

Czesław Siekierski

Member of the European Parliament
Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Strasbourg, December 11, 2018

Vytėnis Andriukaitis
Commissioner
Health and Food Safety

Dear Commissioner,

I am addressing you in connection with the alarming signals that I receive from veterinary doctors coming from various Member States, who are concerned with the contents of draft delegated and implementing acts to the *Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) No. 2017/625 dated 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products.*

Veterinary doctors are convinced that the detailed arrangements for official control proposed by the European Commission are weaker than those already in force and may ultimately result in a the lowering of food safety standards, to the detriment of consumer health in the EU. In addition, it is argued that solutions proposed by the Commission that liberalize existing standards may result in a failure to meet the requirements of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in the process of controlling the production of EU food, which in turn may lead to problems in the export of our products.

The veterinarian's particular concern is with the proposal to allow post-mortem examinations to be done by veterinary students, as official veterinarians, or as official supporting staff. Referring to the definition of OIE, veterinarians take the position that this is an unacceptable move, contrary to international regulations in this area. In their opinion, assigning veterinarians' activities to individuals without proper education and full professional knowledge will result in lowering food safety, and thus will have a negative impact on the level of public health.

Yet another element that veterinarians have concerns about is the proposed abandonment of the post-mortem examination with the performance of a tactile examination and incisions. The medical community points out that such examination is necessary for some diseases, such as nematodes in the lungs or foot-and-mouth disease, in which case detection of the disease is not possible without appropriate incisions and that the benefits of maintaining this practice outweigh the risks of cross-infection referred to by the Commission. An important argument for maintaining this type of research is also the fact that they are required by a number of countries that are important recipients of EU exports, including the United States, Canada, Egypt and Israel.

Finally, I would like to express hope that, within the dialogue the Commission is conducting with the veterinary community, it will be possible to find compromise solutions that will guarantee the continued smooth functioning of the EU official control system, respecting public health requirements, while maintaining the trust of our trading partners.

Yours sincerely,

Czesław Siekierski



Member of the European Parliament

Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development