

The detrimental impact of the absence of animal welfare provisions in Euro-Med FTAs

Eurogroup for Animals' contribution to the consultation launched by the European Commission on the evaluation of six Euro-Med FTAs



Improper stunning of a German Bull in Jordan

Introduction

In the early 2000's, the EU established six Free Trade Agreements under the umbrella of the Association Agreement it has with Euro-Med partners: with Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan. These agreements are not as wide as most modern FTAs: they cover mainly trade in goods. In a few cases, they also cover some agricultural goods. When they do not, the EU often negotiated an additional protocol aiming at liberalizing further the trade in agricultural products. More recently, the EU obtained a mandate to negotiate a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with four Euro-Med countries (Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan), with the aim to expand the scope of the current agreements to resemble more modern EU FTAs. As we can see from the negotiations with Tunisia and Morocco – which are already running – the talks include agriculture.

Contrary to the more recent Association Agreements established with Eastern European countries (like Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova), the existing agreements with Euro-Med countries did not address animal welfare. Neither is the topic included in the ongoing negotiations towards a DCFTA with Morocco and Tunisia.

The main rationale for this seems to be that the EU does not import – and does not see itself importing in the near future - much meat, dairy or eggs from such countries (notably because these countries do not match sanitary requirements established by the EU). However, these agreements have had a detrimental impact on animal welfare. The EU exports numerous farm animals to these countries, for slaughter or breeding purposes. In both cases, they will end up slaughtered – after a short or a longer period - in the destination country, where OIE standards are often not respected when it comes to slaughter, let alone EU rules.

Live exports are problematic for two reasons. The first is the very poor conditions endured by the animals while traveling. This is the reason why Eurogroup for Animals is calling for a ban on live exports, and a transition towards a trade only in meat and carcasses.¹ The second reason is the living and slaughtering conditions endured by these animals in most destination countries they are sent to.

While transitioning towards a meat and carcasses only trade, the EU - being a global leader on animal welfare - should take its responsibility. If it outsources animal welfare concerns by sending live animals to Euro-Med countries, it must cooperate with these countries to improve living and slaughtering conditions for animals exported over there. This could be achieved by including provisions on animal welfare cooperation in the updated trade agreements, and by allocating sufficient resources to the implementation of such provisions.

Cooperating on animal welfare standards with Euro-Med countries would also have a positive impact on achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As explained by our report on Animal Welfare, Trade and SDGs,² and confirmed recently by academics,³ there is a “mutually beneficial relationship” between improving animal welfare and achieving SDGs. It is therefore important for the EU to take this dimension into consideration when it considers how trade policy can contribute to implementing the SDGs on the ground.

The final objective, however, should remain to replace live transport by a trade in meat and carcasses only. At the global level, several key importers of live animals are also key importers of carcasses and meat. Jordan, the biggest importer of live sheep from the EU, is ranked as one of the top ten world importers of meat and carcasses by the UK Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board.⁴ This means that the infrastructure already exists in these countries, and strategies could be put in place to sustain and promote such meat and carcasses trade with them, rather than live exports.

New Zealand introduced a *de facto* ban of live export of sheep for slaughter purposes in 2003, after Saudi Arabia rejected a shipment of 57,000 sheep which led to a two-month delay in the journey, during which thousands of animals died on board. In 2007, the *de facto* ban was extended to also cover live cattle exported for slaughter. New Zealand worked closely with the Halal boards in Saudi Arabia and Indonesia to get them to allow stunning prior to slaughter. This was a crucial step which allowed New Zealand to export meat and carcasses to these countries, instead of live animals.

¹ Eurogroup for Animals, [A Strategy to Reduce and Replace Live Animal Transport](https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/Eurogroup-for-Animals_A-strategy-to-reduce-and-replace-live-animal-transport.pdf), November 2019 - https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/Eurogroup-for-Animals_A-strategy-to-reduce-and-replace-live-animal-transport.pdf

² Eurogroup for Animals, [Animal Welfare, Trade and Sustainable Development Goals](https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/E4A-SDG-and-AW_Report_03-2019-screen-1-1.pdf), October 2019 - https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/E4A-SDG-and-AW_Report_03-2019-screen-1-1.pdf

³ Keeling L, Tunón H, Olmos Antillón G, Berg C, Jones M, Stuardo L, Swanson J, Wallenbeck A, Winckler C and Blokhuis H, *Animal Welfare and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*, *Front. Vet. Sci.* 6:336. doi: 10.3389/fvets.2019.00336, 2019

⁴ AHDB Beef & Lamb and the International Meat Secretariat, *World sheep meat market to 2025 - A joint report*, 2015

Live exports to Euro-Med countries

This section will - for each Euro-Med country targeted by the consultation - study the situation in terms of live exports from the EU. It will analyze the existing trade agreements between the EU and each country and the impact it could have had on the relevant trade flows. Finally, it will describe slaughter conditions witnessed by NGOs in investigations.⁵

As a general consideration, the practices documented by investigating NGOs did not only breach OIE standards, but they were also not in accordance with religious principles which strongly support the need to reduce suffering during the slaughter process. In many cases, brutal disabling methods (tendon slashing and eye stabbing) are the result of a lack of both training of the workers and infrastructure to handle large animals safely and humanely.

1. Jordan***Impact of the existing trade agreements***

The EU exports between 10,000 and 20,000 bovine per year to Jordan. The imports of live bovine from the EU into Jordan started increasing again after 2006, after having decreased from 15,000 heads in 2001 to zero in 2006. These bovine are mostly described as “for slaughter” or “not pure-bred breeding.” The pure-bred breeding bovines imported into Jordan are mostly heifers.

Live export of sheep and goat from the EU to Jordan fully exploded in 2010, reaching more than a million animals in 2016. Numbers in recent years oscillated between 200,000 and 1,100,000 ovines per year. Before 2010, the range was between 10 and 41,000 heads. These exports are mostly sheep, which are neither pure-bred for breeding nor lambs.

The level of exports of EU chicken into Jordan remains high throughout the last decade (almost 1,600,000 animals in 2018).

Interestingly, the EU concluded with Jordan an additional protocol on agricultural goods. The agreement entered into force in 2006 and it scrapped tariffs, over two years, on EU live exports (notably of live sheep, one of the categories that grew most).

In 2018, the EU sent 2,197,502 animals (chicken, bovine and ovine) to Jordan, without putting any mechanism in place to ensure these animals would not suffer more than what they would have if they had stayed in the EU.

Situation in Jordan

Since 2007, Animals International has been obtaining evidence of the cruel treatment of exported animals in Jordan. At street markets, sheep are routinely dragged by one of their hind legs or horns. Their legs are often tied before they are either thrown on the loading tray of a vehicle or stuffed into car boots – often with no air circulation – despite the searing temperatures. Sheep are slaughtered in private households, butcher shops,

⁵ All investigations were carried out by Animals International - <https://www.animalsaustralia.org/investigations/live-export-investigations.php>

street markets or slaughterhouses. Animals International filmed the routine, fully conscious, slaughter of exported sheep at street markets and in a slaughterhouse. All sheep suffered an unnecessary painful, and prolonged death. Sheep are handled roughly, dragged onto the slaughter floor and turned onto their backs, to then be killed through multiple throat cuts – all this occurring in front of other animals. Footage shows dead and dying animals piled on top of each other over the blood drain.



Romanian Sheep in Jordan

In slaughterhouses, cattle were being brutally restrained by ropes before having their throats hacked open. Despite access to equipment such as pneumatic, halal restraining devices and hydraulic percussive stunners, animals were still subjected to unnecessary suffering of traditional fully conscious slaughter due to a lack of training, management and legislative enforcement.

2. Lebanon

Impact of the existing trade agreements

The agreement with Lebanon directly addressed animal products, and reduced some of the Lebanese tariffs on EU exports of live animals. Tariffs on bovine were nonexistent and the number of animals sent by the EU is significant: between 120,000 and 160,000 per year recently. Sheep exports were also already duty-free, and the numbers are also high : almost 200,000 sheep in 2018. Both sheep and bovine exports saw a decrease until a lowest point around 2007-2008, then increased again.

Export of live chicken from the EU to Lebanon were around 400,000-700,000 animals per year until 2012, then they grew to more than a million chicken per year (1,269,134 in 2018). Most of these chicken fall into a custom category that saw its tariff disappear with the Association Agreement (HS 01051119), more specifically five years after its entry into force (thus 2011).



Hungarian Bull roped in Lebanon

In 2018, the EU sent 1,598,564 animals to Lebanon.

Situation in Lebanon

Animals International has conducted investigations in slaughterhouses and butcher shops in Lebanon since 2016 and has extensive knowledge of slaughter practices in the country. Restraint practices such as tendon slashing and eye gouging to disable cattle prior to the throat cut continue in some abattoirs and outside butcher

shops. Most abattoirs still have no infrastructure (open slaughter hall) and subject animals to acute stress and physical suffering of roping restraint before their throats are cut whilst fully conscious. Many butcher shops

slaughter animals at the front of the premises. Manual roping is the routine practice to pull the animals off the trucks to the ground prior to fully conscious slaughter.

3. Egypt

Impact of the existing trade agreements

Main animals exported from the EU to Egypt are ducks, turkeys and chicken. Numbers were already around 3,000,000 birds per year in the beginning of the 2000's but it reached suddenly 33,000,000 in 2010. Since then, levels oscillate from 10,000,000 to 30,000,000 birds per year. The conclusion of the EU-Egypt association agreement did not impact these exports at first, as the agreement only lowered tariffs for two categories of bovines (see below). However, the EU concluded an additional protocol with Egypt on agricultural products which scrapped all remaining tariffs on live animals. This protocol entered into force in 2010, the year that saw a huge increase in export of live chicken from the EU to Egypt.

Exports of bovine grew significantly at two moments. First, when the Association Agreement entered into force (2004). The text addressed two categories of tariffs related to bovine animals: HS 010210 (pure-bred breeding bovine, mostly heifers in this case) and HS 010290 ("Live cattle" which are not pure-bred breeding animals). For the former, the tariff was completely scrapped. For the latter, it was divided by two, and a maximal import volume was set (10,000 tonnes). Imports grew thus up to 9,741 animals per year in 2007. The protocol signed in 2010 liberalised fully all EU exports of live bovine, leading to another increase (from less than 10,000 tons before 2010 to up to 48,914 animals per year in 2017).

In 2018, the EU sent 9,020,550 animals to Egypt.

Situation in Egypt



Romanian Bull with eye stabbed and slashed tendon

Animals International has conducted investigations in Egypt for over 10 years and confirms brutal practices including eye stabbing and tendon slashing are routinely used as a method of disabling animals in lieu of mechanical restraint methods. Most slaughterhouses still have no infrastructure (open slaughter hall) and subject animals to acute stress and physical suffering of roping restraint before their throats are cut whilst fully conscious.

Animals International investigators are aware of the extended suffering of EU animals in full inversion slaughter boxes (tipping terrified animals upside down to have their throats cut) as a result of a lack of supervision and knowledge gaps in how to use these devices correctly.

4. Tunisia

Impact of the existing trade agreements

In the case of Tunisia, it is hard to judge the impact of the Association Agreement as the text was signed in 1995 and applied in 1998. Eurostat does not present data for these years. The Association Agreement reduced Tunisian tariffs on the import of two categories of bovines: from 36 to 17% for a maximal volume of 2000 tonnes for “pure-bred breeding” animals (HS 010210); and from 36 to 27% for a maximal volume of only 35 tonnes for another category of “non pure-bred breeding” bovines (HS 010290).

Over the past decade, exports of live bovine from the EU into Tunisia have amounted to between 5,000 and 15,000 bovine per year.

Tunisia also signed in 2000 an additional protocol with the EU covering agricultural products, which reduced further Tunisian tariffs on the live import of day-old chicks and turkeys. These are the animals that Tunisia imports the most from the EU. From 2000 onwards, these imports have amounted to above a million bird per year, up to 1,547,168 birds in 2015. All these animals fall into the customs categories (HS 010511 and HS 050112) for which Tunisian tariffs were decreased by the additional protocol signed in 2000.

In 2018, the EU exported 1,458,325 animals to Tunisia. However, as Tunisian tariffs on these animals have not been scrapped yet, there is a potential for these exports to grow, especially if the EU obtains a duty-free access for its live exports in the ongoing DCFTA negotiation process.

Situation in Tunisia

Evidence of 2017 reveals the brutal restraining of cattle with ropes before their throats are cut whilst fully conscious. Most slaughterhouses still have no infrastructure (open slaughter hall).



French Progeny handled in Tunisia

5. Morocco

Impact of the existing trade agreements

The situation for Morocco is similar to Tunisia. The Association Agreement was signed in 1996 and implemented in 2000. Even though the text decreased tariffs on EU live exports of pure-bred breeding bovines (HS 010210) and live fowls (HS 010511), it is hard to analyse its impact because of the lack of data.

The country also concluded an additional protocol with the EU on agricultural goods which further liberalizes EU's live exports to Morocco: it eliminated tariffs on pure-bred breeding bovines (HS 010210), reduced tariffs for a specific quota of chickens (HS 01051190 - duty-free within 600 tonnes), but maintained restrictions on calves (HS 01029010 – 2.5% tariff for 40,000 heads), domestic bulls (HS 01029039/41/49 – 40% decrease of the tariff for 100 tonnes) and for domestic sheep and goats other than pure-bred breeding (HS 01041090 and HS 01042090 – 40% decrease of the tariff for 50 tonnes each).

EU exports of live bovine have amounted to between 10,000 and 40,000 animals per year in the last decade, even reaching 91,380 animals in 2008. Until 2009, these live exports of bovines are only located in the category for which the tariff was decreased by the Association Agreement. Afterwards, imports in that category continue but imports in other categories also increased, especially in two that were liberalized post Protocol. The average of bovine sent per year increases after the Protocol entered into force.

Moroccan imports of live chicks and turkeys from the EU have also remained high over the past decade (around 7,000,000 animals per year). Half of these exports – all the ones of chicks rather than turkeys - fall under the category liberalized by the Association Agreement and the Protocol (HS 010511). If one looks at the data in terms of tons, we can see that these imports follow the volume that was set in the Association Agreement (roughly 150 tonnes) and are now increasing (probably to slowly reach 600 tonnes). This trend will need to be monitored.

In 2018, the EU sent 6,776,593 animals to Morocco. The discussions on a future DCFTA could lead to further liberalization in relevant categories (notably in bovines and chicken), and thus to an increase of these exports.



French Dairy Cow handled in Morocco

Situation in Morocco

Animals International has been in Morocco in 2017 where investigators documented the slaughter of an EU dairy cow. The slaughterhouse has no infrastructure (open slaughter hall) and subject animals to the extended distress of roping restraint before their throats are cut whilst fully conscious.

6. Algeria

Impact of the existing trade agreements

The Association Agreement between the EU and Algeria was signed in 2002 and entered into force in 2005. The text contains several tariff reductions for EU live exports to Algeria. They are related to pure-bred breeding bovines (duty free - 50 tonnes), “non pure-bred breeding” (duty free - 5000 tonnes), day old chicks of both fowls and turkeys (duty free and respectively 20 and 100 tonnes).

Exports of live bovines from the EU to Algeria have increased from around 10,000 animals in 2000 to 72,721 animals in 2018. Those exports are mainly heifers. The categories related to “non pure-bred breeding” bovines in which Tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) were created also saw an increase in numbers in the years following the entry into force of the Association Agreement (from a thousand animals in 2005 to around 28,000 in 2011).

Exports of live chickens from the EU to Algeria have remained high throughout the decade. They mostly fall under the categories covered by the Agreement. The average number of chickens and turkey sent to Algeria went from 6.5 to 7.5 million a year after the Association Agreement entered into force. However, it is important to keep in mind the Agreement maintains TRQs (therefore a limited volume) for these categories.

In 2018, the EU sent 5,942,498 animals to the EU. The discussions on a future DCFTA could lead to further liberalization in relevant categories (notably in bovines and chicken), and thus to an increase of these exports.

Situation in Algeria

Our Member Organisations have not yet carried out investigations in the country. However, Algeria received the score of “F” in the Animal Protection Index established by World Animal Protection, a rank similar to Egypt and Morocco⁶.

Conclusions

Eurogroup for Animals calls on the EU to include provisions on animal welfare cooperation in all upgraded Euro-Med FTAs and to cooperate with DG SANTE to ensure sufficient resources are dedicated to this work aimed at lifting living and slaughtering standards for millions of animals, not only those exported from the EU but also the ones raised in Euro-Med countries their entire life.

The EU should establish a roadmap on this cooperation with each Euro-Med countries, providing clear steps and direction for this work. This roadmap should envisage the transition towards a trade in meat and carcasses.

⁶ The country report on Algeria can be found on the following link:
https://api.worldanimalprotection.org/sites/default/files/api_algeria_report.pdf

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Eurogroup for Animals - Trade & Animal Welfare Project

Rue Ducale 29 – 1000 Brussels

Tel: +32 (0)2 740 08 20 – Fax: +32 (0)2 740 08 29

Email: s.ghislain@eurogroupforanimals.org

Website: <http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/trade-and-animal-welfare>

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