



1 March 2013

Re: Open letter to Maltese voters

Dear Maltese voters,

Some months ago, together with 8 Maltese animal welfare organisations, we organised an international conference in Valletta to denounce the fact that John Dalli – the then EU Commissioner for Health and Consumers, appointed by the Maltese government – was disregarding the suffering of countless animals and the voice of European citizens.

Millions of live animals – pigs, horses, cows, sheep, lambs, chickens – are still being transported over long distances on European roads, sometimes for several days, only to be killed on arrival. This huge amount of suffering can easily be avoided by killing the animals in the nearest slaughterhouse to the farm and then transporting their meat and carcasses.

On 15 March 2012, the European Parliament adopted Written Declaration 49/2011 – signed by 395 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) – which calls on the EU institutions to establish a maximum 8-hour limit on the journeys of animals transported for the purpose of slaughter.

On 7 June 2012, representatives of over 100 European animal welfare NGOs together with MEPs from across the political spectrum handed in 1,103,248 signatures to John Dalli, who was responsible for animal welfare in the European Union.

Mr Dalli refused to propose changes to the European rules on live animal transport, affirming that enforcement of the present rules was enough. Some of those rules have been in place for over 20 years and have never been enforced. Mr Dalli never provided any explanation as to why such rules would start to be enforced now.

As you may know, in November 2012, following Mr Dalli's resignation, Dr Tonio Borg became the new EU Commissioner for Health and Consumers, and therefore responsible for animal welfare in the EU.

Even though we have made repeated attempts to form a better relationship with Dr Borg ever since the Maltese government indicated that he would be the new Commissioner, and although we have made available a vast amount of evidence showing why an urgent review of the rules on transport is necessary, Dr Borg is maintaining Mr Dalli's position: no changes to the existing rules, but merely a focus on enforcement (without explaining how this might work).

In answering questions tabled by MEPs the Commission has shown that it does not have significant data on the regular violations of the rules on live transport, and has even less ability to force Member States to enforce them. At the same time, Dr Borg and his staff are making public statements against a review of the existing rules.

We are in touch with Dr Borg's office, and hope that this dialogue will lead to an open and honest exchange of views, and finally to a change of his position that at present is condemning countless animals to further suffering and is disregarding the demands of EU citizens.



From what we read in official EU documentation, at the moment there are more Animals' Angels investigators conducting checks on the welfare of animals during transport than there are inspectors working for the FVO, the European Commission's inspection service! And it is clear to us that further delays in establishing shorter journey limits cannot be justified.

Different journey times might be adopted for different species, and other details should be discussed within the framework of a new piece of legislation, but Dr Borg is simply opposing this opportunity to shield millions of animals from easily avoidable suffering.

In view of the forthcoming general election on 9 March, we are therefore sending this open letter to the leaders of the Maltese parties asking them to make clear statements in favour of an 8-hour maximum journey time for animals sent for slaughter in the EU. And we ask you, the voters of Malta, to take careful note of the parties' statements when you cast your vote.

The end of long-distance live transport of animals sent for slaughter in the EU is one of the easiest legislative measures to adopt in order to stop a huge amount of animal suffering, if the political willingness is there.

Maltese politicians – and the Maltese electorate – can play a key role in making it happen.

Yours faithfully,

Christa Blanke
President and Founder
Animals' Angels

Rosserstraße 8
60323 Frankfurt
Germany

Adolfo Sansolini
Coordinator
www.8hours.eu

PO BOX 64800
London N1P 1QH
UK