CONTROLS OF ANIMAL  
WELFARE DURING TRANSPORT.

*Please note that certain written comments, made by the UK authorities on 1 June 2001 in response to the draft report, have been included in the text of this final report in bold, italic type or as a footnote.*

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## ABBREVIATIONS & SPECIAL TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

AHDO	Animal Health Divisional Office
AHO	Animal Health Officer
CA	Competent Authority
CCA	Central Competent Authority
DG SANCO	Directorate General of the European Commission for Health and Consumer Protection
DVM	Divisional Veterinary Manager
EEC	European Economic Community
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
HQ	Headquarters
LACOTS Standards	Local Authority Co-ordinating body on Food & Trading
LVI	Local Veterinary Inspector
MAFF	The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
MS	Member State
MHS	Meat Hygiene Service
MHS	Meat Hygiene Service
NI	Northern Ireland
OVS	Official Veterinary Surgeon
Ro Ro	Roll on Roll off ferry
SVS	State Veterinary Service
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
VO	Veterinary Officer

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in the United Kingdom from 13 to 16 February 2001. The mission team comprised 2 inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), and 1 Member State expert.

The mission was undertaken as part of the FVO's planned mission programme.

The inspection team was accompanied during the whole mission by 2 representatives from the central competent authority (CCA), the State Veterinary Service (SVS) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF).

An opening meeting was held on 13 February 2001 with the CCA. At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for, the mission were confirmed by the inspection team.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

The objective of the mission was to verify the performance of the Competent Authority (CA) regarding controls carried out to ensure that the provisions of Council Directive 91/628/EEC (as amended), Council Regulation (EC) No. 411/98 and Council Regulation (EC) No.1255/97 are respected. This was the second mission undertaken to the UK for this purpose. It formed part of a wider series of missions to all Member States evaluating control systems and operational standards in this sector.

In pursuit of this objective, the following sites were visited:

COMPETENT AUTHORITY VISITED			Comments
Competent authority	Central	1	Opening and closing meetings were held with the CCA
	Local	1	One AHDO was visited during the mission where a discussion was held with both the DVM and his staff and representatives of the municipal local authority.

LIVE ANIMAL CONTROL SITES			Comments/type of transport
Staging points		1	This was one of the six approved staging points in the UK. Most journeys originating in the UK reach the ferry ports before journey times have been exceeded and this site was used mainly as a place of departure or a place for the mid-journey rest. Controls under Council Regulation (EC) 1255/97 were not therefore in operation.
Slaughterhouses		3	These sites were visited to assess controls of livestock and means of transport arriving at the slaughterhouse.
Markets		2	Most animals originated from the region of each market and the destination for most animals leaving the market was within the same region.
Port		1	This was one of the most important ports in the UK for trade in live animals

### **3. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION**

The inspection was carried out under the general provisions of Community legislation and in particular:

- Council Directive 91/628/EEC of 19 November 1991 on the protection of animals during transport, last amended by the Council Directive 95/29/EC
- Council Regulation (EC) No.1255/97 of 25 June 1997 concerning Community criteria for staging points and amending the route plan referred to in the Annex to Directive 91/628/EEC
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 411/98 of 16 February 1998 on additional animal protection standards applicable to road vehicles used for the carriage of livestock on journeys exceeding eight hours
- Council Directive 93/119/EC of 22 December on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing

### **4. BACKGROUND**

#### **4.1. Summary of previous mission**

The last mission with the same objective to the UK was undertaken from 4 to 8 November 1996 (ref: VI/1929/97). The main findings related to deficiencies in the standard of some of the vehicles seen during the mission.

#### **4.2. Trade in live animals from the UK**

Since 1996 no live bovine animals have been transported from the UK. A variety of other species, mainly sheep but also some pigs and horses have been transported through UK ports between 1996 and 1998.

In 1995 one million sheep were transported by Ro Ro ferry from the port visited to continental Europe. This figure dropped substantially when the major ferry companies pulled out of the business, but the trade has now increased again with 750,000 sheep transiting the port in 2000. A representative of a UK company, which deals in both the meat trade and live animal transport, met with the mission team during the port visit. Regarding the question of replacing the trade in live animals with a trade in meat, this representative stated that his company had studied trends in both sectors and that their experience had been that these were fundamentally different markets.

### **5. MAIN FINDINGS**

#### **5.1. Legislation**

Directive 91/628/EEC as amended by 95/29/EC is implemented by The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997 S.I. No 1480 in Great Britain and Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order (Northern Ireland) 1997 S.R. No 346. This goes

beyond the requirements of the Directive in extending the application of the general provisions to all commercial journeys regardless of the distance involved.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 1255/97 is given force by The Welfare of Animals (Staging Points) Order 1998 S.I. No 2537 in Great Britain and Welfare of Animals (Staging Points) Regulation (Northern Ireland) S.R. No 326.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 411/98 is given force by The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Amendment) Order 1999 S.I. No 1622 in Great Britain and the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order (Northern Ireland) 1999.

## **5.2. Competent Authority**

*The Central Competent Authority (CCA) is the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF). There are, however, devolved administrations for: Scotland (Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department); Wales (National Assembly of Wales Agriculture Department) ; and Northern Ireland (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development). The State Veterinary Service of MAFF carries out inspections, is responsible for approving staging points and issuing route plans in England (after taking advice on the compliance of new routes from the CCA) as well as on behalf of the devolved administrations. The CCA is responsible for authorising transporters in England and Wales and making recommendations to the devolved administration in Scotland.* The sites visited during this mission were all located in England and therefore the organisation and operation of controls in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are not reflected in this report.

In England it is the local authorities (County Councils, Metropolitan Borough Councils, London Boroughs and Unitary Authorities) that are the primary enforcers of The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997. The local authority Trading Standards Department, or Environmental Health & Public Protection Department, normally perform this function. These departments are free to determine how they organise these checks within their individual inspection programmes. There is a National Animal Health & Welfare Panel responsible for co-ordinating the work of the local authorities (LACOTS).

MAFF has delegated the responsibility for animal welfare in slaughterhouses to the "parastatal" body the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS), which employs Official Veterinary Surgeons (OVS) to carry out its obligations in relation to animal welfare as well as those of public health.

The SVS of MAFF also carries out inspections and is responsible for approving staging points, authorising transporters and controlling route plans. Animal health officers employed by SVS carry out checks of vehicles in ports and collection centres. Veterinary Officers employed by the SVS and private practitioners contracted to carry out work for SVS (LVIs) primarily carry out inspections at livestock markets and at places of departure.

### 5.3.Operational procedures

#### 5.3.1. *Guidance and staff instructions*

The CCA of the State Veterinary Service have issued guidance on the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997 to the local authorities. This provides further interpretation of the legislation and provides a basis for enforcement of many of the requirements of Council Directive 91/628/EEC (as amended). The State Veterinary Service also organised training for local authority officials when this legislation was introduced, and the LA are updated through regular professional training courses run by LACOTS.

The Trading Standards Institute, a professional body representing the Trading Standards profession, produces guidance on best practice and inspections in a publication known as the National Information Service. The co-ordinating body (LACOTS) also provides guidance in response to enforcement queries raised through the National Animal Health & Welfare Panel.

The CCA of the State Veterinary Service has issued guidance to its own field staff on the control of welfare during transport and inspection, approval and monitoring of staging points. These are in chapter 33 and 33a of its Field Service Manual.

Official Veterinary Surgeons (OVS) at licensed slaughterhouses have instructions in the Meat Hygiene Service Operations Manual to report to the DVM any apparent non-compliance with legislation concerning animal welfare during transport.

#### 5.3.2. *Authorisation of transporters*

The CCA is responsible for the authorisation of transporters (Article 12 and Schedule 9 of the Animal Welfare Transport Order). The transport of animals over 50 Kms and on journeys of up to 8 hours is authorised under a general authorisation. Therefore livestock hauliers do not need to apply for an individual authorisation if their business is restricted to journeys under 8 hours.

In contrast hauliers transporting animals over 8 hours or involved in intra-community trade must have a specific authorisation. The CCA (MAFF) has set up a computerised database called "Trade" in which all transporters who transport animals more than 8 hours are registered. Applications for obtaining this specific authorisation must be made to the SVS and authorisations will be granted *by the CA* in the light of the animal welfare record of the applicant. Information on this is sought from local authorities and the "Trade" database. Successful applicants are given a unique registration number and their details are entered on the "Trade" database.

Deficiencies detected and reported to the SVS, in relation to the transportation of animals regardless of the journey time, were recorded on "Trade". The mission team interrogated this database to retrieve information regarding details of certain long distance transporters and incidents reported to the SVS. This information had been satisfactorily recorded on the system in the majority of cases, and it proved to be a fast and effective means of surveillance.

Since 1st July 1998 all specifically authorised transporters have certified that their drivers have practical experience to safeguard the welfare of animals in their care. In order to ensure their competence in stockmanship, drivers have increasingly undergone specific training. This specific training has been set up by the transport industry in close co-operation with the SVS. The mission team met one of the organisers of this course during the mission. All relevant items relating to animal welfare during transport (e.g. legal obligations, suitability of vehicles, route-plans, loading/unloading, stocking densities fitness of animals) were covered in the syllabus of the course. On completing the course, the competency of the drivers was assessed by an independent verifier. About 50% of the drivers belonging to the company visited had attended such training.

#### **5.4. Results of previous inspections**

The results of inspections carried out in 1998 and in 1999 are indicated in the following table:

<b>Enforcement activity in the UK between 1998 and 1999 (article 8 of Council Directive 91/628/EEC)</b>		
	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
(a) Number of inspections during transport	<b>2,381</b>	2,633
(b) Number of inspections at places of destination	<b>2,265</b>	2,597
(c) Number of inspections at markets, at place of departure, at staging points and at transfer points	<b>125</b>	399
(d) Number of checks of accompanying documents	<b>13,176</b>	14,679
(e) Number of formal notices issued	<b>440</b>	785
(f) Number of prosecutions instigated	<b>45</b>	87

Some of the checks (d) were carried out at the same time as the checks listed (a) to (c). Formal notices are issued when deficiencies cannot be resolved on the spot and this would indicate that significant deficiencies were detected in 5.3% of checks. A prosecution followed from 11% of cases where a formal notice was issued. In addition in 1999, conditions were imposed on one transporter's authorisation, for repeated infringements of the requirements for route plans. During 2000, another transporter had his authorisation removed for persistently transporting calves over 8 hours using a lower grade vehicle.

## **5.5.Results of inspections at the sites visited during the mission**

### *5.5.1. Means of transport and animals at places of departure*

A collection centre for sheep, which were destined for intra-community trade, was visited during the mission. Animal health certification had been carried out by an LVI. The checklist accompanying the health certificate issued by the SVS highlights that animals should be fit for transport, although this did not form part of the certificate and is additional to the requirements for intra-community trade. The mission team asked for evidence that enabled the veterinarian to certify that this collection centre could be considered as a place of departure. Documents, which were subsequently produced for one consignment of sheep present, established that the sheep had been held in the collection centre for more than 24 hours. The LVI did not normally control the times of arrival and departure of sheep from this collection centre.

An animal health officer from the SVS arrived to supervise the loading of several consignments of sheep. It was explained that the staff at the portal office had a target to supervise the loading of 5% of consignments leaving the collection centres in their vicinity. The CCA staff instruction had stated that 10% of loadings should be supervised. The rate of detection of unfit animals at the supervised loadings carried out by staff from the portal office over a three month period was 0.04%.

### *5.5.2. Means of transport and animals at a port*

Dockside checks were carried out on 100% of vehicles with live animals arriving at this port. The objective of this inspection was to carry out documentary checks and to detect any gross deficiencies such as overcrowding or inadequate head-space. These checks were carried out at a covered gantry by 4 animal health officers. Animal health officers had served notices directing vehicles to unload at lairages in the vicinity of the port where it was evident that journey times would be exceeded if the transport was allowed to continue. Vehicles had also been sent to these lairages where sheep had insufficient head-space or where there was overcrowding (97 animals were removed because of overcrowding during 2000). Twenty nine unfit animals were detected during 2000 and prevented from further transport (0.004% of all sheep being transported).

Sea conditions were monitored by both the local and central authorities and discussions had been held with the ships captain on 10 occasions in 2000 when rough conditions were expected at sea. Although a decision had been taken not to sail on several occasions the SVS left this ultimate decision with the captain. It was reported that in most cases where there was concern from the SVS the captain had decided not to sail. Reports made by Veterinary Officers, who had travelled on the ship, indicated that the sheep had not shown any major signs of distress.

The CCA publishes the results of the dockside checks each month via the Internet.

### *5.5.3. Means of transport and animals at markets*

The controls carried out at the two markets visited during the mission were carried out by officials representing the SVS and officials from the local authority. In both local authorities, the trading standards officer was present at core-times so that they could monitor the standard of vehicles arriving and loading procedures. A Veterinary Officer or an LVI was present for several hours during both of the markets. The trading standards officer drew the attention of the veterinarian to any unfit animals present.

One VO did not follow the SVS procedure of serving notices stating the actions that must be taken in the case of animals unfit for transport, in particular regarding lame sheep. Both the LVI and local authority officials met during the mission, served notices to the transporter to segregate lame sheep on the vehicle and to transport them to a designated slaughterhouse. A notice had been issued by an LVI at one market regarding an incident involving a heifer, which had calved at the market. This had been followed up by a warning from the local authority and had also been recorded on the TRADE database as an infringement by the transporter.

Journey times into the market and time spent at the market were not controlled. Although the majority of animals came from the local area, some animals had travelled for 3 or 4 hours on board basic vehicles to the market. Water was provided in 25% of pens in one market, but was not normally available during the time of the sale in the second market. Since the buyer of the animals could also be several hours distance from the market, the eight hour journey time may not always have been respected.

The trading standards officer stated there were no faults in any of the vehicles he had seen at the market on the day of the visit. Although the majority of vehicles seen did meet the requirements, the mission team identified one two tier vehicle for transporting sheep, which was in a poor state of repair. The trading standards officer subsequently issued a notice prohibiting the use of this vehicle until repairs were carried out. Some minor deficiencies such as too high a step in one vehicle and improper placement of tail gates during loading/unloading were also seen.

In addition to routine checks of vehicles at the market itself, one local authority also instigated roadside checks on all approach roads to a market on six occasions in 2000. Roadside checks were performed as a multi-agency control in conjunction with the Police and support from the SVS where it was necessary to obtain veterinary assistance. The objective of these controls was to control all aspects of veterinary legislation including identification and certification where necessary. The main deficiency detected was lack of appropriate documentation, which could be for either animal health or animal welfare requirements. The representative of the local authority stated that these checks were also effective in detecting deficiencies relating to the structure of the vehicle itself and for problems such as overstocking or lack of segregation.

#### *5.5.4. Means of transport and animals arriving at slaughterhouses*

The controls carried out at three slaughterhouses visited during the mission were predominantly directed at inspecting the fitness of animals arriving at the slaughterhouse. These slaughterhouses received pigs, cattle and sheep, and poultry and sheep respectively. In all slaughterhouses the official veterinarian (OVS) used the same system for recording all animal welfare incidents. Most incidents considered to merit follow-up action were reported to the SVS or to the local authority and the reporting system was demonstrated in each slaughterhouse visited.

Two incidents recorded in one of the slaughterhouses related to the transport of a severely lame sheep and a sheep which broke its leg during unloading. In both of these cases, the OVS had written to the producer threatening to involve the enforcement authorities if these incidents were repeated. In another case where a consignment of sheep had made a journey of 8 hours from Scotland, a high percentage were considered unfit for transport. In this case the OVS had immediately involved the local authority and informed the SVS. Photographs were taken for possible prosecution by the local authority trading standards officer. At a follow-up visit to the farm of origin, the local authority gave the farmer a verbal warning. No details of the incident were recorded by the SVS on the TRADE database. In the second sheep slaughterhouse, the OVS had involved the local authority in prosecuting an incident where the deck of a two-tier vehicle had collapsed killing a number of sheep. A similar incident was being followed by prosecution by another local authority visited during the mission.

In the poultry slaughterhouse visited, the OVS had written to one producer threatening to involve the local authority in taking enforcement action following the arrival of a consignment of broilers where 66% of the birds were suffering from hock burns. She had also requested the SVS to carry out a follow-up visit to the farm. A representative of the CCA reported that the SVS investigation of this farm was ongoing and the problem was being addressed.

The OVS in this slaughterhouse also monitored and recorded incidents where birds were injured or died during transport. There were 3 recorded incidents of injuries from trapped wings or trapped heads in a two year period. This OVS made a visual assessment of whether all the birds could sit down at the same time as a indication of whether the stocking density was appropriate. Although the OVS did not consider that there was any overstocking in the modules, which had arrived at this slaughterhouse, measurements instigated by the mission team indicated that at least some of the modules were approximately 4% overstocked. The OVS reported that approximately 0.1% of birds were dead on arrival.

#### *5.5.5. Control of route plans*

Planned transport of live animals were notified to the divisional SVS-offices and were accompanied by a route-plan for the proposed journey.

The plausibility of these route-plans was checked by the administrative staff of the divisional office. Where the route-plan was correctly completed for an established route, the approval of the Divisional Veterinary Manager (DVM) was stamped on the route plan. Where a route had not been previously established, the route plan was sent to the CCA in London to verify the plausibility of the journey times. This check is principally carried out by administrative staff in the CCA. A commercially available computer-programme, which is modified to take into account drivers' rest times and speed restrictions, was used to do this assessment and the result was sent back to the divisional office. The transporters are obliged to send back the route-plan within 15 days of completion of the journey. If the route-plan was not sent back in the given time, the SVS sent a reminder letter asking for the plan to be returned within 5 days and after a further reminder this infringement is recorded in the "Trade" data base for possible sanctions. 86% of route-plans were returned in 2000.

In the divisional office visited, staff reported that the checking of route plans contributed to about 5% of the time spent on administrative procedures regarding the certification of live animals. Five staff in the CCA are principally dedicated to control of route plans and operation of the "Trade" database. A representative of the CA indicated that they received *up to* 5000 route plans each year.

In order to verify that transporters actually respected the route plan, the CCA had written to each other Member State (MS) to establish a regular communication on this subject. All but 1 MS had confirmed that they were willing to participate and documentation was seen of regular contact with six other MSs following up particular consignments.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1.Legislation and guidance**

The CA in the UK have made the enforcement of the general provisions of Council Directive 91/628/EEC easier and more uniform by also applying these provisions when animals are commercially transported on journeys less than 50 km.

There are many separate bodies charged with the enforcement of this legislation in the UK and the publication of a comprehensive guidance by the CCA has greatly assisted in achieving an overall uniform implementation of the requirements of the Directive.

### **6.2.Authorisation of transporters**

The database for authorised transporters is an effective tool for surveillance and recording infringements.

The move towards specific training for truck-drivers and/or attendants is leading to a better system to ensure compliance with the requirements of paragraph 1(a) (ii) of Article 5 of Council Directive 91/628/EEC.

### **6.3.Means of transport and animals at places of departure**

Surveillance of the means of transport and animals met the requirements of Council Directive 91/628/EEC, although the level of supervision at the place of departure did not meet SVS targets. The CA ensured that all consignments entering intra-community trade were accompanied by an approved route plan and the appropriate animal health certificate. However, there was no control to ensure that a 24-hour rest period had been provided prior to departure at the collection centre visited (Article 2(e) of Council Directive 91/628/EEC).

### **6.4.Means of transport and animals at ports**

The dockside checks provided a basic screening to ensure the requirements of Council Directive 91/628/EEC had been respected, however, checking 100% of consignments in this way may not be the most effective use of resources. Supervision at the time of loading was found to be a more effective way of inspecting that all the requirements had been met, in particular the fitness of animals for transport.

### **6.5.Means of transport and animals at markets**

Surveillance by local authority officials was particularly concentrated on livestock markets, with both a daily presence and strategic enforcement initiatives. This satisfactorily met the requirements of article 8(c) of Council Directive 91/628/EEC. Journey times to and from markets were not controlled, so although most animals were traded locally, the eight hour journey time may not have been respected for some animals (point 2 of Chapter VII of Council Directive 91/628/EEC). This arose in particular at the market where no water was available to the animals during their time at the market (Article 2 (e) of Council Directive 91/628/EEC).

### **6.6.Means of transport and animals arriving at slaughterhouses**

Animal welfare incidents were clearly recorded in such a way that it was easy to audit the procedures followed and the instigation of follow-up action. Although follow-up action was largely satisfactory, one serious incident involving the transport of ill and injured sheep did not result in appropriate enforcement action, which is not in compliance with Article 1(b) of Council Directive 91/628/EEC.

### **6.7.Control of route plans**

Both the involvement of the CCA in approving routes and in verifying that the plan is followed leads to an efficient standardised approach. Effective enforcement action where there were infringements has led to a high rate of return as required by paragraph 2(d) (ii) of Article 5A of Council Directive 91/628/EEC.

## **6.8.Overall conclusion**

The controls operated by the UK, with a few exceptions, ensured that the requirements of Council Directive 91/628/EEC were met. The procedures developed are an example of best practice in relation to similar controls operated in other Member States, notably, the establishment of a database for the surveillance of transporters, the control of route-plans and the enforcement strategy operated by the local authority visited. The establishment of a specific training for truck-drivers and/or attendants is a welcome enhancement of EU-requirements. The few shortcomings which were noted are addressed in the recommendations of this report.

## **7. CLOSING MEETING**

A closing meeting was held on 16 February 2001 with the CCA. At this meeting, the main findings and conclusions of the mission were presented by the mission team. The representatives of the CCA expressed their willingness to address the shortcomings mentioned.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1.To the competent authorities of the UK**

The competent authorities are requested to inform the Commission Services of the actions taken and planned to address the following recommendations and to provide a timetable for the completion of these actions. This should be done within 1 month of receipt of the final mission report.

- The targeting of checks of consignments (as required by article 8 of Council Directive 91/628/EEC) in particular those destined for intra-community trade, should be reviewed, so that maximum use is made of the available resources to ensure the fitness of animals for transport (Article 1(b) of Council Directive 91/628/EEC).
- Take measures to ensure that in certifying the place of departure (as defined by Article 2(e) of Council Directive 91/628/EEC), LVIs have assured themselves that animals have been provided with a 24 hour rest period.
- A system should be developed to monitor that the maximum journey time of 8 hours on board basic vehicles is respected (point 2 of Chapter VII of Council Directive 91/628/EEC), in particular where the journey involves time at a market.
- Take measures to ensure that the stocking density for poultry during transport is respected as laid down in part E of Chapter VI of the Annex of Council Directive 91/628/EEC.
- Take measures to ensure stricter monitoring by the Meat Hygiene Service of the reporting of incidents at slaughterhouses to both the SVS and local authorities as laid down in their operations manual. The SVS and local authorities should ensure

that appropriate follow-up action is taken following such incidents, in particular to enforce Article 1(b) of Council Directive 91/628/EEC.

## **8.2.To the Commission services**

The Commission Services should consider developing an EU wide system for exchange of information in order to verify on an on going basis that journey times have been respected. The system described in 5.5.5 provides a model.

**ADDENDUM TO MISSION REPORT DG (SANCO)/3245/2001**

Comments were received from the CCA of the UK (MAFF) on 01-06-2001 which provided a written commitment to inform the Commission Services of the actions, taken or planned, to address the recommendations given in this report.

Furthermore the UK CCA looks forward to seeing the Commission's proposals to develop better exchange of information on verification of journey times as recommended by the FVO Inspectors along the lines of the system currently operated by the UK and described in Section 5.5.5.