



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Crisis preparedness in food, animals and plants  
**The Director**

Brussels  
SANTE/G5/DS/iv(2021) 1787395

**Subject: Bovine animals on the livestock vessels “Karim Allah” and “Elbeik”**

Dear Ms Bagnato,

Commissioner Kyriakides asked me to thank you for your letter of 2 March 2021 on the above mentioned subject and to reply on her behalf.

The Commission is well aware of the situation of the two livestock vessels. Our services have been in close contact with the Spanish authorities. We are informed that Spanish authorities accepted to receive the animals back.

Already last week, Commissioner Kyriakides wrote to the Minister of Agriculture of Spain asking him to give priority to this issue in order to avoid that these animals further suffer. The Spanish authorities are providing information on the evolution of the situation that is still evolving while writing this letter.

The vessel “Elbeik” has been located in Greek waters but we have no information of its final destination.

The vessel “Karim Allah” has docked at the port of Cartagena (Spain) and the Spanish authorities have inspected the animals. In the absence of official information regarding the sanitary status of the animals and the possible contacts with persons, materials or feed coming from third countries affected by contagious diseases, the Spanish authorities, in accordance with EU legislation, will cull and destroy the animals.

The Commission remains in close contact with the Spanish authorities to ensure that the operations are performed in such a way that these unfortunate animals do not suffer and all provisions applicable for such operations are respected.

So far, the Commission has no evidence that the transport conditions on departure were not in compliance with EU legislation. Nor is there any evidence that the Spanish authorities failed in implementing the EU rules.

Nevertheless, the Commission will investigate the matter and consider any necessary follow-up regarding the conditions of export of these animals in order to be clear on who bears responsibility for what has happened and whether there are any lessons to be learnt.

The Commission is aware that transport on livestock vessels may entail risks to animal welfare. The EU has specific provisions regarding the transport of animals on livestock vessels, including the approval of the vessels and their inspection before allowing the loading of the animals.

I take note of your demand to stop the transport of live animals.

In the context of the revision of the animal welfare legislation, the Commission has mandated the European Food Safety Authority to provide a scientific opinion, notably on animal transport. This request includes a specific question on export by livestock vessels.

In the light of this scientific opinion, as well as the experience gained during the implementation of the legislation, the Commission will consider the most appropriate measures for the future.

Yours sincerely,