



World Organisation
for Animal Health
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Multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario (WJS) workshop
on long-distance transport by land and sea between
Europe, the Middle East and North Africa

7 – 9 November 2023, Tunis, Tunisia

MEETING REPORT

Summary

The multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario (WJS) workshop on long-distance transport by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East and North Africa was held on 7- 9 November 2023 in Tunis, Tunisia.

The workshop was built upon routes with similar transportation challenges identified through previous workshops and through the requests received from Members who transport live animals from Europe to the Middle East and North Africa. Representatives from 15 WOAHA Members participated in the meeting, namely: France, Ireland, Portugal, Romania and Spain from Europe; Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and United Arab Emirates from the Middle East; and Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia from North Africa.

The main objectives of the workshop were to help countries improve animal welfare during long distance and cross-border transport in compliance with WOAHA standards for the whole duration of the journey along the selected route with focus on the responsibilities of the Competent Authorities over the entire journey. In addition, the workshop aimed to share best practices and strengthen collaboration and communication between Competent Authorities. Moreover, the workshop provided the opportunity to deepen Members' understanding of the level of compliance of animal welfare standards and identify key issues, constraints and/or challenges experienced while implementing these standards. The workshop highlighted the need for enhancing and strengthening communication and cooperation between Competent Authorities and all actors involved in the transport of live animals, the importance of well-defined responsibilities and appropriate planning and establishing emergency procedures.

The participants found the workshop useful and quite instrumental to improve multiregional collaboration. They called for further activities on animal transport which would support the implementation and compliance with WOAHA standards such as future whole journey scenario workshops, training, the development of IT tools and guidance documents.

Acknowledgments

The World Organization for Animal Health is grateful to the European Union, Ireland and Switzerland to provide financial support for the Multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario (WJS) workshop on long-distance transport by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. The WOAHA is also thankful to Tunisia for providing support for organization and hosting the event.

Background

The WOAHA WJS workshops aim to support countries to improve animal welfare during long-distance and cross-border transport in compliance with WOAHA standards on animal transport by land and by sea. The approach is built on bringing together all the stakeholders involved in the transport of live animals from the departure point to the destination in order to ensure the same level of understanding of WOAHA standards on animal welfare. Since 2018, the WOAHA has organised series of WJS workshops at regional level (Europe in 2018; the Middle East in 2019) and at multi-regional level (Europe and Middle East 2021, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa 2022).

The multi-regional WJS on long distance transport between Europe, the Middle East and North Africa has been organised to address the specific issues to ensure the welfare of animals during transport by land and sea between selected WOAHA members on Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

Objectives

The main objectives of the workshop were to help countries improve animal welfare during long distance and cross-border transport in compliance with WOAHA standards for the whole duration of the journey along the selected route with focus on the responsibilities of the Competent Authorities over the entire journey. In addition, the workshop aimed to share best practices and strengthen collaboration and communication between Competent Authorities.

The workshop gives an opportunity to the participants to strengthen their understanding of the relevant WOAHA standards (Chapters 7.2 and 7.3 of the WOAHA Terrestrial Code), especially concerning

responsibilities of each stakeholder involved in the process and the required information exchange between the various Competent Authorities. Moreover, the workshop will enable to assess the animal welfare situation in the participating countries, identifying key issues, constraints and/or challenges experienced with the implementation of the relevant WOAHA standards.

Participants

The workshop targeted WOAHA members involved in the route of long distance and cross border transport of animals (countries of origin, transit countries including harbours for sea transfers, destination countries) with two participants per country invited: (i) representative of Competent Authority working at central level (e.g., the nominated WOAHA National Focal Point for Animal Welfare, regional contact point); and (ii) representative of Competent Authority working on regional level/border control post (main entry point);

List of invited countries:

- the Middle East: Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates
- North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia,
- Europe: France, Ireland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovenia, Türkiye.

The representatives 15 out of 18 invited WOAHA members with total of 44 participants (including speakers) attended the meeting.



The full list of participants as well as the agenda of the workshop can be consulted in Annex.

Workshop programme

Tuesday, 7 November 2023.

The meeting was opened with a welcome message from prof. Abderraouf Laajimi, Chef du Cabinet in Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries, Tunisia, who highlighted the importance of ensuring good animal welfare during transport and role of WOAHA for protecting health and welfare of animals. The following welcome message were delivered by Dr Rachid Bouguedour (WOAHA SRR North Africa) and Dr Mohamed Ali Alhosani (WOAHA SRR Abu Dhabi).

Session I: Setting the scene.

Dr. Leopoldo Stuardo (WOAH Standards Department) presented the WOAHS mandate on animal welfare, the main elements of the Global Animal Welfare Strategy development of animal welfare standards, capacity building and education, implementation of animal welfare standards and policies, communication with governments, organizations and public. ([WOAH global animal welfare strategy - transport activities](#))

Dr T. Grudnik presented the regional animal welfare platform and strategies, relevant regional WOAHS activities and objectives of the workshop. ([WOAH regional Platforms and strategies](#))

In the following presentation, Dr Grudnik recalled the provision of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Chapter 7.2 on the transport of animals by sea and Chapter 7.3 on the transport of animals by land, highlighting main points on animal behaviour, responsibilities, competencies, planning the journey, pre-journey period, loading, travel, unloading and post-journey handling and Actions in the event of a refusal to allow the completion of the journey. ([WOAH TAHC Chapter 7.2 and 7.3](#))

Session II: Understanding country's situation and identifying key challenges.

The workshop session focused on understanding the situations in participating countries and enabled representatives of WOAHS members to present an overview of their countries' situations. This included information on existing legislation, primary trading livestock partners and routes, border posts, quarantine facilities, and major challenges related to the transportation of animals. To streamline and standardize the country reports, WOAHS shared a suggested structured template ahead of the meeting. The presentations of the country reports can be accessed online through the following links:

- Europe: [France](#), [Ireland](#), [Portugal](#), [Romania](#), [Spain](#)
- the Middle East: [Jordan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Kuwait](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Türkiye](#), [United Arab Emirates](#)
- North Africa: [Algeria](#), [Libya](#), [Morocco](#), [Tunisia](#)

Wednesday, 8 November 2023

Session III – Addressing the challenges and sharing country's experiences and best practices.

The working groups exercise based on three different case study scenarios give opportunity to identify issues and look for solutions for specific situation in the context of WOAHS standards and based on their competencies, experience, and their countries legislative framework and procedures.

Main points highlighted through working group discussions:

- need for regular communication and collaboration between Competent Authorities and all actors involved in the transport of live animals especially exchange of information before, during and after a journey;
- need to establish procedures and structure the communication (e.g. common template);
- need to harmonize list of non-compliance;
- importance of defining responsibilities (especially between departure port and destination),
- importance of appropriate planning and emergency procedures,

Dr. Carol Sheridan, from the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, provided an overview of Australia's cattle and sheep trade and regulatory framework information on the regulations and processes involved in exporting livestock by sea from Australia. The presentation highlights the importance of welfare management throughout the supply chain, from registered establishments through on-board vessels and including feedlots, depots and abattoirs at the destination. Dr Sheridan described the role of accredited and government veterinarians in overseeing the preparation and inspection of the animals. It also emphasizes the need to accurately report animal welfare indicators and conditions on board the vessels. The presentation also covered principles of Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) and the Export Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) and the actions that may be taken in case of non-compliance with animal welfare standards. She acknowledged the challenges in accurately reporting on animal welfare and ongoing efforts to address them. ([Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock and Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System](#))

Dr Simona Popa shared Romanian experience and lesson learn of the maritime incident that occurred in 2019 involving the livestock vessel Queen Hind. The presentation highlighted the importance of cooperation with maritime experts for animal welfare controls, as well as the need for checks by Port State Control to ensure both maritime safety and animal welfare. The actions taken following the incident cover supplementing the number of veterinarians in the exit point, reviewing internal procedures for loading/unloading, and implementing contingency plans and amendment and completion of national legislation. It also mentions new EU obligations for Official Veterinarians (OV) starting in 2023, including the requirement to team up with authorised maritime experts and verify transporters' contingency plans. ([Emergency procedure](#))

Dr Grudnik presented information about the functioning of the WOAHA network of the National Contact Point on Long-Distance Transportation in Europe as an example of building communication between Competent Authorities. ([Communication between Competent Authorities](#))

In the following discussion on how WOAHA could further help to strengthen the collaboration between Competent Authorities, participants called for further networking events (also online) to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences between Competent Authorities, establishing common format document (network documents, check list, reporting templates) and to create formalized network/system for communication between the different Competent authorities at entry and exit points.

Ms. Silvia Meriggi from Animal Angels, representing the International Coalition for Animal Welfare, presented concerns and challenges related to the long-distance transport of live animals from Europe to non-EU countries from an NGO perspective. The presentation highlights various observed violations of animal welfare requirements during export and proposes possible solutions. The document emphasizes the need for better implementation of the WOAHA Terrestrial Code, which provides internationally agreed provisions for animal welfare during transport. The document calls for improved border and customs procedures, traceability of animals, and destination checks. It concludes by stating that the EU rules on animal protection during transport cannot be enforced outside the EU, and efforts should be made to address these issues before approving live exports ([Transport of animals - NGO perspective](#))

Dr. Iheb Bannouri (Tunisia) presented framework for veterinary health controls on imports in Tunisia. The presentation structure of the inspection process, information about sanitary inspection posts, regulatory references, import procedures, export procedures, transit procedures. The presentation includes information on maritime and air transport of animals with specific references to regulations related to veterinary health inspections. Statistical data is provided on exports, imports, and transit of various animal products. ([Framework for veterinary health controls on imports in Tunisia](#))

Prof Souilem Ouajdi provided information about a twinning project on animal welfare in Tunisia and the North Africa region. The project aims to improve the technical knowledge and skills of the National School of Veterinary Medicine of Sidi Thabet (ENMV) in the field of animal welfare and support its process of becoming a WOAHA Collaborating Centre for Animal Welfare. The project includes various activities such as online courses, training courses, preliminary assessment visits, and working groups for updating

legislation on animal welfare. The project also involves collaboration with other institutions such as the University of Pretoria and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The ultimate goal is to establish a permanent capacity building center on animal welfare and promote the implementation of WOAHA animal welfare standards in the region. The project will be monitored regularly to ensure its objectives are achieved. ([WOAH Twinning Project on Animal Welfare in NA](#))

F. Valentini (WOAH SRR-NA) presented the Scientific and Technical Office (STOR) of the ReMeSa network, which is a collaboration between Mediterranean countries to prevent and control transboundary animal diseases. The STOR works under the coordination of the WOAHA - FAO Tunisian Secretariat of ReMeSa and aims to strengthen communication, scientific cooperation, and professional skills and knowledge in improving animal health and welfare. The presentation outlined the structure of the STOR, including the Scientific Technical Committee (operational liaison between STOR and CVOs) and the activities and projects planned for 2023-2024, such as webinars, workshops, and training courses on topics like vector-borne diseases and animal movement. The conclusions highlighted the collaborative efforts of ReMeSa member countries to protect against emerging threats and improve animal health and welfare in the Mediterranean region. ([REMESA Scientific and Technical Office \(STOR\) - Role and relevant planned activities](#)).

Session IV: Slaughter of animals

A short session was dedicated to welfare during the slaughter of the animals. Dr Grudnik recalled provisions of Chapter 7.5 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code. The chapter describes general principles, handling practices and care of animals in lairages, restraint, stunning, and bleeding, and unacceptable practices. The document covers specific recommendations for personnel requirements, understanding animal behavior, distractions, moving and handling animals, lairage and care, restraint methods, stunning methods (mechanical, electrical, and gaseous), and bleeding. Dr Grudnik also shortly recalled available WOAHA training materials on animal welfare during slaughter. ([WOAH TAHC Chapter 7.5](#))

Thursday, 10 November 2023

Field visit

The participants visited the National School of Veterinary Medicine of Sidi Thabet, (Ecole Nationale de Médecine Vétérinaire (ENMV). Sidi Thabet. They have been provided with an overview summary of the school structure, curriculum, education process and research activities.

In addition, participants visited facilities of the National Foundation for the Improvement of the Horse Breeds, Fondation nationale d'amélioration de la race chevaline (FNARC) in Sidi Thabet. They learn about managing and monitoring the breeding and use of horses, donkeys and mules in Tunisia.

Conclusions of the meeting

The participants confirmed the multiregional whole journey scenario workshop was acutely useful and quite instrumental to improve multiregional collaboration and collaboration between Competent Authorities as mechanism to support implementation of the WOAHA standards and ensuring health and welfare of animals during long distance international transport.

Main points highlighted through the workshop discussion.

- need for strengthening communication and collaboration between Competent Authorities in the transport of live animals especially exchange of information before, during and after a journey.
- importance of defining responsibilities (especially between departure port and destination)
- importance of appropriate journey planning and preparation before animals' departure
- importance of emergency procedures including process of verification, updates, and revisions
- need to further develop procedures in the event of refusal to allow the completion of the journey.

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- need for further networking events (also online) to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences between Competent Authorities,
 - need establishing common format document (network documents, check list, reporting templates)
 - create formalized network/system for communication between the different Competent authorities at entry and exit points.

The participants of the workshop called for further activities supporting the implementation of WOA standards on animal transport aiming at strengthening the collaboration between Competent Authorities and inter-regional cooperation and sharing the experience (workshops, trainings, development of IT tools, guidance documents and checklist, harmonization of the exchanges of information).

Next steps

Following the conclusions of the Multiregional Whole Journey Scenario Workshop series, further actions are proposed to ensure sustained progress and address the identified WOA members' needs.

- Disseminate outcomes of the WJS meeting.
- Organize multiregional WJS workshop(s) and online event(s) to facilitate strengthening communication and collaboration, sharing of knowledge and experiences between Competent Authorities.
- Explore an opportunity to facilitate establishing common format documents (network documents, checklist, reporting templates).
- Explore opportunities to create a formalized network/system for communication between the different Competent authorities at entry and exit points.