

Minutes of the meeting of the expert group on identification, movement and certification of equine animals

4 April 2017, Brussels

1. Approval of the agenda

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public. The Member States' experts on animal breeding (purebred breeding animals of the equine species), the Member States' experts on animal health and the experts from horse industry were participating in the meeting.

3. List of points discussed

1. Exchange of views on a content of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council ("Animal Health Law") and suggestions for a future Commission Delegated Regulation supplementing the EU Animal Health Law (AHL)¹ as regards identification, movement and certification of equine animals, and in particular as regards:

- a. Categories of equidae.

Several Member States expressed the opinion that there should be as less as possible categories of equidae in the legislation, and exactly 'equidae for slaughter' and 'other equidae' (only definitions from point (b) 'equidae' and (d) 'equidae for slaughter' of Article 2 of Directive 2009/156/EC should be preserved in the future delegated act supplementing AHL). In their opinion it is justified from the animal health, identification and registration points of view and would avoid problems encountered by the competent authorities of three Member States with the verification of the declared category of equidae, in particular registered equidae vs equidae for breeding and production, when those animals are certified or checks are carried out on them.

Only one Member State and the experts representing horse industry were advocating 'registered horses' as additional category of equidae. Nevertheless, after more in-depth discussion, it appeared to be clear that there is a need to preserve a special category of horses with higher health status which would be allowed to apply lesser requirements for their frequent movements. Each particular category of equidae should always be linked with the animal health requirements for movement which will be fixed based on animal health guaranties to be fulfilled by each category. It must also not to be forgotten that the system of categories of equidae used in the Union will have an impact on the listing of non-EU countries from which equidae are authorised for entry into the Union.

- b. New obligation: Registration of establishments where equine animals are kept and of their movements between those establishments.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law') (OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1)

Some of the Member States, on the basis of national legislation, already register in their central databases holdings where equidae are kept, even with specification of a type of a holding (breeding/ slaughter).

AHL requires registration in the central database of all holdings where equidae are habitually kept. It was agreed that a clear definition of such a holding is needed where is specified a number of equidae kept, minimum period of keeping of the animals, because the way equidae are kept and moved (frequent movement for a short period of time) cannot be compared to other species of farm animals.

In addition, there was a request for definition of the owner and the keeper registered as well in a central database and link to a holding, having in mind that there may be more than one owner linked to single holding and vice-versa.

Registration of movements of equidae, in accordance with AHL, is to be documented in a holding register. The participants of the expert group meeting were willing to see in the future delegated act supplementing AHL some exemptions from this obligation for particular justified movements out and into a holding.

c. Understanding of 'a unique code' referred to in Article 114(1)(a) of Animal Health Law.

Two Member States were of the opinion that 'a unique code', which is to be entered in the computer database established by the Member State, should be understood as the transponder code. In their view the means of identification referred to in points (a) ('a unique code') and (b) ('a physical means of identification') of Article 114(1) of AHL should be considered as a single number. If at all, the UELN should only be used for purebred breeding animals of the equine species.

Another three Member States preferred to have only a single identification number allocated to an animal. By using only the transponder number the identification system of equidae could be simpler and easier to control.

For some Member States and the representatives of the horse industry 'a unique code' should be understood as an individual identification number which is compatible with the Universal Equine Life Number (UELN), as currently defined in Article 2(o) of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/262. This worldwide recognised system allows tracing back horses to the country of origin and the issuing body which identified the horse for the first time. Those Member States and the representatives of the horse industry justified their support for the UELN also by reporting that transponders frequently have only the manufacturer code, that transponders fail to work or that animals bear multiple transponders. In those cases it is not possible or at least more difficult to trace the animal to the place of origin. With the UELN an additional element of traceability is available. In their view it is unnecessary to change the system which works well.

Overall, the Commission's position is that Article 114(1) of AHL provides for two elements of identification, notably a 'unique code' and a transponder (or an alternative method), and both elements shall be recorded in a central database of each Member State.

d. A physical means of identification or other method which unequivocally links the animal with the identification document.

Based on the discussion it should be assumed that a preferred option is a transponder number including country code. Allocation of the transponder numbers should be under control of the competent authorities.

As regards alternative methods of a physical means of identification, there were suggested ear tags and pastern marks for equidae for slaughter.

- e. The competent authority issuing a single lifetime identification document.

Some Member States reported that their competent authorities will continue with the current system and will delegate the task of issuing a single lifetime identification document to third parties, including studbooks. Some other Member States have not yet taken a decision and discussions on this issue are ongoing. One Member State suggested the separation of animal breeding from animal health and proposed a single document issued by the competent authority for all equidae, while the passport issuing organisations would issue an additional document for breeding/ zootechnical purpose, where relevant.

Moreover, Member States were requested to provide information on who is responsible for the description of horses and providing identification data to the central database and how this will be continued in the future. There were still not clear views on this but several Member States expressed the practical difficulties encountered to have horses registered in the central database (multiple databases from passport issuing organisations, not only situated in the Member State of residency).

Member States also pointed out the importance of electronic exchange of data between central databases of different Member States.

- f. Rules on the information to be included in and specific provisions for a single lifetime identification document provided for in point (c) of Article 114(1) of Animal Health Law that has to accompany equine animals when they are moved.

This point of the agenda was not discussed.

- g. Requirements for entry into the Union of equine animals.

This point of the agenda was not discussed in details, however a decision on types of entry into the Union have a close link with a decision on categories of equidae, discussed under point (a), and animal health requirements assigned to particular categories of equidae.

2. Miscellaneous.

The expert group on a Commission Delegated Act under Regulation (EU) 2016/1012 ("Animal Breeding Regulation"), where the Working document SANTE/7097/2016 rev.3 was discussed, was also a part of this expert group on identification, movement and certification of equine animals.

Minutes regarding the discussion on the Working document SANTE/7097/2016 rev.3 are documented in a different report.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

The Commission obtained required information on the current situation in the Union as regards identification, movement and certification of equine animals, as well as expectations of particular Members States for the future legislation and plans for its implementation.

A follow up expert group meeting is required to discuss a draft legal text including the presented views.

5. Next steps

The outcome of the discussion and opinions provided by the participants of this expert group will be used by the Commission in the context of the Animal Health and Welfare Section of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF)² and during further Commission work towards delegated acts under AHL.

6. Next meeting

The date for the further meeting will be established in the second half of 2017.

7. List of participants

LIST OF PRESENCE TO MEETING - LISTE DE PRESENCE

Title of the meeting : Expert Group on identification, movement and certification of equine animals

Code : E00930

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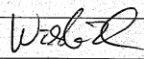
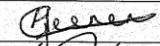
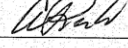
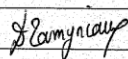
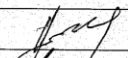


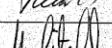
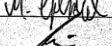



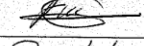

* P = Private Expert Privé * G = Governmental Expert Gouvernemental




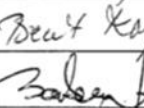
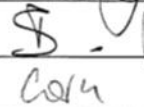
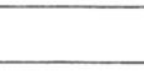
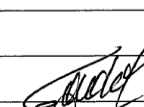
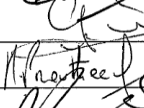

Date: 4 April 2017

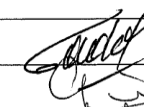
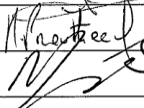
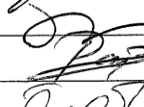
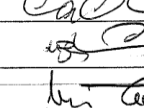
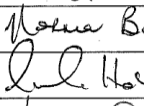
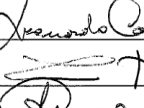
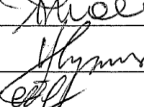
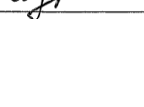





Secretary - Secrétaire : Dimitrios Karkalakis

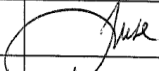
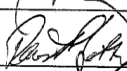
Tel: 32-2-2964321

E-mail: dimitrios.karkalakis@ec.europa.eu

Name-Nom (CAPITAL)	*P- *G	Country Pays Org	LISIBLE E-mail LEGIBLE * P = Private Expert Privé * G = Governmental Expert Gouvernemental	Signature
Wiesböck Josef	G	AUT	josef.wiesboeck@bmlfuw.gv.at	
Geenen Hanne	G	BEL	hanne.geenen@lv.vlaanderen.be	
Reili Katrin	G	BEL EE	katrin.reili@vet.agri.ee	
Rettigner Chantal	G	BEL	chantal.rettigner@afsca.be	
Tamigniaux Daphné	G	BEL	daphne.tamigniaux@sante.belgique.be	
Vandenbempt Sandrine	G	BEL	sandrine.vandenbempt@spw.wallonie.be	
Tanchev Dimitar	G	BGR	rvms.yambol@gmail.com	
Maier Thomas	G	CHE	thomas-paul.maier@eda.admin.ch	
Gaudnikova Jitka	G	CZE	jitka.gaudnikova@mze.cz	
Silhanova Diana	G	CZE	diana.silhanova@mze.cz	
Götschel Matthias	G	D	matthias.goetschel@mwvfvw.rlp.de	
MIESNER DR. KLAUS DETLEV	G	D	kmiesner@fn-dokr.de	
Schneider Jan Hendrik	G	D	janhendrik.schneider@bmel.bund.de	
Ellegaard Kirsten Sejlstrup	G	DNK	kise@fvst.dk	
CASTELLANOS MONTSERRAT	G	ESP	mcastell@magrama.es	
Fernandez Martin Ana	G	ESP	afmartin@mapama.es	
Korpilo Berit	G	FIN	berit.korpilo@mmm.fi	

JULIA COHEN	G	FR	julia.cohen@afpa.eu	
MARIJANA DROBNIC	G	SI	marjana.drobnic@gov.si	
ANDREJ SALIKA	G	SI	andrej.salika@gov.si	
ROBERT HACKO	G	SK	hacko@svps.sk	
Silvia Takáčová	G	SK	silvia.takacova@land.gov.sk	
SANNA VARJUS	G	FI	sanna.varjus@evira.fi	
BERIT KORPILO	G	FI	berit.korpilo@mmm.fi	
BARBARA LOGAR	G	COM	barbara.logar@ec.europa.eu	
BENOIT SAUVEROCHÉ	G	COM	benoit.sauveroché@ec.europa.eu	
Ewa Comara	G	COM		COM
Alf Füssel	G	COM		

Varjus Sanna	G	FIN	sanna.varjus@evira.fi	
Gadot Paul Marie	G	FRA	pmgadot@france-galop.com	
Le Moyne de Sainte Marie Geneviève	G	FRA	genevieve.de-sainte-marie@agriculture.gouv.fr	
Proutheau Marie Noëlle	G	FRA	marie-noelle.proutheau@agriculture.gouv.fr	
Loder Merewyn	G	GBR	merewyn.loder@defra.gsi.gov.uk	
Simpson David	G	GBR	david.simpson@defra.gsi.gov.uk	
Paprika Saša	G	HRV	sasa.paprika@mps.hr	
ČAČINOVIĆ VLADIMIR	G	HRV	vladimir.cacinovic@mps.hr	
Babós Tünde	G	HUN	tunde.babos@fm.gov.hu	
Szobolevszki Tamás	G	HUN	tamas.szobolevszki@fm.gov.hu	
BEHAN NORMA	G	IRL	norma.behan@agriculture.gov.ie	
Hobson Nicola	G	IRL	nicola.hobson@agriculture.gov.ie	
Cordisco Leonardo	G	MT	leonardo.cordisco@gov.mt	
LUCA BUTTAZZONI	G	ITA	luca.buttazzoni@crea.gov.it	
Ruocco Luigi	G	ITA	l.ruocco@sanita.it	
Jurgaitis Arūnas	G	LTU	arunas.jurgaitis@veislininkyste.lt	
VOICECHOVSKA ALEKSANDRA	G	LTU	aleksandra.voicechovska@zum.lt	

Eiffener Venant	G	LUX	venant.eiffener@asv.etat.lu	
Luse Aija	G	LVA	aija.luse@lszaa.lv	
Ozolina Ligija	G	LVA	Ligija.Ozolina@zm.gov.lv	
Graf Marijn	G	NLD	m.c.w.graf@minez.nl	
Lommers Hendrik	G	NLD	h.lommers@minez.nl	
Andersen Fredrik	G	NOR	fread@mattilsynet.no	
SZWAST JOANNA	G	POL	joanna.szwast@wetgiw.gov.pl	
Ślusarczyk Justyna	G	POL	justyna.slusarczyk@minrol.gov.pl	
IONASCU IONEL	G	ROU	ionascu.ionel@anarz.eu	
ROSU ION	G	ROU	rosu.ion@anarz.eu	
Drobnič Marjana	G	SVN	marjana.drobnic@gov.si	
Slottner David	G	SWE	david.slottner@jordbruksverket.se	
Åkerström Göran	G	SWE	goran.akerstrom@fei.org	
Barbara Hoffmann	G	D	Barbara.Hoffmann@bmel.bund.de	
Sirje Jalakas	G	EE	sirje.jalakas@agri.ee	
ANGELOPOULOS PETROS	G	GR	pangelopoulos@erp-greece.be	
BORNANN JEANNE	G	Lux	jeanne.bornann@asta.etat.lu	