(English version)

Question for written answer E-002984/25
to the Commission
Maria Noichl (S&D), Thomas Waitz (Verts/ALE), Sebastian Everding (The Left), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Annalisa Corrado (S&D), Michal Wiezik (Renew), Tilly Metz (Verts/ALE), Anja Hazekamp (The Left), Krzysztof Śmiszek (S&D)
(17 July 2025)

Subject: Violations of the Animal Transport Regulation

In spring 2025, the non-governmental organisations *Soko Tierschutz* and The Marker documented systematic violations of the EU Animal Transport Regulation ([1]). One specific case is the transport of more than 34 000 calves, which were just a few weeks old, from Austria and Germany to Spain. Here, they were fattened in some cases in serious violation of their rights, and were later slaughtered without stunning in North Africa and the Middle East. It is particularly barbaric that the calves' documented travel time was over 22 hours without sufficient rest breaks or care, which is a clear violation of the applicable EU regulations. Criminal charges have been filed with the Augsburg Public Prosecutor's Office.

1. Does the Commission recognise a violation of the EU Animal Transport Regulation in the documented case, and what concrete steps is the Commission taking, in cooperation with the Member States concerned, (Germany, Austria and Spain) to clarify the case?

2. Does the Commission have information on comparable cases of systematic infringements in other Member States?

3. What measures does the Commission propose to prevent such structural abuse in the future — in particular with regard to controls, transparency and sanctioning mechanisms?

Submitted: 17.7.2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(4 September 2025)

1. The Commission is not aware of the details of the specific case mentioned by the Honourable Members and therefore cannot comment on it.

2. The Commission has received several complaints concerning the transport of unweaned calves in various Member States and is concerned by the alleged practices. The investigation of these complaints is ongoing. Animals must be handled in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 ([1]), which governs their protection during commercial transport. The enforcement of EU rules on the protection of animals during transport is primarily the responsibility of the Member States. It is important that the competent authorities in Member States take appropriate measures to prevent the mistreatment of this vulnerable category of animals.

3. In December 2023, the Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation on the protection of animals during transport ([2]), which provides for stricter rules aimed at ensuring higher protection of calves and other vulnerable categories of animals during transport. The proposal aims to facilitate better enforcement of these rules through clearer provisions. Further development of digital tools used for administrative tasks, aims to improve data collection and transparency regarding the transport of animals. In addition, the proposal introduces a new approach to harmonise sanctions in the event of rule infringements on animal transport. The debate is ongoing, and the Commission remains open to working with the co-legislators in this area.

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[1] [1]Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 (OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/1/oj).

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97; OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1-44.

([2]) COM(2023)770.