

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH  
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 20-21 DECEMBER 2005**

**(Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain)  
(Section Controls and Import Conditions)  
(Section Animal Health and Welfare)**

President: Eric Pondelet: points 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 11, 13, 14, 15  
Paul Van Geldorp: points 2, 12  
Alberto Laddomada: points 16, 17, 18, 19

All the Member States were present.

**1. SANCO Inspection Programme 2006 (AL)**

The Food and Veterinary Office presented DG Health and Consumer Protection inspection programme for 2006 including around 260 inspections to be completed in 12 months on food safety, animal health, animal welfare, plant health and general review. This programme remains flexible in order to respond to emergencies and unforeseen circumstances. All Member States received the inspection planning including provisional inspection dates last September and were requested to send their comments and reactions. An update of the programme taking into account new developments will be presented in June 2006. Priorities for 2007 will be presented at a broad-scale meeting end June/beginning of July next. Inspections are carried out in all Member States, in acceding and candidate countries to assess their readiness for accession, and in third countries to ensure that competent authorities correctly apply EU standards or their equivalent for exports to the EU.

**2. Russian import conditions for animals and products of animal origin. (RH) (*See point 3 of the 17 December 2004 SCFAH and point 2 of the 19 October 2004, 18 January, 16 February, 16 March, 21 April, 24 May, 21-22 June, 23 September, 18 October and 22-23 November 2005 SCFAHs*)**

The Commission informed the committee on the discussions which took place on 15-16 December in Moscow on controls of transit and a draft transit addendum to the veterinary addendum based on the conclusions of the Vilnius meeting. The Commission requests that the task of carrying out controls should be shared by both the EU and Russia.

The Commission will prepare another draft addendum on the veterinary certification of composite products to be exported to Russia on the basis of the draft Commission decision on certification of composite products imported to the EU. The Commission will also prepare revised versions of the 14 current EU export certificates. The new draft memorandum on regionalisation will be discussed as well, which is important with

regard to animal health requirements. The Austrian presidency agreed to organise a Council working group as soon as possible in January 2006.

As regards the approval of exporting establishments, Russia requires on the one hand that all establishments in the 10 new Member States (MS) have to be inspected and approved by Russia; on the other hand, in the 15 old MSs this requirement applies only to beef plants. At Russia's request, the Commission will make a proposal based on pre-listing principles and covering all 25 MSs.

The next high level meeting with Russia is planned to take place in Berlin on 17 January 2006 and should cover all problematic points.

The UK delegation asked whether Russia was accepted as a member of WTO. There is no definite deadline for the accession, delay being caused partly by the sanitary and phytosanitary issues. The issue of animal health conditions is being dealt with through revision of the export certificates. Another issue is the presence of resident Russian inspectors signing certificates, a system which Russia is not willing to abolish. Even if the EU cannot demand its suppression, it can require the system to comply with SPS requirements, as regards fees level, transparency and non-discrimination.

**3. Working document on details and work programmes of Community Reference Laboratories in the field of veterinary public health (residues) for 2006. (SANCO/2005/3552) (AMBR) (see point 11)**

Four Community Reference Laboratories (Berlin, Fougères, Rome and Bilthoven) are designated in the field of residues of veterinary medicines and contaminants in food of animal origin. The work programme summarises the activities to be carried out by the 4 CRLs during 2006 including assistance to Member States on development and validation of analytical methods, quality assurance, proficiency tests and workshops.

**4. Working document on details and work programmes of Community Reference Laboratories in the field of veterinary public health (biological risks) for 2006 (SANCO/3872/2005) (JOV) (see point 14)**

Five CRLs are designated in the veterinary public health sector (biological risks) in the following fields: milk and milk products, marine biotoxins, bacteriological and viral contamination of bivalve molluscs, transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) and salmonella. The working document outlines their functions and tasks, as well as the criteria for the development and validation of analytical methods. As from 1 January 2006, the legislative framework changes as Regulation 882/2004 on official controls of foodstuffs comes into force and old hygiene directives are repealed.

From 2006, the Commission and each beneficiary CRL will be bound by a multi-annual contract of 5 years, which will be established in order to define the roles and responsibilities of both parties in implementing their partnership.

The designation of new CRLs is also planned, which will lead to an amendment of Regulation 882/2004.

**5. Mandate for standardisation addressed to CEN in the field of methods of analysis of foodstuffs concerning food hygiene (MH)**

The Commission has prepared a mandate for standardisation addressed to the “Centre Européen de Normalisation” (CEN) concerning analysis methods of foodstuffs in the field of food hygiene, in the framework of the new food hygiene legislation covering the whole food chain from the primary production up to the consumer.

In particular, in the Commission Regulation on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs adopted in November 2005, not all reference methods are validated. Therefore, CEN was requested to elaborate and validate microbiological methods in order to guarantee high level of food safety through a uniform application and control of Community legislation in all Member States.

The elaboration and validation of 15 standard methods should be undertaken in cooperation with several standardisation bodies such as the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), etc. The deadline for presenting these draft standards lies between 2008 and 2010. By 30 November each year the CEN will submit a progress report on the activities of the various working parties involved.

**6. Information of the United Kingdom and the other Member States concerning the investigations related to a cold store in Northern Ireland (see RASFF 2005/833 and follow-up) (See point 28 of the 22-23 November and point 5 of the 8 December 2005 SCFCAHs) (KVD)**

The UK delegation gave an update of investigations related to the Euro Freeze coldstore in Northern Ireland since the last updates on 23 November and 8 December 2005. The fraud was discovered when an illegal consignment of poultry meat was detected at Belfast Sea Port, which was linked to Euro Freeze. Investigations into the coldstore uncovered illicit use of health marks, RASFF notifications were issued, all products were seized and remain detained under official control. An amount of 257 pallets were itemised for presentation to Magistrate for condemnation.

The UK authorities and the Commission have agreed on a protocol for further inspection of detained meat at Euro Freeze and release of meat considered safe.

An independent audit of all Northern Ireland coldstores started on 15 December 2005 and a report of findings is scheduled for early January 2006.

5 new RASFF notifications were issued on 16 December 2005 relating to suspect health marks. The UK authorities will hold bilateral meetings with France in order to resolve the problem of the 400 tons of poultry meat and poultry meat products from Euro Freeze which are detained at the French borders. With regard to financial data held on the company computer system, forensic accountants have been engaged to examine them in depth. There are also continuous discussions with the Republic of Ireland on links between Euro Freeze & D’Arcy Foods.

The UK delegation reaffirmed its commitment to keep the Commission and the MSs informed and to work with the MSs on the final destination of the products involved.

The Irish delegation informed the committee on the actions taken further to the suspicion of links with premises in the Republic of Ireland. Documentation sent by Northern Ireland and all consignments on 11 premises undergo ongoing investigations. 41 establishments handling imported products were visited, where no irregularities were found. All stand-

alone and annexed cold-store will be visited in January 2006 and a report is due in February 2006.

The Dutch and Spanish delegations are still looking into the matter of counterfeited health marks and will send information on their findings.

The Commission requested the MSs which have received fraudulent meat to follow very strictly the protocol and to prove the legality of the meat production at the establishment of origin or to block or confiscate meat products pending results of investigations.

\*\*\*\*\*

A number of fraud cases in the meat sector occurred recently: Euro Freeze in Northern Ireland (see above); 3 episodes in Germany of which information was received from RASFF; scandals in Hungary; chickens labelled wrongly in the NL.

The Commission is deeply concerned about this fraud. A letter dated 16 December 2005 from the director Mrs P. Testori was sent to the CVO's of all MS requesting them to control all approved coldstores, stand-alone or attached to an abattoir and to check all practices occur legally.

MSs should submit a report at the end of January - beginning of February 2006 to inform the Commission on the number of coldstores inspected and on the problems encountered. Discussions will take place in February - March to see if legislation needs to be amended. In any case, illegal activities must be stopped and their authors sanctioned.

The German delegation made a presentation on illegal trade of various meats not suitable for human health involving two main trading companies "Domenz" and "Hug". After seizure and analysis of the (frozen) meat neither evidence of risk for human health nor presence of pathogenic bacteria was found. The meat was frozen and out-of-date, originating from Germany, France, Italy, Denmark, The Netherlands, Spain and Brazil, for distribution to Germany, France, Denmark, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Spain. The first RASFF notification (05/269) was raised on 22 November 2005 from North Rhein-Westphalia and pointed out suspicious minced turkey meat transported from Denmark to Germany. The German authorities had all EU-coldstores (317) inspected and the control of all non EU-accredited coldstores is going on.

The Hungarian delegate informed the MSs about the investigations carried out in relation to a processing plant involved in illegal trade of poultry meat. The meat was unfit for human consumption, being repacked to change the expiry date and the plant temperature being too high. It presumably originated from Poland and the Czech Republic. The Hungarian authorities seized and destroyed all the meat, closed down the plant and will update the Commission and the MSs on the results of further investigations.

#### **7. Discussion on Annex I of Regulation 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules (WD)**

Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 defines the territories of the Community with regard to imports. The Commission pointed out that the new Member States are not

included in this annex. The legal service of the Council advised that the Act of Accession provides automatically for their inclusion. The Commission still questions the need to formally update the annex and which procedure to follow. It will carry on examining the matter.

**8. For distribution: Report relating to FVO Mission to Romania, 14-18 November 2005, to follow up commitments in relation to upgrading of certain classes of food establishments [DG(SANCO)/7581/2005 - MR]**

This item was not discussed.

**9. Presentation of a CD-Rom on Food Safety, developed by the Commission (WD/TC)**

The purpose of the CD-Rom is to inform the public at large of the effects of the new hygiene legislation. It describes in a very accessible language the new principles and main requirements of this legislation. The format adopted is an interactive magazine, consultable in all Community languages. This CD will also contain all the legislation on foodstuffs, including guidance documents published on our website.

Once the definitive version established, 10000 copies of the CD-Rom will be available and distributed to professional organisations, consumers associations; it will also be available through the Food Safety website of DG SANCO.

**10. Discussion on the impact of the hygiene package on game meat (WD)**

The 3 guidance documents which were approved at the 22-23 November 2005 SCFCAH are not yet published on SANCO website.

In the meantime, the Commission received a request for clarification from the game sector. In some MS, under national law, very severe conditions will apply for game and game meat, which is excluded from Community legislation, i.e. which is delivered in very small quantities directly from the hunter to the final consumer or to local retail establishments. The Commission proposed an addendum to amend the guidance document on the implementation of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs and of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin, in order to make clear that this kind of traditional food falls under national rules and so to maintain traditional hunting practices.

Many MSs were concerned that game meat should not be considered as primary products and wanted a distinction to be made between game and game meat. They supported the German view that Regulations (EC) No 852/2004 and 853/2004 should be amended to clarify the definition of primary products.

The Commission explained that at the request of the hunting sector traditional practices during hunting should be in the guidelines to be sure they are preserved. Since no consensus could be reached, nothing will change for the time being. The Commission proposed to discuss the matter further at the Expert Group meeting on food hygiene on 30 January 2006.

**10a BSE situation in the UK and possible lifting of the UK restrictions laid down in Council Decision 98/256/EC (KVD) (See point 4 of 21-22 June and point 5 of 22-23 November 2005 SCFCAHs)**

An exchange of views on possible lifting of the UK embargo took place at a working group meeting on 28 November 2005 to have a feedback from Member States on their opinion and advice. Austria wished to get some information on the testing regime actually in place; since 2004, UK applies a full testing of cattle born before August 1996, which is the same scheme for all the other 24 Member States (MSs).

The British delegation updated the MSs on the BSE situation in the UK. It distributed a copy of a letter dated 15 December 2005 sent by the British Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) to all the other CVOs on the lifting of the UK embargo. Dramatic progress has been made in the UK in reducing the BSE epidemic. Figures show that the BSE incidences in the UK and in the other MSs are now similar. On 23 January 2006 the prohibition for over thirty months cattle to enter the food chain will end and will be replaced by the Older Cattle Disposal scheme.

As regards animals subject to emergency slaughter, they can only enter the local market if they have suffered an accident requiring immediate slaughter on farm. Moreover, in order to protect the UK consumers, farmers, veterinary surgeons and slaughterhouse operators have been made aware of the new rules on emergency slaughter under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004.

Before the next technical meeting in January 2006, MSs should have at disposal all the information needed: the EFSA report on UK BSE status, FVO mission reports, monitoring programme, etc.

For any further information, UK invited the MSs to contact Debby Reynolds ([Debby.Reynolds@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Debby.Reynolds@defra.gsi.gov.uk)), UK CVO, or Nigel Gibbens ([Nigel.Gibbens@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Nigel.Gibbens@defra.gsi.gov.uk)).

The MSs thanked the UK delegation for all the detailed explanations provided.

The French delegation informed the MSs that the “Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments” (AFSSA) gave an opinion on this issue 21 November 2005, which will be sent officially to the Commission, and in which it overestimated the risks of animals submitted to emergency slaughter. In view of the restrictive approach taken by UK, France requested more information on the BSE prevalence in such a category for the AFSSA to update its opinion. UK assured that the BSE prevalence in emergency slaughtered animals born before 1996 is very low.

The Austrian delegation asked about the impact of this sudden opening to the market. As regards the UK market, the arrival of new British beef will be substituting for imports. Impact on EU market seems to be low. Experts of the Outlook Group - DG AGRI, which follows that impact, are invited by the Commission to the working group meeting on 12 January 2006 to provide more information.

France enquired about the timetable for a decision on the lifting of the UK embargo. The Commission intends to submit draft amendments to Community legislation at the 24 January 2006 SCFCAH and put them to vote in February 2006. Considering delay for administrative procedures and translations, the entry into force should be beginning of

April 2006. A lot depends on the reactions from the MSs, who should openly raise any concern at the working group meeting on 12 January 2006.

**10b Status of implementing rules based on vertical Directives repealed by Directive 2004/41/EC (TEG)**

Directive 2004/41/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council repeals from 1 January 2006 a certain number of Directives relating to the hygiene of foodstuffs, it stipulates as well that a number of acts shall continue to apply until adoption of the hygiene Regulations (EC) Nos 852/2004, 853/2004 and 854/2004.

The Commission presented a draft list of repealed or maintained legislative measures following the entry into application of Regulations (EC) Nos 852/2004 and 853/2004. The MSs were requested to examine and comment on this document, which will be finalized and presented again at the SCFCAH on 24 January 2006.

**10c Irish fresh meat transiting UK to European continental destinations (KVD)**

*(See point 28 of 22-23 November 2005 SCFCAH)*

The Commission made the following declaration: “Under Council Decision 98/256/EC concerning emergency measures to protect against bovine spongiform encephalopathy, amending Decision 94/474/EC and repealing Decision 96/239/EC, Ireland is required to provide exporters with certificates for products that are shipped through the UK to continental Europe. The Commission declares that the Member States should continue to accept the model of health certificate, referred to in Annex IV to Directive 64/433/EEC, as prescribed in Article 10(3) of Decision 98/256/EC.”

**10d Certification of products of animal origin destined for third countries (TEG)**

*(See point 28 of 22-23 November 2005 SCFCAH)*

The Commission made the following declaration: “Third countries, where EU provisions in respect of products of animal origin are not applicable, are entitled to request animal and/or public health certificates from Member States exporting to these territories. To permit the issuance of a valid export certificate by the receiving Member State in respect of products originating in another Member State, the Member State of origin should provide the relevant certification to the exporting Member State. Title IV of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 provides for administrative assistance and cooperation between competent authorities (CA) in the areas of feed and food. Under Article 36 of this Regulation, upon receiving a reasoned request, the requested CA must ensure that the requesting CA is provided with all necessary information and documents, including certificates where necessary, enabling the latter to verify compliance with feed and food law within its jurisdiction.”

**11. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Decision as regards financial aid for the year 2006 to certain Community Reference Laboratories in the veterinary public health field of residues (Document SANCO/2004/3664 Rev. 2) (AMBR) *(see point 3)***

This proposal refers back to Regulation (EC) No 156/2004. The four designated Community Reference Laboratories in the veterinary public health field (residue) are granted a financial assistance from the Community provided they carry out the approved work programmes efficiently and supply all the necessary information within certain time limits. Financial support will cover 100% of the cost considered eligible according to Commission Regulation (EC) 156/2004 up to the maximum amount fixed in the financial Decision for 2006.

Vote: 318 votes in favour, Greece represented by Cyprus, Malta absent (qualified majority)

**12. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 99/276/EC laying down special conditions governing imports of fishery and aquaculture products originating in Mauritius, as regards the competent authority and the model of health certificate (Document SANCO/10688/2005) (Legal basis: Directive 91/493/EEC) (Right of scrutiny of the European Parliament) (RM)**

This proposal intends to make official the request from Mauritius to change the name of the competent authority for verifying and certifying compliance of fishery and aquaculture products with the requirements of Directive 91/493/EEC, which is the “Division of Veterinary Services (DVS) of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries”.

Vote: 309 votes in favour, Greece represented by Cyprus, Portugal absent (qualified majority)

**13. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Regulation amending Annex XI to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the rules for importation of live bovine animals and products of bovine, ovine and caprine origin (Document SANCO/1371/2005 Rev. 1) (Legal basis: Regulation (EC) 999/2001) (Right of scrutiny of the European Parliament) (See point 25 of 5 October 2005 SCFCAH) (JOV)**

A technical vote was reached at the SCFCAH of 5 October 2005 and the SPS consultation will end on 27 December 2005; therefore the vote was put off to the SCFCAH of 24 January 2006. Further to the opinions of the European Food Safety Authority of February 2005 and August 2005 ([http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/tse\\_assessments/gbr\\_assessments/catindex\\_en.html](http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/tse_assessments/gbr_assessments/catindex_en.html)) on the geographical BSE risk of certain third countries, Brazil, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Chile should no longer be exempted from the TSE-related trade conditions for live bovine animals and products of bovine, ovine and caprine origin.

Vote: postponed to the 24 January 2006 SCFCAH

**14. Exchange of views and possible opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Decision as regards Community financial aid for the year 2006, to certain Community reference laboratories in the veterinary public health field of biological risks (Document SANCO/3747/2005) (Legal basis: Council Decision 90/424/EEC) (JOV) (see point 4)**

Council Decision 90/424/EEC guarantees financial contribution from the Community to Community Reference Laboratories (CRLs) to perform their activities and to organise workshops. After assessment of work programmes and estimates of corresponding budget, the Commission establishes the maximum amounts to be granted to the designated CRLs. The amounts vary as compared to last year to reflect the evolution of the CRLs' activities. Financial support will cover 100% of the cost considered eligible according to Commission Regulation (EC) 156/2004 up to the maximum amount fixed in the financial Decision for 2006.

Vote: 318 votes in favour, Greece represented by Cyprus, Malta absent (qualified majority)

**15. Exchange of views and possibly opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Decision concerning a specific financial contribution by the Community relating to the survey on TSE resistant PrP genes in goats presented by Cyprus for the year 2006 (Document SANCO/3183/2005 Rev. 1) (Legal basis: Articles 19 and 20 of Council Decision 90/424/EEC of 26 June 1990) (See point of 18 October and point 6 of 22-23 November 2005 SCFCAHs) (KDS)**

In 2005 the Cypriot authorities submitted a bi-annual survey starting 1 January 2006 on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) resistant genotypes in goats. Its objectives are to further investigate and to determine the baseline prevalence the PrP gene of the Cyprus goats. The results should provide helpful information for putting in place breeding programmes for resistance to TSEs in sheep. This proposal intends to grant a financial contribution of maximum 47.500 € for the first year in so far as the actions provided for are effectively carried out and the necessary information is supplied within defined time limits. The decision to extend the contribution to the second year depends on the results of the first part of the survey.

Vote: 318 votes in favour, Greece represented by Cyprus Malta absent (qualified majority)

**16. Opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Decision 2005/432/EC laying down the animal and public health conditions and model certificates for imports of meat products for human consumption from third countries (Document SANCO/10560/2005 Rev. 5) (see point 16 of 10-11 November and point 15 of 8 December 2005 SCFCAHs) (HB)**

Decision 2005/432/EC lays down animal and public health rules on imports into the Community of consignments of certain meat products and the model public and animal health certificates. This decision should be amended to ensure proper correlation with the regionalisation of third countries, in particular of Brazil, Namibia and South Africa.

This proposal takes into account late comments by the legal service and attempts to simplify the wording.

Vote: 318 votes in favour, Greece absent represented by Cyprus, Malta absent (qualified majority)

**17. Opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Decision amending Annexes I and II to Council Decision 79/542/EEC (SANCO/10616/2005 Rev. 5) (see point 15 of 10-11 November and point 16 of 8 December 2005 SCFCAHs) (HB/PVG)**

Further to concerns of some MSs of possible risks in relation to import of de-boned beef from the remaining approved EC region, the Commission invited the Brazilian ambassador & Chief Veterinary Officer to a meeting on this issue. The Commission reported on the technical discussions held the day before with the Brazilian veterinary services.

In the 3 Brazilian States of Mato Grosso do Sul, Parana and Sao Paulo export restrictions are in place due to foot and mouth disease. The Commission requested the Brazilian services to report on the exact number and the locations of all outbreaks (33) and suspicions, that their traceability system has been improved, ensuring animals from these 3 states do not “leak” to other states and then to the EC, on how these 3 areas are policed, on how the 40 and 90 days rule are applied, i.e. the minimum period an animal should remain in a farm and in the approved area before being allowed to be slaughtered for the EU market, on vaccination, etc.

The Commission believed that the situation appears to have improved in Brazil and that the measures in place in the affected areas are as reported. It will send a follow up mission to Brazil early next year to verify the insurances and guarantees given, in particular as regards movement controls and traceability.

The report of the FVO mission on residues (FMD) and traceability which occurred in September 2005 before the outbreak will be available shortly.

Following the foot and mouth disease outbreaks in Brazil, the Commission adopted Decision 2005/753/EC suspending imports of bovine de-boned meat from the States of Mato Grosso do Sul, Parana and Sao Paulo. The present draft proposal intends to amend certain of the regionalisation descriptions and timing restrictions for Brazil but only in order to ensure clarity, coherence and transparency.

Vote: 318 votes in favour, Greece absent represented by Cyprus, Malta absent (qualified majority)

**18. Opinion of the committee on a draft Commission Decision laying down a list of third countries from which poultry, hatching eggs, day-old chicks, poultry meat and wild game-bird meat, eggs and egg products for human consumption and specified pathogen-free eggs may be imported into and pass in transit through the Community and the applicable veterinary-certification conditions and amending Decisions 93/342/EEC, 2000/585/EC and 2003/812/EC (Document SANCO/10361/2004 Rev. 12) (RF/HB) (See point 20 of 13-14 September, point 29 of 5 October, point 9 of 10-11 November and point 19 of 8 December 2005 SCFCAH's)**

The Decision brings together all the Decisions concerning certification for this whole area and lays down provisions for the veterinary certification for imports into and transit through the Community of poultry, hatching eggs and day-old chicks; of meat, minced meat and mechanically separated meat, of poultry, ratites and wild game-birds; of eggs and egg products and specified pathogen-free eggs. Amendments to existing Community rules governing imports into and transit through the Community of the commodities concerned take into account the new public health requirements under Regulations (EC) Nos 852/2004, 853/2004 and 854/2004. However the Commission proposed to put off the issue of allowing imports from third countries of minced meat and mechanically separated meat, in order to be able to examine the difficulties and problems which might arise from imports of such meat from an animal health perspective.

Vote: 318 votes in favour, Greece represented by Cyprus, Slovakia represented by Slovenia, Malta absent (qualified majority)

**19. Opinion of the committee on a Commission Decision amending for the second time Decision 2005/710/EC concerning certain protection measures in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza in Romania (Document SANCO/10788/2005) (See point 4 of 23 November 2005 SCFCAH)**

The first draft decision on regionalisation due to outbreaks of avian influenza in Romania which was voted on 23 November 2005 is not yet adopted which means all export of poultry meat from Romania is banned until adoption. Since then the situation has worsened leading to the intention to submit a longer list of counties (26) from where exports of meat and meat products are not allowed. These provinces are located in the Danube delta and in the Eastern and Southern parts of Carpatian mountains, these are natural barriers which should prevent migration of birds to the West. However there is a potential danger of migratory birds moving from Danube delta to the South.

Vote: 318 votes in favour, Greece represented by Cyprus, Slovakia represented by Slovenia, Malta absent (qualified majority)

**20. Guidelines for applications for new alternative methods of disposal or use of animal by-products under Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 (Document SANCO/3674/2002 Rev. 7) (TG)**

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist Member States in the preparation and submission of alternative methods of disposal or use of animal by-products and so to speed up the procedure at Commission level. Not only specialised experts but also competent authorities should provide their assistance. Before approval, alternative methods must undergo a scientific assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to ensure that risks to public and animal health are minimised. This document has no legal value but its use is highly recommended by the EFSA and the Commission.

A general consensus was reached on these guidelines.

## **21. Guidance note: Interpretation of Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002: Questions arising from FVO inspections to Member States (2004-2005) (Document SANCO/2005/1295 Rev. 5) (TG)**

This draft guidance note provides a number of answers to questions which came up during FVO inspections to Member States on the interpretation of certain aspects of Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002. A general consensus was reached on this guidance document.

## **22. Miscellaneous**

- The Commission distributed the table with provisional dates for the 2006 SCFCAH's.
- The Commission presented the new organigramme of the Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General (<http://s-darwin.sanco.cec.eu.int/intranet/Staff/organigramme/docs/2006-01-01-chart.pdf>), which will apply as from 1 January 2006. The chairman explained the main changes and reorganisations within DG SANCO to the Member States.
- The Dutch delegation inquired about the state of the interface which should link the TRACES system and the national systems for entering data on imports from 3<sup>rd</sup> countries. This interface is not yet operational and incurs extra-costs due to double data input. The Netherlands supported by Germany requested a postponement of the obligation for the Member States (MS) to introduce in TRACES all the Common Veterinary Entry Document for Products from 1 January 2006.

The Commission reminded the MS of the following whereas of Decision 2005/515/EC:

1. the release of the Off line system was done mid-July, which was the first step for a smooth integration into TRACES of the persons in charge of the load, in order for them to perform their administrative work;
2. the supply of one interface for those who desire to develop connection with national or local system. The Commission recognised that this has not been provided to all MS because a pilot project is still under way in the Netherlands.

The Commission committed itself to provide all MS with this interface but proposed not to modify the Decision and particularly the date of application in order to firmly establish this obligation, although it will also consider that date of application as a starting point for an interim period which allows some flexibility and will be examined in six months time. The MSs which need to will be able to use this 6-month delay to implement the connection and the other MSs can start the enforcement of the Decision. Italy supported that approach to avoid a repetitive postponement.