

E-2605/01EN

Answer given by Mr Byrne
on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2001)

As far as figures on trade of live animals are concerned the Commission will provide the Honourable Member with the data requested under separate cover.

Article 11 of Council Directive 91/628/EEC of 19 November 1991 on the protection of animals during transport and amending Directives 90/425/EEC and 91/496/EEC, requires that transporters presenting live animals for importation, transit or transport into and through Community territory shall be authorised only if they give a written undertaking to comply with the requirements of the Directive.

Council Directive 91/496/EEC of 15 July 1991, lays down the principles governing the organisation of veterinary checks on animals entering the Community from third countries¹. Article 4 of the Directive provides that the official veterinarian must carry out a physical check on animals presented at the inspection site. That check must include, in particular, verification of compliance with the requirements of Directive 91/628/EEC.

It should be noted that directives are addressed to the Member States, which are responsible for bringing them into force. Article 10 of Directive 91/628/EEC provides that the Commission shall carry out on-the-spot checks to ensure uniform application of the Directive. However, day to day monitoring to ensure the welfare of the transported animals is the responsibility of the Member States.

At the international level, several initiatives have been undertaken including, in particular, close co-operation with competent authorities of the applicant countries for Union membership. As a result several countries adopted Community requirements to protect animals during transport during the past year.

The Commission obtained on 23 October 2001 the mandate from the Council to negotiate on behalf of the Community the ongoing review of the European Convention for the protection of animals during international transport. All Member States are parties of the convention as well as Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, and Turkey.

In the framework of the revision of Directive 91/628/EEC, the Commission will consider, in its proposal, how the welfare conditions of animals transported to the Community can be improved whilst respecting its international obligations. The proposal will be based on a new opinion of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare, which is expected by the end of 2001.

¹ OJ L 268, 24.9.1991, as last amended by Council Directive 96/43/EC of 26 June 1996, OJ L 162, 1.7.1996.