

Brussels, February 27<sup>th</sup> 2017  
International Press Release

## **Damning investigation reveals brutal treatment of European exported livestock**

**Animals International today released shocking footage showing breaches of European animal welfare legislation and international agreements during transport and slaughter from Europe to the Middle East and northern Africa.**

The organization conducted a landmark eight-month investigation from July 2016 til February 2017 documenting the handling and slaughter of European cattle and sheep in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian territories and Egypt.

*“This investigation reveals an abject failure by EU officials to monitor this trade. Animals raised in European care are being transported in breach of EU regulations before enduring horrific slaughter practices in breach of international agreements,” said Animals International EU Director, Gabriel Paun.*

The evidence includes:

- Terrified, fully conscious European bulls being hoisted to the ceiling by one rear leg before having their throats cut in Turkish slaughterhouses;
- EU cattle being tortured with electric prods before being hoisted and slaughtered in Lebanon;
- Petrified EU bulls being brutally restrained with ropes before having their throats hacked whilst fully conscious in the Palestinian territories; and
- The extended suffering of European animals in full inversion slaughter boxes in Turkey, Palestine and Egypt.
- In addition, the brutal handling and slaughter of sheep was documented in the Palestinian territories and Jordan.

*“EU farmers and the general community will be mortified to see how the animals raised in European care are being treated. One Romanian cattle farmer almost fainted in shock and distress on being shown vision of the slaughter practices his animals were enduring,” Mr Paun said.*

Every year, well over 1 million European cattle and sheep are exported by sea and road to Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa, despite destination countries having no laws to protect animals from brutal treatment.

*“The ethical and regulatory failures start well before the animals arrive in importing countries. There is not even a requirement to have a vet onboard livestock vessels which leaves thousands of animals without access to veterinary care for up to 10 days in a high risk environment,” he added.*

Evidence gathered during transport by Animals International and the Animal Welfare Foundation (AWF) shows:

# Animals

## INTERNATIONAL

- Exhausted animals arriving at EU harbors with workers routinely shocking animals with electric prods to force them up ramps onto ships;
- Hungry young calves calling for their mothers; and
- Almost unrecognizable Irish cattle being unloaded in Turkey, completely covered with excrement.

*“These ships are not 5 star cruise liners. They are floating, archaic prisons for distressed animals who should never have been forced to leave Europe. All you need to think about is thousands of animals imprisoned on a ship being tossed around in wild seas to understand just how wrong this trade is,” said Mr Paun.*

**Animals International has joined forces with Eurogroup for Animals and its members from all over Europe and calls on the EU Commission to announce a phase-out of live animal export, and actively encourage a transition to a carcass-only trade with importing countries.**

*“All of the countries Europe is exporting live animals to are large importers of chilled and frozen meat. There is absolutely no excuse in this day and age for putting animals through such extended suffering by exporting them live – especially when it involves terrible cruelty and regulations are being breached at every turn,” Mr Paun said.*

**Due to the horrific nature of the cruelty being inflicted on exported animals, Animals International calls on the Commission and relevant exporting Member States to immediately:**

- Introduce a regulatory system (as is in operation in the Australian live export industry) that makes European exporters legally accountable for ensuring supply chains they provide animals to in importing countries meet international standards.
- Increase oversight and enforcement of transport regulation 1/2005, in relation to both road and sea transport.
- Ensure a government veterinarian accompanies all livestock shipments by sea.
- Require mandatory reporting of illness/injuries and deaths on ships and the public disclosure of this information.

**DOWNLOAD FOOTAGE:** <http://www.animalsaustralia-media.org/upload/photos/eu-live-export>

Evidence to be provided to the EU Commission and to the farming ministers of the involved Member States includes handling and slaughter of animals from Ireland, France, Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, Belgium, Czech Republic, Portugal and Spain. The footage shows slaughter methods that are routine in importing countries, and that breach international standards. Due to acceptance of these practices at both social and government levels in these countries, they would inevitably also be inflicted on animals exported to them by other European countries. The slaughter of calves born to dairy cattle exported from the EU to Egypt has also been documented.

## BACKGROUND BRIEFING

### **The European Commission has failed to uphold EU protocols and international agreements**

The European Commission and exporting Member States have been made aware of the extreme cruelty inflicted on exported animals, yet the EU Commission has been actively seeking to increase exports of cattle and sheep. This places the Commission in clear breach of the Article 13 TFEU requirement to “pay full regard to” animal welfare in formulating and implementing EU agriculture policy.

In addition, by facilitating and supplying live animals to countries that are consistently failing to meet OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) standards – the Commission is undermining the work of the OIE to improve animal welfare. Compliance with OIE standards is intended to form the basis of trade agreements between countries.

### **The European Commission position on animal exports encourages and facilitates cruelty**

European countries are exporting animals without any consideration of whether infrastructure, handling and slaughter practices in importing countries comply with base level international standards.

The majority of abattoirs in importing countries have no capacity to handle or slaughter animals humanely. In addition, many lack even basic hygiene protocols that would deem the resultant meat unfit for human consumption in the EU.

The EU’s endorsement of long distance transport of livestock either by truck or for five to 10 days by sea, despite all the known animal welfare repercussions, also sets an appalling example to countries yet to accept a societal and government responsibility to protect animals from harm.

### **Sea and road transport rife with regulatory failures**

Transport to destination countries by sea or road reveals a clear regulatory failure. EU transport regulation 1/2005 has been deemed by the European Court of Justice to apply both within the EU and outside its borders until animals reach destination countries.

This regulation, relating to rest periods, stocking densities and provision of food and water, is being consistently breached on trucks within the EU. On livestock ships leaving the EU for the Middle East and North Africa, there is no regulatory oversight whatsoever to ensure compliance or the welfare of animals.

There is no requirement for a veterinarian to accompany animals, despite thousands of animals being isolated in cramped conditions on ships for five to 15 days. This means that sick and injured animals have no access to veterinary care – nor is there any expert oversight or management of disease risks.

Calves as young as 10 weeks old are being exported and expected to cope with days at sea in ever-changing weather and sea conditions. No official records are being kept of injuries, sickness or mortalities of animals that occur during journeys from the EU to destination countries.

During 2016, Animals International observed via marine data navigation sites no less than 58 different livestock vessels transporting animals from Europe to Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa. Most of these vessels are more than 40 years old were not purpose-built livestock vessels and fail to meet appropriate infrastructure and welfare standards.

### **Animals are being killed in slaughterhouses where no hygiene protocols are in place**

Live animal export is putting both human and animal welfare at risk. Most abattoirs in importing countries have no hygiene protocols, and meat processed in this environment would be deemed unfit for human consumption throughout Europe.

### **Live export *must* be replaced by a carcass only trade**

Animals International and Eurogroup for Animals agrees with the position of the The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe which states that: "*Animals should be reared as close as possible to the premises on which they are born and slaughtered as close as possible to the point of production.*"<sup>ii</sup>

This position has been reached acknowledging the significant welfare implications for animals during long distance transportation by truck or ship, and the appalling handling and slaughter practices inflicted on animals in importing countries.

There is no cultural nor religious reason why animals cannot be slaughtered in their country of origin and exported as carcasses. All importing countries of live EU animals already import chilled and frozen meat, revealing a willingness to do so.

To this end, both in terms of animal welfare and meeting international and EU regulations, Animals International and Eurogroup for Animals calls on the Commission to announce a phase out of live animal export and actively encourage a transition to a carcass only trade with importing countries.

Taking this policy position is the only way that the Commission will be acting in accordance with the Article 13 TFEU requirement to "pay full regard to" animal welfare in formulating and implementing EU agriculture policy, and support the work of the OIE in improving animal welfare globally.

### **Who is Animals International?**

Animals International is a member of Eurogroup for Animals and the global arm of Animals Australia, Australia's leading animal advocacy organisation.

Recognised internationally for strategic public awareness campaigning, our ground-breaking investigations have spanned 16 countries and influenced much needed change, including industry and regulatory reform. Our investigations into the global live animal export trade have revealed the suffering of animals exported to the Middle East and Asia from Australia, South America and Europe, sparking public and political concern about this global trade.

### Additional facts

During 2016 Animals International observed via marine data navigation sites no less than 58 different livestock vessels transporting animals from Europe to Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa. Most of these vessels are not purpose-built livestock vessels and fail to meet appropriate infrastructure and welfare standards.

European animals depart from the following ports:

- Sete, France
- Rasa, Croatia
- Greenmore & Waterford, Ireland
- Setubal & Simes, Portugal
- Midia, Romania
- Koper, Slovenia
- Cartagena, Spain
- Kavala, Greece

They are shipped to:

- Turkey
- Lebanon
- Jordan
- Israel (some animals are exported onward into the Palestinian territories)
- Egypt
- Algeria
- Libya
- Morocco

---

<sup>1</sup> Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, 29/09/2016. FVE calls to end suffering of animals during long distance transports. Position paper. [www.fve.org/news/index.php?id=229](http://www.fve.org/news/index.php?id=229)