

Country report on animal welfare during long distance transport by land and sea

TÜRKİYE

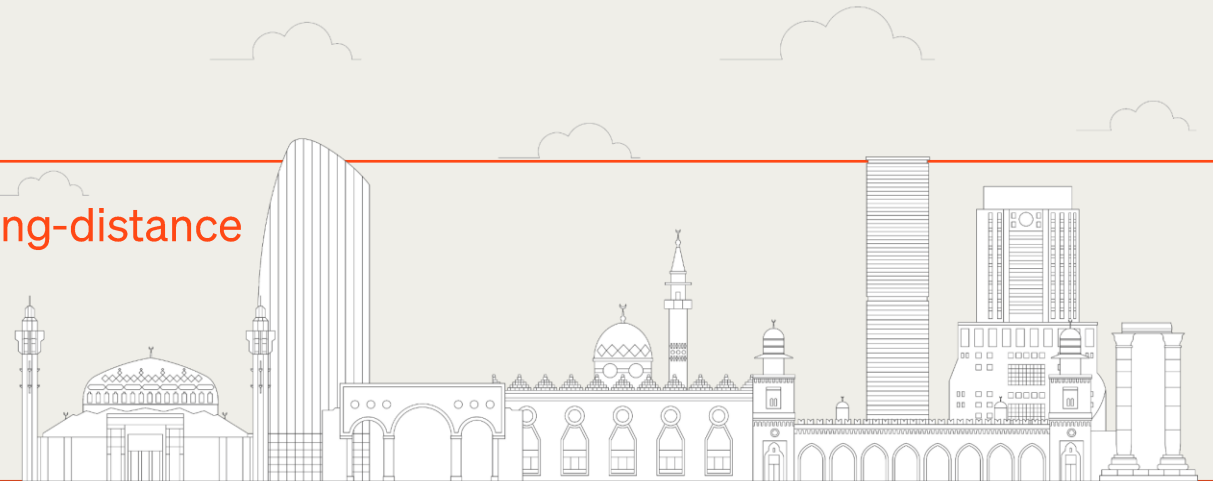
Speaker(s) name

Mustafa BİLÇEN

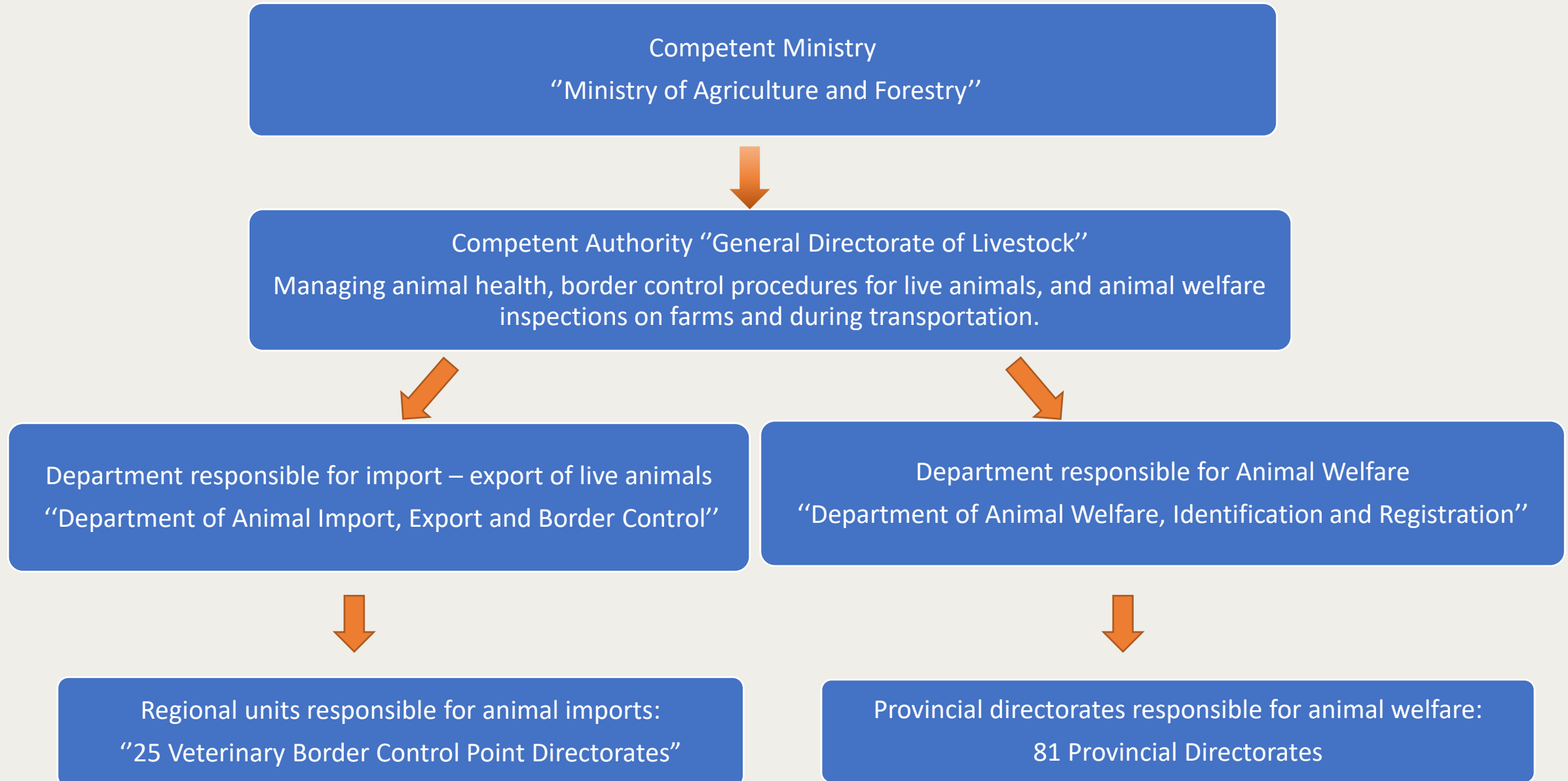
Cüneyt Cem GÜRKAN

Multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario workshop on long-distance transport by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa

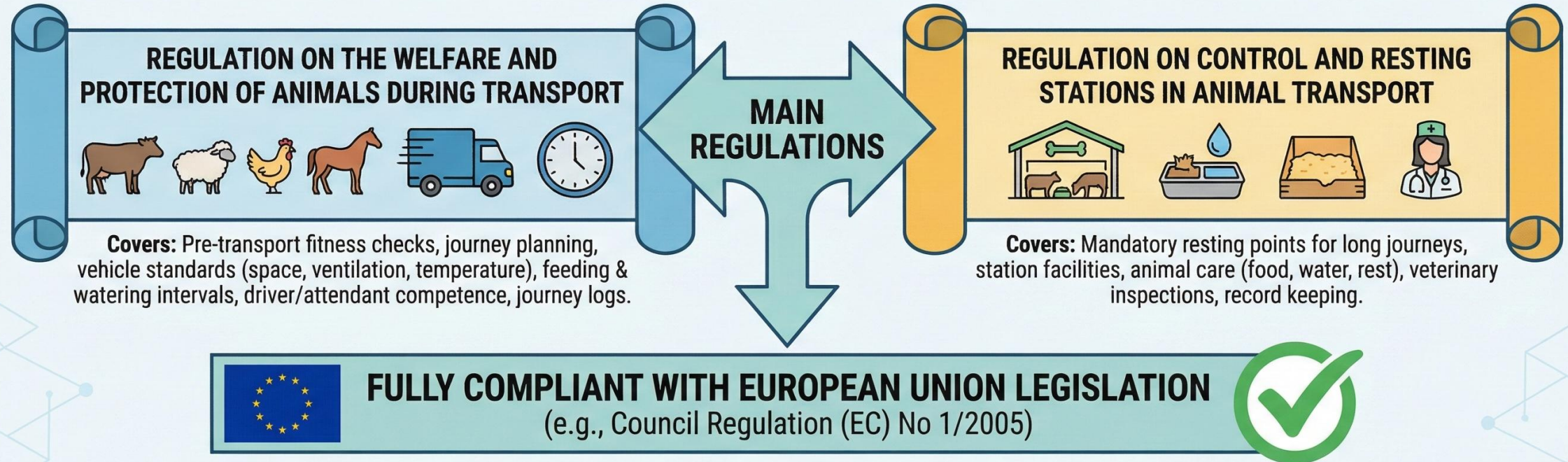
13- 15 January 2026, Amman, Jordan



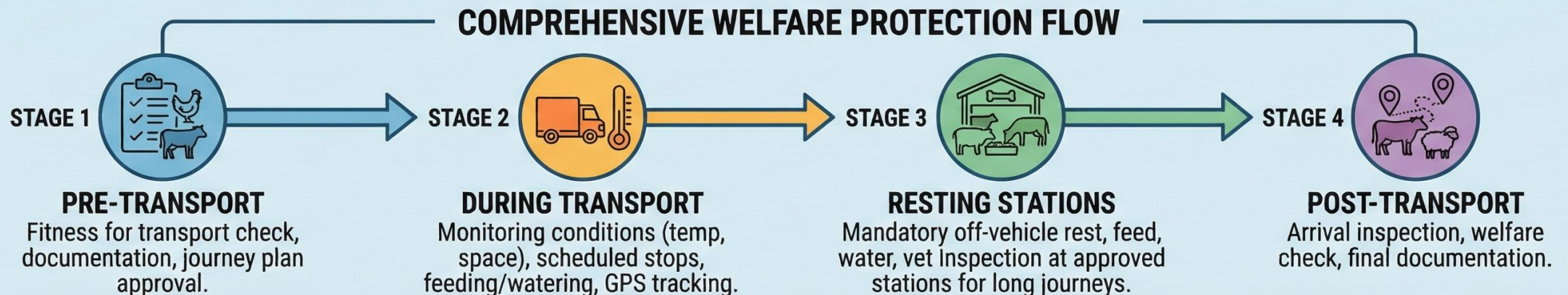
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TURKEY'S ANIMAL TRANSPORT WELFARE REGULATIONS & EU COMPLIANCE



Aligns with EU standards for animal welfare during transport, including journey times, resting periods, and vehicle requirements.



Examinations of Animals Before, During and After Transport

Mandatory monitoring of animal welfare status at every stage of transportation.

BEFORE THE JOURNEY



Suitability & Documentation Check

- Animals checked for transport suitability at departure by official veterinarians.
- For long journeys, verification of:
 - Carrier authorization certificates
 - Driver competence certificates
 - Vehicle approval certificates

DURING THE JOURNEY



Regular Monitoring & Resting

- Welfare status regularly checked during transport.
- For journeys >8 hours:
 - Stop at control & resting stations.
 - Examined by official veterinarians.
 - Feed and water needs are met.

AFTER THE JOURNEY



Arrival Inspection & Action

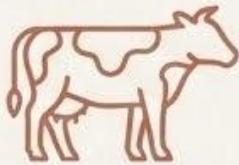
- At arrival (e.g., slaughterhouse/establishment):
 - Check general health status.
 - Check for signs of mistreatment.
- If deficiency detected: Official veterinarian takes necessary measures.



Definition of the Animal's “Fitness to Travel”

The sources prohibit transporting animals that are not fit to travel.

General Condition



Animals must be in a condition in which they will not be injured or suffer unnecessary pain.

Situations Considered Not Fit



- Animals that cannot move by themselves without pain or cannot walk without assistance.



- Those with a serious open wound or organ prolapse.



- Animals that have passed 90% of the pregnancy period or animals within the first week after giving birth.



- Newborns whose umbilical cord has not fully healed.



- Except for distances shorter than 100 km; calves younger than 10 days, lambs younger than one week, and piglets younger than three weeks.

Exceptions

Permission may be granted only if the illness/injury is mild and transport will not cause additional pain, or if transport is carried out under veterinary supervision for treatment/diagnostic purposes.



Standards for Facilities, Containers and Transport Vehicles

The sources set technical standards for transport vehicles and facilities as follows:



Transport Vehicles and Containers

- Must be designed to prevent animals from escaping, falling and being injured.
- Floors must be covered with non-slip material and minimize leakage of urine and feces.
- Adequate ventilation and appropriate space (square meter/height) according to each animal's species must be provided.
- Vehicles for long journeys must have light-colored and insulated roofs, as well as temperature monitoring and warning systems.
- Containers must bear signs indicating the presence of live animals and arrows showing the top side.



Resting Stations

- Must have appropriate equipment for safely unloading and loading animals such as ramps, bridges and piers (with non-slip floors and protective barriers).
- Must have separate quarantine compartments for sick or injured animals.
- Stations must provide sufficient lighting, ventilation, drainage and cleaning equipment.



Certification and Record Keeping for Animal Transport

AUTHORIZATION & COMPETENCE

It is mandatory for each element involved in the transport operation to be authorized with specific documents:



CARRIERS: Carriers must obtain a "Carrier Authorization Certificate" from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Separate certificates for journeys <8h (Type 1) and >8h (Type 2).



DRIVERS & ATTENDANTS: Must receive training (behavior, physiology, emergency care) and hold a "Competence Certificate".



TRANSPORT VEHICLES: Mandatory "Vehicle Approval Certificate" for long-journey road vehicles and sea vessels >10 nautical miles. Valid for 5 years.

DOCUMENTS DURING THE JOURNEY

It is a legal requirement to keep the following documents in the vehicle during transport:



ORIGIN & DECLARATION: A document showing the origin of the animals, a transport declaration, or a veterinary health report.



JOURNEY DETAILS: Documents indicating place of departure, date, time, estimated duration, and destination.



JOURNEY LOG (LONG JOURNEYS): For planning, controlling, and reporting the journey.

RECORD-KEEPING OBLIGATIONS

Records are of critical importance for traceability and inspection of animal welfare:



3 YEARS
RETENTION

JOURNEY LOG: Includes planning, departure, destination, carrier declaration, and non-compliance report. Retain for at least 3 years.



3 YEARS
RETENTION

GPS RECORDS (LONG JOURNEYS): Carriers must use a GPS system and retain the data for 3 years for inspections.

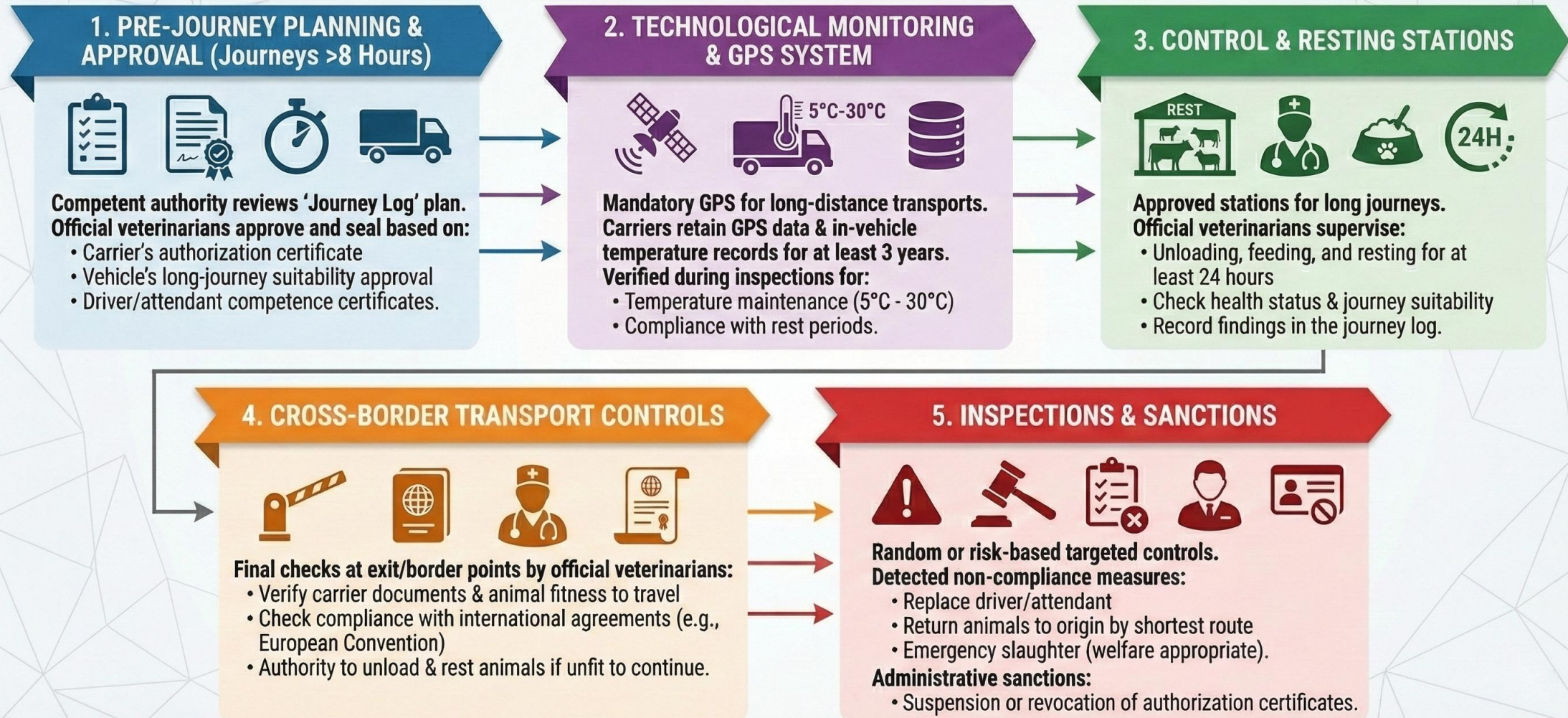


3 YEARS
RETENTION

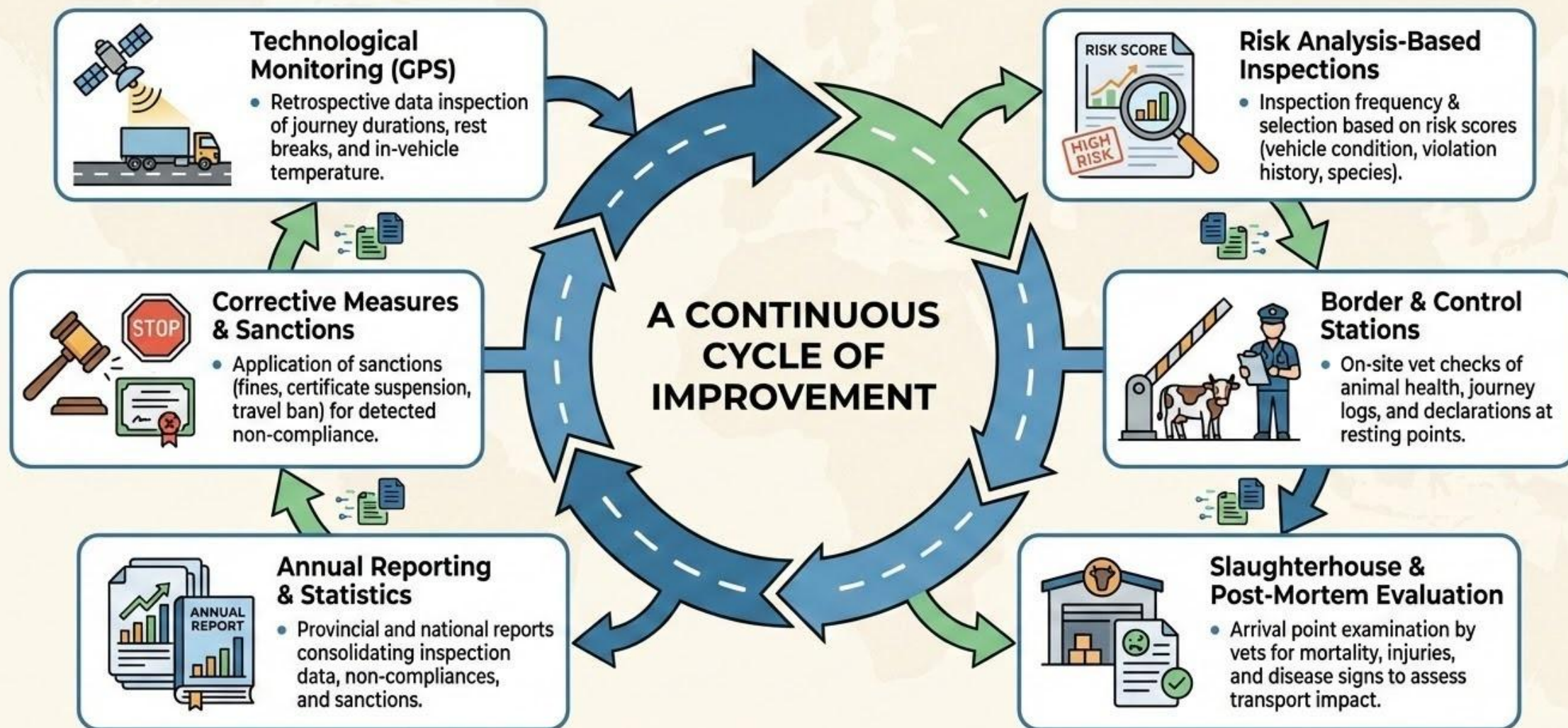
CONTROL & RESTING STATIONS: Managers must record vehicle entry-exit times, veterinary information, and any deaths/injuries. Retain for 3 years.

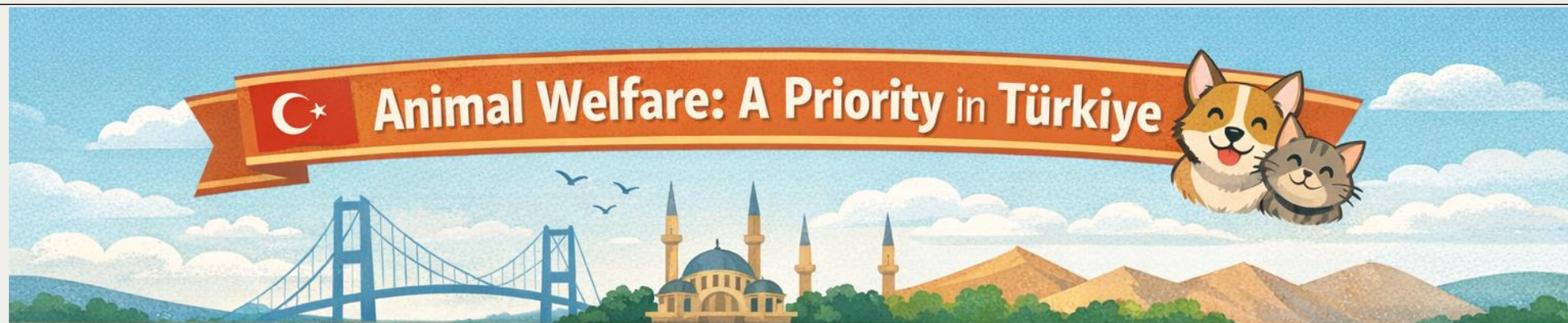
Implementation of the standards

The competent authority's management processes



MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING & EVALUATING ANIMAL TRANSPORT STANDARDS





Türkiye closely follows global developments in the field of animal welfare and takes swift action to adapt to new advancements.



Our legislative framework regarding control and rest stations is fully in place.



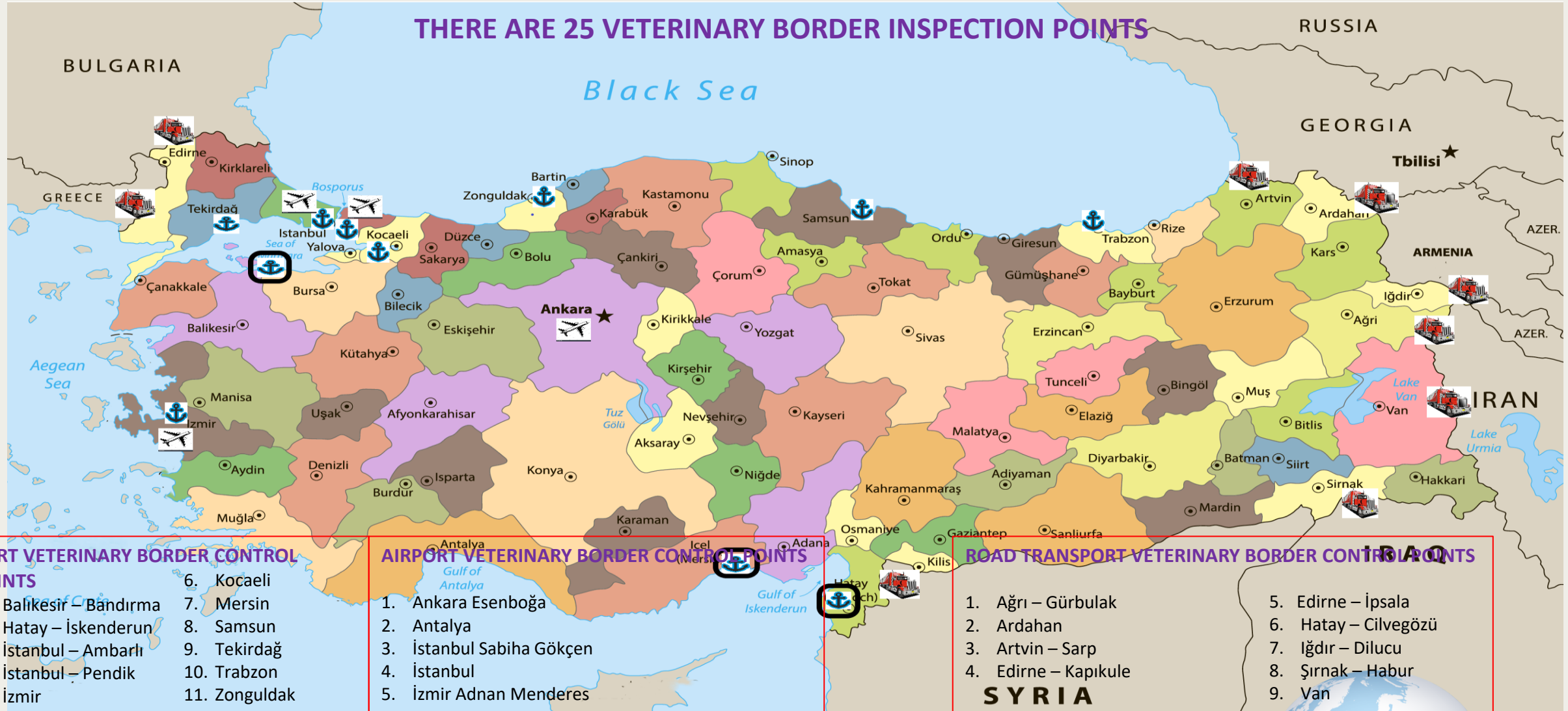
However, these provisions cannot yet be implemented, as the establishment of our control and rest stations has not been completed.



Installation efforts are ongoing.



Overview of country livestock transport and trade



- Our country's import of bovine animals for fattening, slaughter, and breeding has been realized mainly from European Union countries, Australia and South America.
- Due to recent outbreaks of Bluetongue, Foot and Mouth Disease and Sheep and Goat Pox in EU countries, imports from these countries have been suspended.
- Bovine animals were mainly imported from Brazil and Uruguay during the last 3 years.

YEAR	Cattle
2023	607.000
2024	450.000
2025	447.000



- *In our import operations, numerous animal welfare violations have been detected in animals and transport vehicles sent to our country from both EU countries and South American countries.*
- *From time to time shipments containing following animals have been sent by the exporting country to our country*
 - *Not selected by our official veterinarians in the exporting country,*
 - *Without ear tag,*
 - *Not complying with veterinary health certificate requirements,*
 - *Detected not compliant during physical, document or identity checks*
- *In such cases, information is urgently provided via email to the authorized service of the exporting country, WOAHA representatives, and certain non-governmental organizations.*
- *However, instead of taking necessary actions all our trading partners only came up with a solution that Türkiye should immediately take the animals so as not to violate animal welfare...*



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- *Due to our sensitive approach to animal welfare, and specifically to prevent harm to animals, certain shipments of this type have been accepted into our country through alternative solutions, despite being unsuitable.*
 - *Unfortunately, exporting countries have repeated the same mistakes, assuming that whatever they send to Türkiye will be accepted.*
 - *When animals that do not meet import requirements are sent to our country, all EU country authorities provide the following responses;*
 - *It was a minor mistake.*
 - *The animals are actually healthy.*
 - *Emergency slaughter should not be performed; animals are valuable.*
 - *Animal welfare is very important.*
 - *From now on, attention will be paid to such errors.*
 - *An investigation will be conducted into the official personnel who approved the shipment.*
 - *Although*
 - *Animals have entered just 300 meters inside our country's official borders,*
 - *Still present in the customs area,*
 - *Still held under the control of veterinarians at the Veterinary Border Control Point Directorate*
 - *Still not unloaded from the transport vehicle in some cases*
- ❖ **We are informed that these shipments cannot be returned or sent back under any circumstances.**

Thank you

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