

Brussels, 15 December 2018

Minutes

Fourth meeting of the **EU Platform on Animal Welfare**

19 November 2018, Albert Borschette Building

1. Fourth meeting of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare (the Platform)

The meeting was web streamed. Click [here](#) to access the recording.

2. List of points discussed

2.1. Opening session

2.1.1. Introduction and welcome to participants

The Chair, Anne Bucher, Director General for Health and Food Safety, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

2.1.2. Anne Bucher, Director General for Health and Food Safety – Presentation and adoption of the agenda

Ms Bucher presented the draft agenda of the meeting. As no additional points were asked to be included, the agenda was adopted as tabled.

2.1.3. Vytenis Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety – Speech

Commissioner Andriukaitis, summarised the main achievements of the Platform and of the Commission and presented future initiatives. He highlighted the important contribution of the Platform's subgroups for the successful enforcement of EU legislation. He also mentioned the designation of the first EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare and the adoption of a Recommendation on an EU Coordinated Control Plan for the official controls on online sales of dogs and cats as some of the Commission's latest achievements. The Commissioner also pointed out the progress of the Platform's digital communication tool. Furthermore, he announced that the Commission will establish a second EU Reference Centre devoted to the welfare of poultry, rabbits and fur animals. In addition, the Commissioner informed that a seminar on online sales of dogs and cats, hosted by the Commission, will take place on 28 November and a project on "*Quality Controls and Indicators for Animal Welfare*" was foreseen to be launched in late 2018. Moreover, the Commissioner confirmed that the Commission will perform an evaluation of the EU animal welfare strategy 2012-2015, following the recommendation of the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) report on the matter.

2.1.4. Gabriele Damoser, Head of Unit "Animal Welfare" at Austrian Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer – Austrian priorities on animal welfare

Ms Damoser presented the animal welfare rules in Austria and the priorities of the Austrian Presidency. She pointed out that since 2005 animal welfare legislation in Austria has been placed at federal level. Following this, the Austrian Animal Welfare Association was founded in May 2006. The main achievements of the association are extensive education of children and adults by using teaching materials, workshops, classes, and training courses.

The main priority of the Austrian Presidency is the enforcement of EU animal welfare rules. The welfare requirements have to be ensured throughout the whole transport time, with a specific focus on long journeys to non-EU countries and on transport during the hot season. Yet another priority of the Austrian Presidency is promoting the activities of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Animal Welfare Platform for Europe on long distance transport and the development and implementation of the OIE international standards.

Ms Damoser informed the participants about a recent survey of Member States conducted by the Austrian Presidency. The survey was linked to the restrictions on exports of live animals in the summer of 2018, as well as to possible future measures.

2.1.5. Questions and answers (5 interventions)

Vier Pforten and Eurogroup for Animals asked Ms Damoser to inform about the outcome of the survey conducted. Greece asked Ms Damoser to further elaborate on the possibility of a strict prohibition of animal transportation during the hot season to southern-eastern countries. FVE wondered if the ban was considered by Austria alone or at EU level. Ms Damoser replied she was not in a position to present any results of the survey because it has not been finalised yet, pointing out that a complete ban of exports during the summer would create problems. The Commissioner emphasised the need of sustainable actions, arguing that a complete ban was not a viable option.

Vier Pforten asked the Commissioner about the action plan on online trade of puppies. Vier Pforten also raise the issue of available resources for the dissemination of the work of the Platform's subgroup on transport, regretting that the Commission logo could not be used for the document that the subgroup is going to produce. The Commissioner stressed cat and dog animal welfare issues were not under the Commission's competence. Regarding the question of resources, Commissioner Andriukaitis explained in details that the Commission is presently short in human and financial resources following consecutive costs reduction.

CIWF asked the Commissioner what would be his advice to his successor and also enquired about the need for new laws related to those animal species not covered by species-specific legislation. The Commissioner said that he will ask his/her successor to keep animal welfare issues high on his/her agenda. He also stressed that no additional legislation was needed, arguing that proper enforcement of the existing legislation was a more relevant option.

2.1.6. Janusz Wojciechowski, Member of the European Court of Auditors – The European Court of Auditors' report on animal welfare audit

Mr Wojciechowski presented the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) report on animal welfare, which covered farm animals' lifetime, their transport and slaughter. It examined the

overall implementation of the EU animal welfare strategy, focusing on two of its objectives, namely achieving compliance with animal welfare requirements and synergies with the common agriculture policy (CAP). The audit has shown that the Commission and the Member States audited (Germany, France, Italy, Poland and Romania) had succeeded in addressing some animal welfare issues through a combination of guidance and enforcement actions. Mr Wojciechowski pointed out the areas of success: the group housing of sows and the ban on bare cages for laying hens. However, some weaknesses continued to persist, particularly in relation to the routine tail docking of pigs, long-distance transport, the transport of unfit animals, and the use of stunning procedures at slaughter. In particular, as regards the use of the derogation for slaughter without stunning, there is a risk for excessive use of the derogation to streamline the production process.

The ECA's report indicated that the animal welfare rural development measure contained good examples of actions beneficial to animals, going beyond the minimum requirements. However, this measure was not widely used and of the countries visited, Poland and France decided not to introduce it. In France, this choice contrasted with the national strategy on animal welfare. The recommendations addressed to the Commission were as follows: (1) to evaluate the animal welfare strategy and reflect how to address its conclusions; (2) to develop enforcement strategy in order to reduce the time for implementing the Commission recommendations by Member States; (3) to improve coordination between the official inspections and cross-compliance; (4) to improve the use of rural development support in order to achieve animal welfare objectives.

2.1.7. Questions and answers (6 interventions)

World Animal Protection wondered whether the contradiction between improving animal welfare and the strategy of rural development in France was noticed by the auditors or expressed by the French government. Mr Wojciechowski explained it was an official declaration by the country. However, the reasons behind it were unclear. In addition, he stated that the Polish government believed the measures were against the competitiveness of the farmers.

Eurogroup for Animals drew the Platform's attention to the implementation of the slaughter regulation, asking how slaughtering animals without stunning was reflected in ECA's report. According to Mr Wojciechowski, the ECA observed different practises in the Member States, all compliant with the legislation. He was of the view that the Commission should consider the issue when evaluating its animal welfare strategy. From Mr Wojciechowski's point of view, the legislation should be clearer, allowing derogation only in case of ritual slaughter. CIWF expressed concerns that slaughter without stunning could become a common practice, asking how the Commission could make sure the derogation was not overused in the future. The Commissioner said that the derogation from stunning should not be used for commercial purposes and should be limited to religious reasons. CELCAA commented on the situation in France, noting that the best solutions could only come by involving all stakeholders. In France, a special authorisation from the authorities is needed to conduct religious slaughter. In addition, a register of religious slaughterers and sales of their products are in place.

The Netherlands expressed support for the evaluation of the animal welfare strategy. According to them, after the evaluation is complete, the stakeholders will have to act on the conclusions of the assessment and engage in a clear discussion about whether a new strategy or an action plan should be prepared.

FESASS advocated for a harmonised EU-level approach regarding animal welfare to ensure the development of rural areas. FESASS asked about perspectives of funding, highlighting the need for investment. Mr Wojciechowski and the Commissioner agreed with FESASS, stating a common approach at EU level regarding the matter was needed.

2.2. Morning session

The morning session was chaired by Mr Bernard Van Goethem, Director for Crisis Management in Food, Animals and Plants, DG SANTE.

2.2.1. Session 1: Enforcement – subgroups of the Platform

2.2.1.1. Terence Cassidy, Policy Officer, Unit "Animals", Directorate Health and Food Audits and Analysis, DG SANTE – Presentation of the outcome of the second meeting of the subgroup on transport

Mr Cassidy outlined the composition of the subgroup, reminding the overall objective of the subgroup which is to assist and advise the Commission on issues identified as difficult (i.e. extreme temperatures, export of cattle and unweaned animals). The outputs of the group will not be considered as Commission's official documents; therefore they will not be validated by the institution's logo. He also elaborated on the objectives and the work groups within the transport subgroup. The extreme temperatures work group focuses on factsheets for organisers, transporters and drivers, research gaps, scenario-solution documents and a communication strategy. The export of cattle group puts its attention to producing fact sheets on organising the journey to non-EU countries, a list of import requirements, and a list of resting facilities outside the EU. The export of unweaned animals group is analysing the following aspects related to calf transport: prolonged hunger, thermal comfort, health and fitness.

2.2.1.2. Terence Cassidy – Presentation of the selection process and composition of the subgroup on the welfare of pigs

Mr Cassidy outlined the composition of the subgroup and highlighted some of the difficult issues in the area: barriers to changing production practices; assessing health status of pigs, diet and competition; improving management and environment. Tail-biting and tail-docking issues are of high significance for the subgroup. The ways to assess health status of pigs needs to be better clarified, according to Mr Cassidy. In relation to tail docking, Sweden and Finland will be given ground in the meeting of the subgroup on 26 November to share their expertise on how to have pigs with intact tails nation-wide.

2.2.1.3. Terence Cassidy – Presentation of a forthcoming DG SANTE project “Quality controls and indicators for animal welfare”

Presenting the forthcoming project, Mr Cassidy gave an overview of the general stages of the project, namely survey, audits and meetings. Speaking of possible outcomes, he mentioned guidance for Member States on organising official controls and mapping the use of animal welfare indicators. The project is going to focus on broilers and pigs because these two sectors are intensive ones, with a lot of data produced.

2.2.1.4. Questions and answers (12 interventions)

Belgium drew the Platform's attention to surgical pig castration, as the issue is not being addressed by the subgroup on pigs. The participants were reminded that a special expert group on the matter was set up by the Commission in 2010, which is now working without the Commission's support. Belgium asked the Commission to establishing a subgroup on the matter. A number of Platform members (European Meat Network, CIWF, Eurogroup for Animals, EuroCoop, Animal Health Europe, Vier Pfoeten, Finland, the Netherlands, Austria, and Denmark) expressed support for the Belgian initiative, aiming at giving more attention to surgical pig castration within the scope of the Platform. Ms Eva Zamora Escribano explained that the subgroups, created by the Commission, were to focus on the enforcement of EU legislation and suggested establishing a voluntary initiative on the matter. Mr Denis Simonin added that the pig castration issue was of a non-legislative nature.

CIWF addressed the issue of live exports, asking Mr Cassidy about measures taken by non-EU countries, namely in North Africa and the Middle East, to improve animal welfare conditions during transport, on the farm and at the time of killing. Mr Cassidy informed that Turkey had committed some money to improve border inspection posts. Mr Van Goethem stated that the Commission was working to improve the situation related to exports to non-EU countries.

The Netherlands asked the Commission to put the report on Council Directive 2007/43 on the welfare of broilers on its agenda for the next Platform meeting, as this could be a positive thing for looking at how the Directive had been implemented. Mr Simonin said the Commission had already produced early this year a report on the implementation of the Directive. It was now necessary that the Member States work on the basis of this information to improve their controls.

The Netherlands and Eurogroup for Animals proposed that the Platform approves the documents drawn up by the subgroup on transport. FVE wondered about the DG SANTE's new project, asking if the stakeholders would be consulted in the process. Mr Cassidy confirmed that they would be involved.

2.3. Afternoon session

The afternoon session was chaired by Ms Eva Zamora Escribano, Head of SANTE Unit G2 'Animal Health and Welfare'.

2.3.1. Session 2: Voluntary initiatives – Outcome of the Platform Members' own initiatives

2.3.1.1. Birte Broberg, Senior Veterinary Officer, Danish Veterinary and Food Administration – Responsible ownership and care of equidae

Ms Broberg presented the timeline that led to the creation of the voluntary initiative on equidae. She stressed out that the challenges for equine welfare in the EU and the need to produce guidelines were highlighted several times.

Ms Broberg also referred to the broad representation of the different sectors in the initiative that brought diversity to the debate, without forgetting to put animal welfare as the key topic.

The initiative key areas of work include two guides, one on horses and one on donkeys (including hybrids), to take into account the similarities and differences of these animals, as well as fact sheets summarising the most important keywords issues of both guides. Their aim is to support good practices and responsible keeping, care, training and use of equidae by giving information on the biological and behavioural characteristics of these animals, as well as to give recommendations on topics such as accommodation, breeding or mutilations, and thus improve equine welfare in the EU and beyond. The documents are not meant to replace, contradict or put in question any existing guide, guideline, charter or legislation as they address areas where there are no specific EU-legislation.

Ms Broberg highlighted that two spaces were created on the Digital Tool for the initiative. A thematic network dedicated to the own initiative members and a folder on the Agora Library in which the guides and documents of the voluntary initiative can be uploaded and shared with all the members of the Platform. She asked for the possibility to have the guides adopted as a Platform documents and to have them translated for ensuring their success. The guides will be produced by mid-2019.

2.3.1.2. Léon Arnts, Senior Policy Officer Animal Welfare, Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality; Animal Supply Chain and Animal Welfare Department – Health and welfare of pets (dogs) in trade

Mr Arnts informed the members of the broad composition of the voluntary initiative on pets in trade. He added that an increase of interest in this topic has led to the creation of two chaired seats for Portugal who joined Spain and for Finland and Ireland who joined the initiative together and decided to alternate between the meetings. The main objectives of the initiative are the exchange of good practices on enforcement and on systems of identification & registration of dogs (I&R), improving communication and cooperation between Member States with regard to pet trade, as well as working on a better exchangeability of data from I&R systems. Recently, the members of the initiative decided to develop guides/guidelines on the basis of their inventoried information.

He presented the first outcome of the initiative which is a document based on a mapping survey on I&R systems for dogs in the group's Member States. This document contains information on the code structure of chips numbers and on national legislation and competent authorities in the Member States involved. Furthermore, the group is now working on making an inventory on how the I&R databases are updated and used, as well as on enforcement and sanctioning. The second part of the mapping survey will focus on registration systems of breeders and sellers, inventory of existing guidance documents on the welfare of pets, pet owners and travel, as well as leading to a guidance document on responsible ownership, buying and selling of pets and on recommendations to the Commission to improve the use of the TRACES system in regard to the trade of pets.

Finally, Mr Arnts informed the audience about the creation of a thematic network on "Health and Welfare of Pets (dogs) in Trade" on the Digital Tool, where outcomes of the group will be published and be accessible to all Platform members. He kindly requested the other Member States to provide information for their mapping initiative through an empty format that will be published on the Digital Tool soon.

2.3.1.3. Katerina Marinou, Head of the Animal Welfare for Farm and Laboratory Animals' Division, Directorate General of Veterinary Services, Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food – Welfare of Fish

Ms Marinou reminded the members that the sentience of fish has been recognised by science, as well as the fact that they can experience stress and pain through all stages of their lives: breeding, transport and time of killing. According to several surveys, the public now considers that fish should be treated and killed humanly. The production sector has to take into account fish welfare by following guidelines and promoting good practices because bad publicity could affect the sales of fish and other species. Greece, as the leading European producer of sea bass and sea bream, decided to launch this voluntary initiative that could help work on the welfare of fish. This initiative was well received by the members during the previous meeting. She also informed the members that the next meeting of the voluntary initiative will be held in Athens on 15 January 2019, and also of the possibility to participate by telephone or Skype.

The main task set-up by the group is the elaboration of terms of reference presented during the inaugural meeting of the initiative on the 25 September 2018. The outcomes of this voluntary initiative will help the competent authorities in the implementation of existing legislation, as well as improving fish welfare by producing clear and informative materials which will be disseminated in the aquaculture sector in the EU and beyond.

The focus points of the group will be to improve the welfare of fish by reducing stress and disturbance during breeding, transport, killing, handling, and to focus on water quality parameters which can vary from species. Furthermore, the group will focus on fish welfare at killing since some practices like the use of ice need to be improved or stopped in the future.

2.3.1.4. Birte Broberg – Welfare of pullets

Ms Broberg explained that the Council Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purpose apply to pullets but is too general to cover all complex animal welfare challenges that these animals will have to face during their lives, including their future lives as laying hens. For that reason, Platform members decided to produce a discussion paper on the best management practices for the welfare of pullets. The idea was presented during the last Platform meeting in June, and members were invited to indicate their interest in joining or nominating a candidate for the voluntary initiative. The group is now composed by five Member States, four business organisations, two civil society organisations and the OIE as an international organisation. This broad representation assures to produce the best result taking account all points of view on the subject.

2.3.1.5. Questions and answers (12 interventions)

Several members congratulated the voluntary initiative groups on their work (ISAE, OIE) and added that the Commission should consider the possibility to endorse the materials created by these initiatives, as well as to give logistic support for their translation and dissemination (World Animal Protection, CIWF, FVE, World Horse Welfare, Vier Pfoten). The Commission will consider the Platform members' demands to give more visibility to the outcomes of the voluntary initiatives. The OIE added that collaborative work on horses has led to produce materials such as the videos published on the OIE YouTube Channel, and that, concerning the wellbeing of fish, it is an opportunity to see how the actual measures worked. In the case of pullets and laying hens, the OIE has developed a draft on laying hens that could

be of great support in the work implementing by the group. ISAE underlined the importance of taking into account the welfare of pullets and best practices during the life of these animals to avoid issues such as feather pecking, which can be compared to the tail docking issue for pigs.

Ms Sossidou, independent expert, asked for the voluntary initiative groups to include research gaps in their discussions and Ms Keeling, independent expert as well, asked how indicators will be addressed by the working groups. Regarding fish, Ms Marinou explained that the group does not have sufficient time and resources to evaluate indicators which vary according to the physiology of each species.

Ms Broberg explained that they introduced biological characteristics and (abnormal) behaviour of horses in their paper, as well as indicators of insufficient welfare and an annex on body condition scoring provided by the University of Milan. EuroFAWC asked if the voluntary group on equines is considering the possibility to analyse the issue of rewilding of horses. She replied that the initiative did not address wild horses because it focused on animals that were kept by owners. Iceland asked whether there will be a discussion in the voluntary initiative on equines, on farming or collecting pregnant mare's hormone and on possible welfare issue in the countries that are using this method. Ms Broberg replied that she did not know to which extent the practice was used in EU countries. The problem could be addressed during the next meeting of the voluntary initiative if members have enough expertise in this topic. France would like to participate actively in the voluntary initiative on equines and draw attention to the importance of its guidelines for the welfare of equidae.

CIWF asked Ms Marinou and the Commission whether it will be possible in the future to consider an EU Reference Centre on the welfare of fish, considering the lack of information about fish, especially at the time of slaughter. The Commission indicated that for the time being there was no decision in this respect because the focus was on the second centre. FVE highlighted the lack of validated medicines for fish in some countries that are needed for sedation before the handling and asked Ms Marinou if there was a discussion on this topic inside the voluntary initiative on fish. Ms Marinou replied that it was not discussed yet but she would be happy to raise this issue in the future.

Vier Pfofen asked if the voluntary initiative on pets considered also the Commission's coordinated control plan for the official controls of online sales of dogs and cats. Mr Arnts replied that once the results of this plan are available, they will be further examined. The Commission highlighted that at this stage it can't provide any additional information regarding its coordinated control plan. Hopefully, this could be envisaged in some of the future Platform's meetings.

2.3.2. Session 3: Information and knowledge sharing

2.3.2.1. Denis Simonin, Head of Animal Welfare Sector, Unit "Animal Health and Welfare", Directorate Crisis Management in Food, Animals and Plants, DG SANTE – Presentation by the Commission of the Platform Digital Tool

Mr Simonin presented the Digital Tool of the Platform and highlighted its importance for the exchange of information and good practices between the meetings. He reminded the procedure of access and explained its composition. The Digital Tool is made up of a common space named Agora and networks dedicated to the two subgroups, on Animal Transport and

on Pig Welfare, but also to the voluntary initiatives. Mr Simonin explained the features and functionalities of the Digital Tool. In all networks, members are able to share information, events and documents, publish links, pictures or polls. They can also react to members' activities, initiating discussions with comments and like or adding the information to their favourites. He also presented the weekly newsletter of the Digital Tool which gives an overview of the other members' work assuring more visibility to their initiatives. Mr Simonin encouraged all members that had not requested the access yet to join the 76% of the Platform members who are already enrolled in the tool.

2.3.2.2. Hans Spoolder, Senior scientist at Wageningen Livestock Research; Wageningen University & Research, Coordinator of the first EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare – First European Union Reference Centre for Animal Welfare

Mr Spoolder explained that the Official Controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625 served as a legal base for the designation of the first EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare (the Centre) which started to work in October. The aim of this Centre, dedicated to pig welfare, is to support the activities of the Commission and the Member States by providing consistent technical data, research findings and new techniques and expertise. The work programme focuses on the welfare of pig on-farm, during transport and at the time of killing. Mr Spoolder presented the Centre's team composition. He stressed that they will work on making information easily accessible and on creating an efficient network with national reference bodies. As stipulated by the Article 96 of Official Controls Regulation, the Centre's activities will be concentrated on: coordinated assistance, animal welfare indicators, scientific and technical studies, training courses and dissemination of research and innovations. The Centre will start by establishing a national support body network, as well as by drafting a strategic plan. Then, it will focus on compiling an inventory of animal welfare indicators needs and risks, identifying the main knowledge gaps. In the field of training and education, the Centre will collaborate closely with Better Training for Safer Food programme (BTSF). The Centre will also take part in the meeting of the subgroup on pig welfare in Grange to gather feedback on the ideas the experts have worked on so far. All of these will be followed by dissemination activities. Finally, Mr Spoolder informed the members that they can contact the centre by e-mail for any questions.

2.3.2.3. Nick Dymond, Counsellor, Veterinary Services, Sanitary and Phytosanitary, New Zealand Embassy to Belgium, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Romania, Sweden and Mission to the EU & NATO

Mr Dymond gave an overview of New Zealand's animal welfare system and its importance for the country's economy which depends largely on the farming industry. The Animal Welfare Act of 1999 provides the basic principles and standards for animal welfare. This act is complemented with regulations and codes, each providing enforcement and details on minimal requirements to ensure animal welfare. Due to its small size, the country can have a collaborative approach with stakeholders in many areas of work. New Zealand has its own animal welfare strategy and emergency management, but also works closely with other countries (e.g. Asian countries, EU) and international organisation such as OIE. Mr Dymond reminded the members of the similarities between New Zealand and EU legislation on animal welfare. He also presented a chronological development of all the New Zealand animal welfare regulations, codes and acts. The non-compliance with the Animal Welfare Act can lead to fines or prosecution. An Amendment Act was created in 2015 to enforce regulation and to deal with low to medium offending. He also presented a new regulation from this year

to deal with several animal welfare matters, such as restrictions on transportation of animals or welfare rules for castration. Mr Dymond shared the successful impact of young calves' regulation which led to lower death rate of these animals. The next regulation due for 2019/2020 will focus on surgical and painful procedures and the country will continue to work on emergency management, understanding of animal behaviour and positive animal welfare.

New Zealand works actively on the education of the public and professionals to its new regulations. To improve knowledge on this subject, they are using several tools: meetings with stakeholders, educational materials, and a mobile app called fit for transport which allows the transporters to find specific details on each animal condition. The paper materials are distributed in all veterinary clinics in the country.

2.3.2.4. Questions and answers (7 interventions)

Eurogroup for Animals asked Mr Spoolder if it was possible to work on best practices beyond legislation to make sure Member States and stakeholders have the possibility to promote extra efforts for pig welfare. Eurogroup also wanted to pay more attention to the use on CO₂ for the stunning of pigs and asked Mr Spoolder to address this topic in the priority list and strategy of the Reference Centre.

Mr Simonin reminded that the EU Reference Centre has been designated on the basis of the legislation on official controls. He clarified the difference between the risk assessment that is the role of EFSA and the Reference Centres that are established to help the Member States on the performance of their official controls. Considering the limited resources, all topics cannot be addressed and therefore the implementation of existing legislation stays the priority for the Commission. CIWF asked for more information on a second EU Reference Centre. Ms Zamora Escribano replied that the Centre work would focus on poultry, rabbits and fur animals and as soon as more information is available it will be shared with the members.

Ms Sossidou (independent expert) asked Mr Spoolder how the Reference Centre will manage the amount of data and will share them in transparency. She reminded that he mentioned an automated data collection system. Mr Spoolder gave an example of automatic data collection with abattoirs using cameras. He added that they are listing the various opportunities to record automatically indicators of animal welfare and how they can be shared into the production chain.

Vier Pfofen asked Mr Dymond if the fit for transport app is generating positive effects and to help the subgroup on Animal Transport (extreme temperatures) with any assessment that he might have on it as well as sharing it for a use in the EU. Mr Dymond replied that he did not have any specific data because it is a new project, but it is already very well received by the stakeholders in New Zealand. He added that he will be happy to put Vier Pfofen in contact with the people that are managing it.

Eurogroup for Animals and HSI pointed that the EU should take the example of New Zealand to improve the standards and legislation. HSI asked how New Zealand is dealing with the enforcement of the legislation. Mr Dymond replied that the size of the country allows them to work more precisely on topics such as slaughter and that they mainly focus on the understanding and training of stakeholders to make sure that they apply the legislation. Eurogroup encouraged New Zealand to promote their standards through trade negotiations with the EU. Mr Dymond thanked Eurogroup for Animals and replied that they are already

working mutually with the Commission on improvements in several domains in the Trade agreements. Ms Zamora Escribano added that the inclusion of animal welfare in trade agreements is among Commission's priorities.

The OIE asked Mr Dymond how animal welfare was integrated in their emergency plan. The OIE also shared an update on Wageningen Process, a common project developed with FAO, Animal Network, the World Bank and Wageningen University, which was presented by the World Bank during the third Platform meeting. This project aims to develop a set of good practices to improve the animal welfare of livestock in low and middle income countries. The group is working on pig welfare guidelines and an equine guide that will complete the OIE existing codes. Mr Dymond explained that in case of extreme weather situations such as flooding or drought, they can proceed to emergency slaughter or shifting of stock, but they are also taking care of the welfare of farmers. ISAE mentioned that they are actively supporting the global development of animal welfare science. This year ISAE congress held in Norway, in collaboration with OIE, will allow scientist to discuss it. Furthermore, in 2020, there will be an international congress in India to discuss topics which are relevant for this region. He invited all members who are interested in this to contact the organisation.

2.4. Closing

2.4.1. Conclusion and closing of the meeting

Ms Zamora Escribano thanked all the members for the constructive discussions. She highlighted two announcements made by the Commissioner. Firstly, that the Commission will launch an evaluation on the animal welfare strategy 2012-2015 following the recommendation of the Court of Auditors and secondly, the designation of the second EU Reference Centre. The Commission will continue to share information about any further developments on animal welfare reference centres. Ms Zamora Escribano emphasised the importance of the work performed by the two subgroups. She congratulated the participants of the voluntary initiatives for all their work and for sharing with the platform. The Commission is pleased with these initiatives which are working on topics that are not subject to specific provisions in the current EU legislation. She encouraged members to continue in this way and to contribute to these initiatives by providing relevant information and support. The Commission will consider the possibility to publicise the materials coming from the voluntary initiatives. Ms Zamora Escribano emphasised the importance of being involved in the Digital Tool in terms of access and participation. She thanked New Zealand for the presentation and opportunity to exchange information and experiences with the members of the Platform. Ms Zamora Escribano reminded that all the presentations will be available on the website and on the Digital Tool. She also informed that the fifth meeting is scheduled for the 29 April 2019 and the sixth one for 23 September 2019.

2.4.2. Exchange of views (2 interventions)

Germany thanked the Commission for the Platform and the initiatives that have been put in place, and asked if the Platform was to be extended under the next Commission. Ms Zamora Escribano indicated that she could not reply to this question at that point in time and that members will be informed in due course.

ORCA wanted to inform the members of the crowdfunding for the creation of ORCA Academy, a project of home for students who will be involved in animal welfare. Ms Zamora

Escribano thanked ORCA for its intervention and reminded that this kind of information could be also shared on the Digital Tool.

3. List of Participants

European Commission:

Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis, Marco Valletta

DG SANTE: Anne Bucher, Bernard Van Goethem, Eva Zamora Escribano, Ana Ramirez Vela, Denis Simonin, Marguerite Kuzma, Stanislav Ralchev, Milda Zarnauskaite, Aude Luyckx, Pia Sainz, Terence Cassidy,

DG NEAR: Alexandra Vlachou

SG: Francesco Carlucci

European Court of Auditors (ECA):

Janusz Wojciechowski, Member of the ECA

Kinga Wiśniewska-Danek, Head of Private Office of Mr Wojciechowski

Diana Voinea, Head of task of Animal Welfare Audit, ECA

Colm Friel, Principal Manager of Animal Welfare Audit, ECA

Speakers:

Janusz Wojciechowski, Member of the European Court of Auditors

Birte Broberg, Senior Veterinary Officer, Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

Léon Arnts, Senior Policy Officer Animal Welfare, Dutch Ministry of Agriculture

Katerina Marinou, Head of the Animal Welfare Division, Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food

Hans Spoolder, Senior Scientist at Wageningen Livestock Research; Wageningen University & Research

Nick Dymond, Counsellor, Veterinary Services, Sanitary and Phytosanitary, New Zealand Embassy to Belgium

Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

European Economic Area (EEA) members: Iceland, Norway

International Organisations: OIE

Business and Professional Organisations:

Animalhealth Europe

Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU (a.v.e.c.)

COCEGA - European Agri-Cooperatives

EuroCommerce - Retail, Wholesale and International Trade Representation to the EU

European Community of Consumer Co-operatives (Euro Coop)

European Dairy Association (EDA)

European Federation of Animal Health Services (FESASS)
European Feed Manufacturers Federation (FEFAC)
European Forum for Animal Welfare Councils (EuroFAWC)
European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB)
European Liaison Committee for the Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade (celcaa)
European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (U.E.C.B.V.)
European Meat Network (EMN)
European Rural Poultry Association (ERPA)
Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)
International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE)
Liaison Centre for the Meat Processing Industry in the European Union (CLITRAVI)

Civil Society Organisations:

Animals' Angels e.V.
Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)
Eurogroup for Animals
Humane Society International/Europe (HSI/Europe)
Organisation for Respect and Care of Animals (ORCA)
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
VIER PFOTEN International (VIER PFOTEN)
World Animal Protection
World Horse Welfare

Independent Experts: Elisabetta Canali, Linda Keeling, Niamh O'Connell, Vytautas Ribikauskas, Evangelia Sossidou, Anna Elisabet Valros, Antonio Velarde Calvo

Observer: Switzerland

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU