

IMPORT MEASURES ON LIVE ANIMALS AND MEAT PRODUCTS

Statement by Croatia at the meeting held on 24-25 June 2003

1. We have carefully listened to the speech of the Hungarian representative expressing their concern in respect of the Ordinance regarding import restrictions into Croatia of live animals and products of animal origin in order to prevent the introduction of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.
2. We would like to express our regret regarding the Hungarian delegation's concern and at the same time inform you of the efforts made by the Croatian side in order to overcome, as urgently as possible, any misunderstanding related to enactment of the respective Ordinance. Referring to the oral statement of the Hungarian delegation, we would like to stress the following:
 - (a) The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Croatia has enacted a series of measures with the intention to protect human and animal health against all risks connected with all TSEs, including BSE.
3. Croatia has recognized the importance of prevention, control and eradication of TSEs such as BSE. For these purposes our Government has spent more than US\$20 million out of its own budget resources. Furthermore, since 2001, our authorities have examined more than 40,000 ruminants. Until now, we have no confirmed cases of BSE in Croatia.
4. All of these measures have emerged from the prohibition to feed proteins of animal origin to animals whose meat is used for human consumption (Official Gazette, No.8/2001 of 23 January 2001). These measures are directly related to the protection of public health and they are important for the functioning of domestic trading as well as for import of consignments into Croatia.
5. Furthermore, we would like to add that Croatia has acted in accordance with all of the relevant provisions of the SPS Agreement, as well as with the relevant EC regulations, aiming to adjust Croatian legislation with that of the European Communities, in order to fulfil its obligations arising from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.
6. Before the issuing of the relevant Ordinances, the Croatian Veterinary Authority has forwarded inquiries to all interested parties. During the process of communication, questions were posed concerning their respective legislation and measures in force in order to prohibit the feeding of processed animal proteins to animals which are kept, fattened or bred for the production of food.
7. The first Ordinance was published on 30 May 2003 (Official Gazette, No.89/03), five days before its entry into force. This period was provided for all the competent authorities of the exporting countries to submit the respective proofs, *inter alia*:

- confirming to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry that no feed containing proteins of animal origin has been used for feeding of animals to be imported and for feeding of animals from which the products to be imported originate;
 - with the exception of fish-meal intended for feeding of animals, except for feeding of ruminants; milk and dairy products used for feeding of animals; gelatine which is not of ruminant origin and dicalcium phosphates and hydrolysed proteins, which have not been obtained in utilisation plants.
8. All the countries that have provided the requested data have been immediately exempted in the new Ordinance concerning the restriction of imports.
9. Therefore, upon receiving confirmations from Bulgaria and Romania, we have reacted promptly by issuing a new Ordinance, exempting these countries from the import restrictions for ruminants. This Ordinance 96/03 came into force on 10 June 2003.
10. Furthermore, the competent authorities of Hungary and the Czech Republic have submitted the requested confirmation with regard to the ruminants. In our immediate response, we have issued the third Ordinance also exempting Hungary from the import restriction for the ruminants. This new change to the Ordinance was published on 17 June 2003 (Official Gazette, No. 100/2003).
11. In addition, we would like to add that the Croatian Veterinary Authority, in the course of June, has had numerous telephone consultations with colleagues in Hungary. The result of these consultations was the information provided to the Hungarian colleagues that, within a period of 60 days, Hungary should provide the remaining confirmation for species other than ruminants. After effective analysis of the submitted evidence about the prevention, control and eradication of certain TSEs, Croatia will react appropriately and promptly.
12. At the same time, Croatia will observe all the recommendations by all relevant international bodies and the bodies of the European Commission, particularly the recommendations by the Scientific Steering Committee, harmonizing the measures with the new scientific data when they become available.
13. We remain open for any type of further consultation that could be dealt with in the bilateral framework with our Hungarian colleagues, which we hope will result in a mutually satisfactory solution.
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