

Non-commercial movement of pet animals

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Horst SCHNELHARDT (EPP, DE) on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the non-commercial movement of pet animals.

The committee recommends that the European Parliaments position adopted at first reading, under the ordinary legislative procedure, should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Definitions: the term non-commercial movement has been clarified. It shall mean any movement which does not aim at the sale of a pet animal or the transfer of ownership of the pet animal. In order to avoid the situation whereby pet animals are accompanied in the name of third parties without any evidence being produced, the term authorised person has been introduced.

Maximum number of pet animals: experience has shown that commercial movements of dogs, cats and sometimes ferrets are frequently fraudulently disguised as non-commercial movements, seeking to circumvent the application of stricter rules on the trade and import of such animals. In order to prevent such practices from occurring, the currently applicable rules based on Commission Regulation 388/2010 limit the maximum number of animals, which can accompany their owner, to five. This limitation, however, has caused enormous difficulties in reality for those citizens wanting to participate in certain competitions or exhibitions sport events, for which they need to travel among different Member States with more than 5 animals. In this respect, the report proposes to introduce derogations from this maximum number.

Derogation from the anti-rabies vaccination condition for young pet animals of the species listed in Part A of Annex I (dogs, cats and ferrets): Members have introduced amendments allowing young animals aged between 12 and 16 weeks to be excluded from the requirements relating to the validity of the rabies vaccination defined in Annex IV.

It is necessary to ensure that animals which not yet meet the requirements of Annex IV, point 2(d) can be moved for non-commercial purposes. With regard to the immunisation of animals aged less than 12 weeks, these animals should not necessarily be accompanied by their mother as proposed by the Commission.

Members consider it important that the requirements of this derogation are extended and clarified to minimise any risk. By way of derogation, the non-commercial movement of pet animals not vaccinated against rabies may be authorised between Member States or geographically definable parts thereof which are free of rabies, or in which there is a negligibly low risk of introducing rabies, provided they comply with specific conditions.

Pet animals of the species listed in Part B of Annex I (invertebrates, ornamental aquatic animals, reptiles, birds, mammals: rodents and domestic rabbits): when they are transported to event venues, animals (e.g. birds) should be accompanied by a duly completed individual or collective identification document. Members consider that individual identification documents would be costly and unnecessary.

Non commercial movement of pet animals from a third country: Members want to ensure that only pets that pose no threat to the health of humans and animals in the EU are imported from third countries. They propose that pet animals shall be moved through a travellers point of entry in a Member State if arriving from a third country or territory. To this end, Member States shall compile a list of the travellers points of entry and keep it up to date. By way of derogation, Member States may allow registered military, search or rescue dogs to be imported through a different point of entry from that for travellers.

Members propose establishing, through delegated acts, a list of third countries or territories which have demonstrated that they apply rules equivalent to those laid down in Section 2 of Chapter II, this Chapter and Section 2 of Chapter VI for animals of species listed in Part B of Annex 1.

Identification document: the identification document should be in a format that can be easily recognised and identified as such by the supervisory authorities, so this Regulation needs to contain such provisions. Members suggest amending the structure and wording of the rules on how to complete the identification documents as this has created confusion among veterinarians and pet owners. The report suggests a new structure of these parts of the regulation: each sections first lists the required format of the respective identification document according to the type of animal and type of non-commercial movement (between EU Member States or arriving from third countries); it then mentions all the relevant entries that need to be filled in by a veterinarian. Each section is concluded by outlining the procedure, which needs to be followed by a veterinarian in order to duly complete the identification document.

The report suggests that the document should contain a few additional entries to improve the identification of the respective animal and to better protect the identification documents from falsification. The document should include : (i) the name, address and signature of the owner or the authorised person; (ii) the name, address and signature of the authorised veterinarian issuing or completing the identification document; (iii) the species, breed, sex and colour of the animal and other relevant information regarding the description of the health status of the animal.

In order to improve the user friendliness, the ease of the application of this regulation as well as to guarantee uniformity, the report suggests including a model of each type of identification document.