

EN
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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(27.4.2026)

On 19 May 2025, the UK and the Commission reached a common understanding and agreed to work towards establishing a Common Sanitary and Phytosanitary Area by way of an EU-UK sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreement.

On 13 November 2025, the European Council adopted the guidelines¹ for the negotiation by the Commission of an SPS agreement between the EU and the UK that should cover sanitary, phytosanitary, food safety and general consumer protection rules applicable to the production, processing and distribution of agrifood products, the regulation of live animals and pesticides, the rules on organics as well as marketing standards applicable to certain sectors or products.

The agreement would require that the UK dynamically aligns to the relevant EU rules and, as a result, movements of animals, including zoo animals, could be undertaken without sanitary checks at the borders and with the same certificates as the ones required for movements between Member States.

The guidelines as approved by the Council do not cover CITES² requirements and therefore the future SPS agreement will not include them in its scope. As a consequence, permits will still be required to move CITES species to and from Great Britain.

¹ Council Decision (EU) 2025/2468 of 13 November 2025 authorising the opening of negotiations between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on a common sanitary and phytosanitary area between the European Union and the United Kingdom in respect of Great Britain and to link the United Kingdom's and the Union's greenhouse gas emissions trading systems (OJ L 149).

² Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.