

Investigation into fate of cattle and unweaned calves reconfirms urgent need to revise EU law



Photo: Animal Welfare Foundation / Animals International

Investigations have once again uncovered violations that inflict unnecessary suffering on animals being transported alive, despite the EU Transport Regulation entering into force thirteen years ago.

[Animals International \(AI\)](#) and the [Animal Welfare Foundation \(AWF\)](#) have revealed the fate of 30 breeding cattle that left Bavaria and ended up in Libya as “animals for slaughter” - despite the fact that Germany claims not to export live animals for slaughter purposes. Their footage was presented yesterday in the documentary [Tiertransporte grenzenlos](#) (“Animal transports without borders”) on ZDF by Manfred Karremann.

The film also reports the fate of unweaned, 15-day-old calves sent to a collection point in Belgium. From there, without receiving the rest period imposed by the EU Transport Regulation, they were transported to Spain. Eight months later, Animals International identified three of these calves in a Lebanese slaughterhouse.

This investigation is again another wake up call for the Commission to revise the legislation and introduce a maximum journey time of eight hours and end the transportation of unweaned animals, among other changes.

Germany, which exported about 70,000 cattle to non-EU countries in 2018, has restrictions in place to control this trade. Bavaria has banned the export of cattle to 17 non-EU countries, and Germany claims not to export animals for slaughter. Despite this, evidence collected in recent years shows that exporters have long been exploiting a loophole: the detour of animal transports through other EU member states, which is made possible by the fact that journeys are currently allowed to be more than eight hours long. As reported by Gabriel Paun (AI), animals with German ear tags are regularly found in North Africa or Middle East abattoirs.

In the case of the 30 Bavarian breeding cattle, the veterinary office in Miesbach issued the transport documents on 16th May 2019, indicating an agricultural business in the village of Divin (Slovakia) as the destination. AWF/TSB reports that at the address indicated in the journey log, there wasn't any farm. Instead, the truck reached a collection point in Lieskovec, 35km away from Divin, where the cattle received new transport documents in which their status had changed from "breeding" to "slaughter" animals.

After a few hours, without the 48 hours rest prescribed by the EU Transport Regulation (EU Reg. 1/2005), they re-started their journey exhausted. After 2,100km they reached Tarragona in Spain, where they were loaded into a vessel bound for a Libyan slaughterhouse.

It's clear that exporters are also disregarding the law when it comes to transporting unweaned animals. In 2018 alone, Germany exported about 650,000 suckling calves, with a high proportion transported long distances to Spain directly or indirectly via assembly centers in other EU Member States. This was despite the Federal Minister of Agriculture Julia Klöckner declaring that there were no suitable vehicles to transport these animals over long distances.

"The evidence collected by Animals International and Animal Welfare Foundation is a clear signal that the Transport Regulation urgently needs to be revised to forbid the long-distance transport of live animals and stop the transport of the unweaned ones," said Reineke Hameleers, CEO at Eurogroup for Animals. *"The case of the German cattle and unweaned calves proves once more that, despite good initiatives taken at national level, violations will continue to occur as long as animals are allowed to be transported on journeys of more than 8 hours."*

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Eurogroup for Animals represents 67 animal advocacy organisations in 25 EU Member States, the UK, Switzerland, Serbia, Norway, Australia and the USA. Since its inception in 1980, the organisation has succeeded in encouraging the EU to adopt higher legal standards for animal protection. Eurogroup for Animals reflects public opinion through its membership organisations' affiliations across the Union, and has both the scientific and technical expertise to provide authoritative advice on issues relating to animal welfare.

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