

Mr.Pascal Lamy
Commissioner for Trade
The European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

16 November 1999

Dear Mr.Lamy,

RE: Live Animal Exports

It has recently been brought to my attention that each year around 100,000 horses are exported from eastern Europe – mainly from Poland and Romania to the EU to be slaughtered for meat.

Most of the horses are sent from Poland to Italy on horrendously long journeys. Some, however, come from even further afield – from Lithuania, Belarus and the Ukraine. The journey from Lithuania to southern Italy is around 3,000 km. and can take up to 60 hours. Even the shorter journeys – from Poland to northern Italy – last 20 hours. In 1999, investigators trailed horses being sent all the way from Lithuania for slaughter in Sardinia on a journey of 95 hours.

The long journeys can be a nightmare for the animals. In the swaying trucks, the horses sometimes lose their balance and fall; once on the ground they risk being trampled on by their companions.

By the time they get to the customs post at Gorizia in Italy, many of the horses from eastern Europe are exhausted. Others are injured with eye, chest and leg wounds. Some are dead, having succumbed to the stresses of the long journey. Many of the horses that have survived as far as Gorizia still have long journeys to come. Some are sent on to Leccio in north-west Italy; others are taken all the way to Bari in southern Italy.

As Italy is a member-state, could you please take action to ensure that all the European Laws are upheld with regard to the transport of live animals. The EU must act to end this inhumane trade in horses.

The EU Directive on the protection of animals during transport (Council Directive 91/628/EEC as amended by 95/29/EC) is due for review at the end of 1999. This represents a vital opportunity for the EU to adopt a fundamental change of policy, whereby long distance live transport is, wherever possible, abandoned and replaced by a trade in meat and carcasses.

I have sent a similar letter to David Byrne and Franz Fischler.

Yours sincerely

Dr Caroline Lucas MEP