

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004663/25
to the Commission
Daniel Buda (PPE)
(21 November 2025)

Subject: Economic challenges of compliance with EU animal welfare rules

The study supporting the impact assessment for the review of the EU legislation on animal welfare during transport (Milieu SRL, 2023) concluded that compliance with Regulation 1/2005 remains ‘economically unattractive’. Despite this, the Commission has brought forward a proposal for a regulation which has high implementation costs.

The impact assessment for the new legislative proposal shows that limiting travel times and increasing available space will result in annual costs of EUR 642 million for the pig-rearing sector, EUR 35 million for laying hens, EUR 914 million for broilers and EUR 1 069 million for cattle. On top of this, the installation of feeder systems for calves would cost transporters EUR 3 million annually, and then come the additional costs of ensuring long-distance transport conditions based on weather forecasts, which will cost EUR 5 million for the transport of broilers, EUR 3 million for pigs, EUR 2 million for cattle and EUR 1 million for calves.

1. How does Commission expect to ensure greater compliance with stricter animal welfare requirements during transport if compliance with the current rules is already ‘economically unattractive’?
2. Will it be possible to use the European Competitiveness Fund to help the sector comply with the provisions of future EU animal welfare legislation?

Submitted: 21.11.2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(27 January 2026)

1. The study ⁽¹⁾ found that compliance with Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 ⁽²⁾ is ‘economically unattractive’ because of inconsistent enforcement and low sanction levels across Member States, granting non-compliant operators a competitive advantage. The Commission’s proposal aims to reverse this dynamic by introducing clearer rules, harmonising enforcement tools and sanctions, thus ensuring better compliance and fair competition.

Regarding costs, the impact assessment ⁽³⁾ distinguishes between costs borne by farmers and those borne by transporters and other sectors. Specific costs for vehicle improvements, space allowance and weather-dependent logistical planning, are operational investments for transporters. To mitigate these impacts, the proposal includes transition periods. As the most important economic impacts identified relate to space allowance, the Commission has shown openness to discuss with the co-legislators adaptations to these rules to balance economic impacts and animal welfare improvements.

2. The European Competitiveness Fund ⁽⁴⁾ will only support activities contributing to its relevant objectives. In sectors like agriculture and bioeconomy, support is foreseen for the development, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of relevant Union legislation and policies. This includes supporting relevant institutions, cooperation between national authorities and with stakeholders, studies, development and deployment of tools and infrastructures. Other EU funds are also relevant. For farmers, funding is possible under the Common Agricultural Policy. For the transporters, which are generally small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the ‘SME window’ of InvestEU ⁽⁵⁾ facilitates loan guarantees.

⁽¹⁾ Study supporting the impact assessment accompanying the revision of the EU legislation on the welfare of animals during transport <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ad660d3f-94e2-11ee-b164-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

⁽²⁾ 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, pp. 1-44. ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/1/oj>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023SC0401>.

⁽⁴⁾ COM(2025) 555 https://commission.europa.eu/publications/european-competitiveness-fund_en.

⁽⁵⁾ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/access-finance/investeu/investeu-fund-sme-window_en.