



World Organisation
for Animal Health
Founded as OIE

2nd meeting of WOAH regional network of National Contact Points
on long-distance transportation in Europe

15 December 2022

teleconference

MEETING REPORT

Summary

The second meeting of the WOAAH network of National Contact Points (NCP) on long-distance transportation in Europe was held on 15 December 2022 as an online event. The meeting provided the opportunity to recall the objectives and role of the network, as well as to share updates on relevant activities and developments on transport at the global and regional levels. Participants were presented with the outcomes of the multiregional Whole Journey Scenario workshop on long-distance transport by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa and the findings from the Technical Item presented during the 30th Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe (Catania, Italy, October 2022). In addition, the meeting allowed for a short discussion on activities planned for the following years and identifying topics for the next meeting (communication between Competent Authorities, feedback from destination countries, emergency procedures and journey planning and verification).

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 facilitates the application of WOAAH 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 WOAAH Delegates to nominate NCPs. The first kick-off meeting of the network of National Contact points was held as teleconference on 18 November 2021.

Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were to reinforce involvement of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe, re-call their role and responsibilities and present to participants an update on WOAAH's activities and other relevant activities on animal transport on global and regional level. The meeting gave opportunity to present and discuss WOAAH activities planned for 2023, particularly next meeting of the NCP network planed as a face-to-face event in June, as well as initiate discussion on activities 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 WOAAH Members in Europe (National Contact Points on long distance transportation in Europe or nominated representatives). In total 47 participant joined the meeting including 38 representatives of 35 WOAAH Members and 10 speakers, WOAAH staff and interpreters. Detailed list available in the Annex II.

Session I: State of play

Terms of reference and activities of the NCP's network

(Tomasz Grudnik – WOAAH SRR Office in Brussels) - [link to presentation](#)

Terms of Reference were adopted by the WOAAH 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.

Up to date 26 out of 53 WOAAH members in Europe have nominated NCP on long distance transportation. According to the replies collected by a poll during the meeting, during the last 12 months, 11 NCP have already contacted other NCP (with 8 of them more than once).

WOAH global activities on transport

(Leopoldo Stuardo, WOAAH - Standards Department) – [link to presentation](#)

The Animal Welfare Global Forum was established to continue WOAAH's work on animal welfare and to foster dialogue between countries and relevant international stakeholders on challenging animal welfare topics, difficulties implementing animal welfare standards, and on priority issues for WOAAH work programme. The second Global Forum with a theme on 'Animal transport: a shared responsibility' was held in April 2019 (in Paris, France). The outcomes of the discussion during the forum identified were a need to establish a sense of collective responsibility amongst all participants in the transportation chain, defining individual responsibility at every point in the process, and effective communication and coordination along the transportation chain. In addition, the discussion highlighted the importance of multidisciplinary approach when developing animal welfare policies so that economic, social and practical considerations are taking into account and complement the use of animal welfare science. The Code Commission will start in 2023 with a revision of Chapters 7.2 and 7.3 on the transport of animals by sea. Also, Chapter 7.4, transport of animals by air, will be updated in collaboration with International Air Transport Association. In addition, WOAAH, in collaboration with WOAAH Collaborating Centres on animal welfare, initiated work on the development of guidance documents on the transport of animals (e.g., animal transport checklist (s), emergency procedures).

EU activities on transport

(Stanislav Ralchev – European Commission, DG SANTE, Animal Welfare Unit) - [link to presentation](#)

The European Commission prepares a revision of the animal welfare legislation, including animal transport and slaughter of animals. The process to revise the EU legislation on the protection of animals during transport started in 2020 with series of activities, such as fitness check (evaluation) of the current rules, public consultation and impact assessment, aiming to present legislative proposals in 3rd quarter of 2023. In addition, supporting elements include the sub-group on transport within the EU Platform on animal welfare and a recently published by European Food Safety Authority [scientific opinions on welfare during transport](#).

In parallel, for the current EU regulation on transport, the European Commission works on implementing and delegating acts concerning livestock vessels.

Other European Union activities on animal transport include the European Parliament Committee of enquiry on animal transport (ANIT) June 2020- December 2021 and a review on

animal transport by the European Court of Auditors, with results expected to be published in the spring of 2023.

Session II: 2022 activities

Multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario Workshop between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa

(T. Grudnik) - [link to presentation](#)

(Adrián Úbeda Ortiz – Border Control Post, Cartagena, Spain)

The WJS workshop on transport by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East and North Africa was held on 8-10 November 2022 in Cairo, Egypt. The workshop was built upon routes with similar transportation challenges identified through previous workshops and through the requests received from Members who transport live animals from Europe to the Middle East and North Africa. Representatives from 17 WOAHA Members participated in the meeting.

The workshop aimed to strengthen understanding of the relevant WOAHA standards and specifically those addressing transport of animals included in Chapters 7.2 and 7.3 of the WOAHA Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code). A special focus was given to the definition of responsibilities for each of the stakeholders involved in the transport of animals and to the fundamental value of information exchange and communication between the Competent Authorities.

Moreover, the workshop provided the opportunity to participating countries to present their level of implementation of WOAHA animal welfare standards and to identify key issues, constraints and/or challenges experienced while implementing these standards. The workshop also enabled sharing of best practices and built bridges to strengthen collaboration between all Competent Authorities. The workshop highlighted the need for enhancing and strengthening communication and cooperation between Competent Authorities and all actors involved in the transport of live animals, the importance of well-defined responsibilities, appropriate planning and of establishing emergency procedures.

From the WJS workshop participant perspective, Dr Adrián Úbeda Ortiz highlighted the importance of the whole journey approach, an opportunity for the in-person interaction and exchanging experiences. This WJS workshop allowed to establish a higher level of transparency, to initiate discussion on the responsibilities in the event of an animal consignment refused at destination and building a communication network between Competent Authorities for addressing animal health and welfare issues during transport between Europe, The Middle East, and North Africa.

Technical Item I of the 30th Conference Commission for Europe – “long distance transport of live animals: WOAHA standards and best practices including societal perception and communication aspects”

(Luigi Iannetti, IZS Teramo – WOAHA CC for Animal Welfare) - [link to presentation](#)

(Estelle Hamelin, WOAHA Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels) - [link to presentation](#)

The online questionnaire used for this technical item was mainly completed by WOAHA Delegates, National Focal Points for animal welfare or National Contact Points for long distance transportation. The qualitative analysis of the information provided was carried out by grouping similar answers and, when proper, the United Nations geoscheme was applied to highlight any spatial clustering of the results. The wide majority of the Members (46 out of 47) declared to have in place specific legislation on animal welfare during transport, and most of them stated

to be “generally aligned” with WOAAH standards, there are still many countries in the Region where certain crucial requirements are not mandatory. Journey and contingency plans are commonly part of the specific legislation on animal welfare during transport, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the legal requirements concerning animal transport by the Competent Authority or other certification bodies. The presence of major gaps in budget and/or available resources and trained personnel was declared by almost the half of responding Members (21 out of 47). Concerning the awareness of the civil society regarding animal welfare issues during transport, 11 Members reported a “low” level of awareness, and they were mostly included in the areas of Southern Europe, Western and Central Asia. The greatest part of Members responding “high awareness” clustered in the Northern and Western Europe geographical areas. Members were also asked to indicate possible WOAAH initiatives that could improve the implementation of the standards, and most of them suggested to develop training activities and provide additional guidance through revised and/or new standards in the Terrestrial Code and/or through other WOAAH documents. [Link to the document.](#)

The following discussion based on this technical item, the Regional Commission recommends WOAAH members to develop and update relevant legislation, clearly identify responsibilities through guidelines/procedures), develop procedures for communication between Competent Authorities and ensure animal welfare courses and welfare-related training in the veterinary school curricula. The recommendations call WOAAH and WOAAH members to continue to support the development and implementation of strategies to address regional needs and priorities on animal welfare during transport. The Regional Commission also recommends WOAAH to provide targeted capacity building, technical support through revised and update standards and relevant tools as to advocate to increase all stakeholders' awareness. [Link to the recommendations.](#)

Session III: Future activities - [link to presentation](#)

Activities planned for 2023.

Within the 3rd Action Plan of the Platform a series of activities on animal transport are planned for 2023: meeting of WOAAH regional network of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe, regional WJS workshop for Europe, multi-regional WJS workshop Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, and development of a self-assessment and monitoring tool on animal transport.

The 3rd meeting of meeting of WOAAH regional network of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe is planned to be held in June 2023 in Ireland as a face-to-face event. Through a poll during the meeting, participants indicated main topics to be discussed at the next meeting: communication between Competent Authorities, feedback from destination countries (harmonization procedures, sharing official controls and inspection results, feedback etc.), emergency procedures and journey planning and verification.

In addition, a dedicated **Whole Journey Scenario workshop for Europe** is planned to be held back-to-back to this meeting. NCP are invited to submit specific route proposal to be addressed during this WJS workshop.

The **multi-regional WJS on long distance transport (land and sea) for Europe, North Africa and the Middle East** is planned to be organised in second semester 2023 in Tunis (location to be confirmed) to continue strengthening collaboration and communication between Competent Authorities on animal transport issues within those neighbouring regions.

Initiate the **development of a self-assessment and monitoring tool** for evaluation of the level of implementation of WOAAH standards on animal welfare during transport.

Next Action Plan (2024-2026) of the Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe

The Secretariat (WOAH SRR Brussels office) and the Steering Group of the Platform initiated work in developing the 4th Action Plan for 2024-2026. The proposed next action plan aims to ensure continuity with the previous action plans by building upon their achievements, with the transport of animals remaining within priority topics. The outcomes of earlier activities, especially WJS workshops, feedback from the contact points network and results of the technical item I survey provide a solid basis for planning activities on animal transport in the 4th Action Plan framework. The activities on animal transport for the next action plan will focus on strengthening collaboration and communication between Competent Authorities, sharing experience, capacity building. Those activities will include multiregional WJS workshops and supporting the network of the contact points on long distance transportation in Europe. The poll results demonstrate support by participants of the meeting for the initial proposal for the next action plan. In addition, participants via a poll indicated activities that should be included in the next action plan to assist the Competent Authority in the implementation of standards and requirements on animal transport in the context of the NCP network: develop training programmes, provide additional guidance through other WOAH documents (guidelines, handbooks, etc.) and develop regional workshop programmes.

Next meeting

The next meeting of WOAH regional network of National Contact Points on long-distance transportation in Europe is planned to be held in June 2023 in Ireland as a face-to-face event.

Annexes

Annex I – Agenda

Annex II – List of participants

Annex III – Poll results