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WOAH (funded as OIE)
Platform on animal
welfare for Europe

3rd meeting of WOAHP regional network of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe (including the Whole Journey Scenario for Europe)

20-22 June 2023 – Dublin, Ireland



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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Meeting Report

Summary

The third meeting of the WOAHP network of National Contact Points (NCP) on long-distance transportation in Europe was held from the 20 to the 22 of June 2023 in Dublin, Ireland. Over 50 participants, consisting of 41 National Contact Points, speakers, and stakeholders, attended this meeting. This meeting was the first meeting of the network in face-to-face mode that gave the opportunity to all participants to meet each other and establish direct contact that will be helpful to ensure the welfare of animals transported through. The meeting also provided the opportunity to recall the objectives and role of the network, to update participants on the last activities done at WOAHP regional and global level, but also to share the experience of different countries, stakeholders' perspective and of EU activities, including EFSA opinions.

The dedicated Whole Journey Scenario for Europe session allowed to present challenges and best practise for the specific route of transporting animals by sea. Two working group exercises allowed reviewing the two WOAHP guidance documents and focus points to assess the implementation of WOAHP standards on transport. The first one focused on the WOAHP guidance document and the second on the WOAHP standards on transport. Those exercises highlighted the importance of discussing and exchange view on the approach taken by the different members.

The last session of the meeting was dedicated to the next action plan (2024-2026) activities on transport and on what was expected from the members. The discussion clearly showed the importance given by the members to those meetings that allow exchanges in between themselves and the importance to develop common documents to build a community around long-distance transportation that will contribute to the progress made on this topic through time.

1. Introduction

Background

The Terrestrial Animal Health Code provides a set of provisions for ensuring animal health in relation to international trade and movement of animals and recommendations for the welfare of animals during the transport of animals by land, by sea and by air. The regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe (The Platform) facilitates the application of WOAHP welfare standards in Europe and empowers and supports the Veterinary Services in implementing those standards. The transport of animals is identified one of the five priority topics targeted by the Platform's activities. In addition, recognising the importance of the subject, the Regional Commission for Europe in November 2020 adopted "Terms of Reference

of the National Contact Point on Long-Distance Transportation". Following the adoption of the ToR, the Platform's secretariat invited all 53 European WOAHA Delegates to nominate NCPs. The first kick-off meeting of the network of National Contact points was held as teleconference on 18 November 2021 and was followed in 2023 by the 2nd meeting, also held as a teleconference on 15 December 2022.

Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were:

- To reinforce involvement of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe.
- To re-call their role and responsibilities
- To present to participants an update on WOAHA's activities and other relevant activities on animal transport on global and regional level.
- To have a dedicated session to the Whole Journey Scenario in Europe that focused on the WOAHA standards and guidance documents on transport.
- To present and discuss the activities planned on transport of animals in the framework of the next action plan of the Platform for 2024 -2026.

The detailed agenda of the meeting is available in Annex I.

Participants

The meeting targeted representative all 53 WOAHA Members in Europe (National Contact Points on long distance transportation in Europe or nominated representatives). In total 55 participant joined the meeting including 42 representatives of 41 WOAHA Members and 10 speakers, WOAHA staff and interpreters. Detailed list of participants is available in the Annex II.

The meeting was funded by the European Union, Ireland and Switzerland and organized with support and hosted by Ireland. The meeting was open with welcome adders by Rob Doyle Director of Veterinary Trade, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland and Estelle Hamelin WOAHA Sub Regional Representative in Brussels. Participants were also address with welcome message by Martin Blake, WOAHA Delegate and Irish CVO on second day of the meeting.

2. Session 1: State of play

The first session was dedicated to WOAHA activities on transport at Europe level but also at global level with intervention by the standards department and the observatory.

2.1. Terms of Reference and state of play of the NCPT network ([Link to view presentation](#))

Tomasz Grudnik, from the Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels recalled the Terms of Reference adopted by the WOAHA Regional Commission for Europe during the 29th Regional Conference, 9-10 November 2020 ([link to terms of reference](#)). The 1st kick-off meeting of the network of NCP was held as a teleconference on 18 November 2021 allowing to initiate work of the network, build understanding among NCPs on their role and responsibilities, initiate the definition of working procedures for collaboration within the network, identifying common issues and priorities for future activities of the network. The 2nd meeting on 15 of December allowed to reinforce the engagement, but the organisation of this 3rd meeting in face-to-face mode really allowed to launch of the network with an important increase on the number of nominated NCP between December 2022 and June 2023.

Up to date 49 out of 53 WOAHA members in Europe have nominated NCP on long distance transportation and 1 member that informed us he will not nominated a contact point and 3 nominations are still missing.

According to the replies collected by a poll during the meeting, during the last 12 months, 27 NCP have already contacted other NCP (with 22 of them more than once) with at least somehow helpful replies.

2.2. WOAHA global activities on transport ([Link to view presentation](#))

Leopoldo Stuardo, from WOAHA Standards Department presented the Global Animal Welfare Strategy and the latest developments. The main ongoing activity is the revision of the chapters on transport, focusing first on transport by land and sea. At global level work is also focused on the guidance

documents on transport (Check list / Animal Transport Emergency Plan Model) and the thematic study led by the WOAAH Observatory.

2.3. WOAAH Platform activities on transport ([Link to view presentation](#))

T. Grudnik shortly presented activities of the Platform on transport including recent events: whole journey scenario workshops and seminar for WOAAH national focal points on animal welfare. An additional focus was made on an ongoing project, the development of a self-assessment and monitoring tool for transport that will be developed in collaboration with the Standard Department and the Observatory who is developing a thematic study on transport.

2.4. WOAAH Observatory – Animal welfare related work ([Link to view presentation](#))

Morgane Salines, from the WOAAH Observatory presented the mandate and objectives of the Observatory and the work done by the Observatory on Animal Welfare. A focus was made on the upcoming thematic study planned to be launched in September 2023 on “*Animal welfare during transport by land and sea: level of implementation of WOAAH standards and challenges faced*”.

2.5. Q&A and discussions

The discussion focused on the following topics:

- The transport by air of live animals is also regulated by IATA, and to make evolve the standards it is need to cross reference with the IATA regulation.
- There is an interest on issues related to on transport by air, however no activities planned under this network is due to its priority topics given by the members of the region with focus on transport by land and sea. In addition, the transport by air is a very specific topic that may implicate a very specific group of people to work with, but a dedicated meeting could be organize. In addition, the limitation to access to IATA Live Animals Regulations by Competent Authorities (currently available only on commercial basis).
- The standards on welfare of fish are under revision in the aquatic code, as planned in the aquatic animal strategy.
- The thematic study on transport of animals led by the Observatory will be done internally in WOAAH and will be coordinate with the Standard department but also the Europe region to link it with the development of the Self-Assessment Tool on Transport.

2.6. EU Activities on transport (audit results, EU network experience, regulation revision)

2.6.1. Revision of the EU legislation on protection of animals during transport ([Link to view presentation](#))

Stanislav Ralchev, Policy officer at the Animal Welfare Unit G3 of DG Sante, presented the revision of the EU legislation on protection of animals during transport. As part of the EU's Farm to Fork strategy, the Commission launched a process of revision of the animal welfare legislation. The revision of the regulation process includes open public consultation, impact assessment supported by ongoing external studies on slaughter and killing, farming, transport, and animal welfare labelling. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) works on seven animal welfare mandates (transport, pigs, broilers, laying hens, calves, ducks and geese, and dairy cows). Transportation of animals remains a high priority topic in the EU. This topic is being addressed by various activities including: the European Parliament Committee of enquiry on animal transport (ANIT), a review on animal transport by the European Court of Auditors (ECA)

2.6.2. DG Sante: Audits and other controls ([Link to view presentation](#))

Angel Miguelez and Patrick Caruana from the DG Sante Health and Food Audits and Analysis (Unit F2) presented the outcomes of series of audits that focus on transport of live animals: unweaned calves, during long journeys, laying hens, livestock vessels and fish farming. The European Marine Safety Agency tool (Thetis) to share information about livestock vessels approvals and inspections was shortly presented. In addition, sharing experience the EU national contact points network and guidance network

documents demonstrated benefits common understanding of standards and direct exchanges with and between Competent Authorities.

2.7. Q&A and discussions

The discussion focused on the following topics:

- The reference of the standard for the acceptance of animal transport vessels under European regulation and if there is any internationally guide established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the representative of the EC confirmed that there is no international standard, and it would be interesting to explore the possibility of establishing certain guidelines to be used globally for the design and operation of livestock transport vessels.
- Dr Stuardo, recalled the collaboration relationship with the International Standards Organization (ISO) and proposed to explore the possibility of ISO TC 8 Ships and Marine Technology and developing standards on the design and operation of livestock vessels. It was proposed that the National Contact Points for Transport to contact the national standard organization from their countries of origins to look for advice on this sense.
- The animal welfare EU's audits for non-EU countries, in line with the current legislation, focus only on slaughter. the EU's audits on transport are only carried out in EU countries. The mandate of this audits only allows to focus the audits on authorities.

3. Session 2: Whole Journey Scenario

The second session dedicated to share experiences on long distance transportation of live animals through the Whole Journey Scenario workshop, addressing specific animal transport issues and focusing on transport by sea between WOAH Members in Europe.

3.1. Outcomes of Whole Journey Scenario Workshops ([Link to view presentation](#))

Tomasz Grudnik reminded the objectives of the WJS workshops and gave information on the most recent workshop organized and upcoming event. He also took the opportunity to remind the conclusion of the technical item on Transport of the last Regional Commission for Europe that took place in October 2022 and the highlight on the topic in the 2022 WOAH annual report.

3.2. Country experiences

3.2.1. Portuguese experience with livestock vessel transport – positive examples ([Link to view presentation](#))

Maria Correia, Portugal's transport contact point, presented the data related to the export of live animals from Portugal, the existing procedures and the requirements for the stakeholders. A practical case was then presented with the corrective measures implemented and the lessons learnt, insisting on the importance of a good collaboration and communication with the Competent Authorities at destination.

3.2.2. Long distance transport of livestock by sea – The Israeli experience ([Link to view presentation](#))

Liran Plitman, Israeli animal welfare Policy coordinator, presented the data related to the import of livestock done exclusively by sea, the relevant regulations and procedures and manual audit form for livestock vessel that is a check list with all the requirement for the transport of live animals. The presentation focused on the more common welfare and procedural issues and presented practical cases of non-compliance and the measures taken.

3.2.3. Türkiye: country report on animal welfare during long distance transport by land and sea ([Link to view presentation](#))

Cüneyt Turan, Turkish transport contact point, presented an overview of the Turkish livestock transport and trade followed by the national animal welfare standards and how they are implemented and monitored for long-distance transportation.

3.3. Q&A and discussions

The discussion focused on the following topics:

- sharing information on list approved establishments, operators, and procedures (for EU members info available at dedicated websites), Türkiye also could share that information.
- possibility to share procedures for training of drivers, procedures for approval of means of transport and facilities (available in local languages).
- need to establish procedures for dealing with not compliance and report to different government authorities and to other countries.
- animal welfare EU's audits for non-EU countries, in line with the current legislation, focus only on slaughter. the EU's audits on transport are only carried out in EU countries, the mandate of this audits only allows to focus the audits on authorities.
- availability of resting points in Türkiye (specific project for establish resting points is ongoing, locations are already determined, however financial procedures are still in progress).

4. Session 3: Stakeholders' perspective

The third session was dedicated to present the perspective by representatives of different stakeholders, transporting company, business operators associations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

4.1. Animal welfare during long distance transport of animals – latest developments from a business operators' perspective ([Link to view presentation](#))

Hans-Peter Schons, European Platform of exports of Bovine genetics (ExPla) presented the importance of the livestock trade sector in the EU, the expectation of a business operator and focused on what should be avoid and what are the opportunities. On the opportunities, he presented examples of digital solutions to improve compliance, reliability and transparency for the transport of live animals.

4.2. Transport of animals: challenges for the meat and livestock traders ([Link to view presentation](#))

Carolina Cucurella, Senior Veterinary Advisor at European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (UECBV) presented the EU livestock numbers and export data, and trade evolution from 2010 to 2021. She then focusses on the challenges of the sector within the Farm to Fork Strategy and the evolution of the EU animal welfare regulations. She concluded reminding the reasons of the reasons transport of animals is needed in EU and how the long-distance transport can be improved.

4.3. Long distance transport in EU – the NGOs perspective ([Link to view presentation](#))

Silvia Meriggi, Animals' Angels Project Manager representing the international Coalition for Animal Welfare, presented the constraints, challenges and weaknesses and possible solutions in terms of animal welfare and enforcement of legislation and standards, and the expectation of ICFAW in relation to the transport of live animals. Animals' Angels recommendation in details are listed in a position paper ([link](#)),

5. Session 4: Transport by land and by sea, capacity building and tools

The fourth session was a dedicated to capacity building and sharing experiences and available tools and solutions.

5.1. Ireland: Approval of livestock vessel ([Link to view presentation](#))

Aidan Cahill, Ireland's transport contact point, presented data on the cattle traded out of Ireland and trade routes and the Ireland's national rules. A focus was made on vessel approval, physical inspection of vessels and the checks done before, during and after loading. In addition, presentation covered challenges, procedures and practises for transport of unweaned calves, including lorries with integrated feeding system to provide milk replacement.

5.2. Sharing experience – response for an emergency – transport by sea ([Link to view presentation](#))

Adina Ciurea, Romania's transport contact point, presented a practical case of a maritime incident implicating a vessel transporting livestock. She presented the measures taken to manage the incident but also focus on the measures put in place to prevent the reoccurrence of this type of incident.

5.3.EFSA opinion: The welfare of livestock during transport ([Link to view presentation](#))

Mette S. Herskin, chair of EFSA working group on transport, presented an overview of the scientific opinion that focused on specific species (horses, cattle, sheep and pigs). The scientific opinions review the current practices and different stages (preparation, loading/unloading, transit and journey breaks) related to the transport of animals, identify highly relevant welfare consequences with linked animal-based measures, and identify various hazards leading to those welfare consequences. The Opinions contains general and specific conclusions relating to the different stages of animal transport with recommendations to prevent hazards and correct or mitigate welfare consequences. There are also section on specific topics like unweaned calves and cattle and sheep transported in vessels.

5.4.new results from a Danish study of deck height during transport of pigs weighing 20-25 kg ([Link to view presentation](#))

Mette S. Herskin, Senior researcher at Aarhus University, presented the result of a study on how does deck high during transport affect measures of good ventilation and natural movements for pigs weighing between 20 and 25kg. The conclusion is that the deck heights that were study have only minor and sporadic effects on the chosen indicators of ventilation and natural movement.

5.5. WOAH Guidance document presentation ([Link to view presentation](#))

Leopoldo Stuardo presented the two draft guiding documents (emergency plan model and check list) developed by WOAH and WOAH Collaborating Centres to support the implementation of the WOAH chapter on animal transport by land and sea that needs to be adapted to the national/regional context.

5.6. Working Groups exercise – WOAH guidance documents

The aim of this group exercise was to allow to the participants to share their view and the main challenges and positives outcomes of the different guidance documents. The participants were divided in four groups and each group was given a different document (emergency plan model for transport by sea or by land, or check list for transport by sea or by land). The main highlighted points were:

- need to define responsible actors for all steps of journey planning and for emergency procedures,
- provided information on animal categories, certain types of animals (e.g. young animals) may require specific emergency procedures and consideration for planning the journey,
- checklist needs to cover specific points on all steps of the journey (departures, transit and destination),
- verification of the equipment functioning (ventilation, drinkers),
- need to include in emergency procedures steps for emergency killing and dealing with dead animals, including welfare and biosecurity aspects (such as carcass disposal),
- emergency procedures should not be generic but specific for a journey,
- the importance of drivers being familiar with emergency procedures,
- consider including in the emergency procedures list if veterinary services providers along the route,
- contact information of CA along the route,
- more details on the checklist, not only yes/no (e.g. on vessel crew competencies), with cross-reference to other documents.

5.7.Planning the journey, verification process, official controls – sharing country experience

Two countries, Denmark and Austria, presented their tools and practices for verification process of the journey plans.

5.7.1.Planning the journey and the planning verification process in Denmark ([Link to view presentation](#))

Gustaf Löfgren, Academic officer of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, presented the Danish exports data and the tool and procedures they use to cover the entire journey of transported

animals. He concluded by presenting the typical identified infringements in the re-assessment of the journey log at the end of the journey.

5.7.2. Austrian weather portal & evaluation of resting points outside the EU ([Link to view presentation](#))

Marco Scottini, Austria's transport contact point, started by presenting the amendment of the Austrian Animal transport Act that established the rules to export animals before focusing on the management of the risk of high temperatures during transport. He presented the Austrian decrees on "hot weather conditions" that lead to the development to the Austrian Weather portal that help plan the journeys. A focus was also made on the confirmed resting points by Austria outside of EU.

5.8. Working Groups exercise – assessment of implementation of WOAH standards ([Link to view presentation](#))

The aim of this session was to collect NCPs' view on the future Observatory thematic study and the self-assessment monitoring tool for the Platform, both addressing implementation of WOAH standards on animal welfare during transport. The participants were divided in four groups and were asked to list the provisions of Chapters 7.2. and 7.3. of the Terrestrial Code for which it would be very important to assess the level of implementation. The following topics were highlighted as priority issues to be assessed: training of business operators, animal fitness for transport, actions to be taken in case of emergency, responsibilities, level of maintenance of trucks/vessels, weather forecasting, ventilation, space allowance, travel and resting time, water supply. The outcomes of this workshop will be used to develop the next Observatory thematic study as well as Platform's self-assessment monitoring tool.

6. Session 5: Future activities: New Action Plan (2024-2026) of the Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe and future activities of the National Contact Point network ([Link to view presentation](#))

The last session was the occasion to present the activities planned on transport for the next Action Plan (2024-2026) of the Platform. The activities organised in the next Action Plan will continue with work of the NCP network and regional and multiregional WJS considering the lesson learned and success of the already conducted activities.

The presentation was followed by a discussion with the participants, using the interactive tool Wooclap, on what was their expectations regarding the activities planned and topics to be presented and discussed during those activities.

The discussion highlighted that the physical meetings for the network meetings and Whole Journey Scenario workshop are massively favoured. The need of physical meeting was supported by different participants indicating that if they know personally the people of the network is much easier to contact the persons and interact with them when a need arises. The importance of the different available times to discuss during physical meetings was also highlighted as an important tool to develop good relationship between the members of the network and as a result develop the network.

Participants were also asked about the topics to be discussed during the next meetings. Numerous ideas emerged through discussion from communication, sharing experiences to poultry transport and development of common documents. It was agreed that the secretariat will study all the proposals, regroup them and send a survey to the participants to identify the 3-4 main topics of interest to be discussed in the next meetings.

a specific proposal was raised to develop a template document to share information in between contact points to facilitate the exchanges. The best people to draft such document are the contact points themselves and the secretariat can support the process.

7. Field visit

Participants visited Irish National Stud, thoroughbred horse breeding facility in Tully, Kildare (<https://irishnationalstud.ie>). Through the facilities tour, they have an opportunity to hear about Thoroughbred history and breeding management, procedures and practices, and Irish racehorse history, breeding, training and racing.

8. Main conclusions

The 3rd meeting of the National Contact Point on Long-Distance Transportation that was also the 1st meeting face-to-face gave the opportunity to all participants to establish direct operational communication with the other contact points of the network present to the meeting. This link is essential to this network which first goal is to allow to the contact points to have easier direct contact in case they need assistance or need to share information with another contact point.

This meeting was also the occasion to share experience from different countries on different transport practices. As we saw in the last session of the meeting, sharing experiences is an important expectation from the participants. We will continue to promote and facilitate it.

During the meeting it was establish that there is a need to facilitate the preparation of the meetings of the network to make the most of them. A proposal was made, to organize a pre-on-line meeting presenting the main important points to be discuss during the in-person meeting and the documents that needs a particular attention from the participants.

In conclusion, the 2,5 days of workshop has served as a catalyst for cooperation, communication and collaboration within the network and with partners, and allowed knowledge sharing among all participants. The participating contact points' feedback on the importance of this network and on the need to meet regularly in person to help the network to reach its full capacity show their unwavering dedication to this network. It is essential to harness the momentum generated by this first in person meeting and continue to develop the network for its members to be able to make the most of it.

List of annexes

Annex 1 – [Agenda](#)

Annex 2 – List of participants

Annex 1 – Agenda



3rd meeting of WOA regional network of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe

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Programme

DAY 1: 20 June 2023	
Session 1: State of play Chair: E. Hamelin	
Opening remarks	R. Doyle, Ireland E. Hamelin, WOA SRR Brussels
Terms of Reference and state of play of the NCPT network	T. Grudnik, WOA SRR Brussels office
WOAH global activities on transport	L. Stuardo, WOA Standards Department
WOAH Platform activities on transport	T. Grudnik
WOAH Observatory	M. Salines, WOA Data Integration Department
Revision of the EU legislation on protection of animals during transport	S. Ralchev, EC DG SANTE
European Commission DG SANTE: Audits and other controls	P. Caruana, A. Miguelez, EC DG SANTE
Session 2: Whole Journey Scenario - Europe Chair: M. Salines	
Outcomes of previous Whole Journey Scenario Workshops.	T. Grudnik
Sharing countries experience:	
- Portugal	M. Correia
- Israel	L. Plitman
- Türkiye	C. Turan

Session 3: Stakeholders' perspective	
Chair: L. Stuardo	
European Platform of Exporters of Bovine Genetics	H-P Schons
European Livestock and Meat Trading Union	C. Cucurella
NGO perspective (Animals' Angels)	S. Meriggi
Transport company	Hinde Exports Ireland
DAY 2: 21 June 2023	
Welcome message	M. Blake, Ireland
Previous day remarks	All (exercise)
Session 4: Transport by land and by sea, capacity building and tools	
Chair: T. Grudnik	
Ireland - recent developments in livestock transport	A. Cahill, Ireland
Response for an emergency – transport by sea	A. Ciurea, Romania
EFSA opinions on animal welfare during transport	M. Herskin
Results from a Danish study of deck height during transport of 20-25 kg pigs	M. Herskin
WOAH Guidance document - Check list / Animal Transport Emergency Plan Model	L. Stuardo
WOAH guidance documents	All - working groups exercise (4 groups)
Planning the journey, verification process, official controls - sharing country experience:	
- Denmark	G. Löfgren
- Austria	M. Scottini
Developing assessment of implementation of WOA standards on transport	All - working groups exercise (4 groups)
Session 5: Future activities	
Chair: T. Grudnik	
Next Action Plan (2024-2026) of the Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe and future activities on network on contact National Contact	T. Grudnik
Main conclusion and closing remarks	E. Hamelin
DAY 3: 22 June 2023	
Field visit - Irish National Stud & Gardens	