

24/10/2017
Brussels, Belgium
Press Release

Animal welfare: new EU Commission initiative. BREXIT: already substantial losses and great uncertainties.

On Friday 20th October 2017, the 66th European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (UECBV) AGM took place in Bucharest, Romania, a business-friendly country where the improvements in primary production are more and more evident in terms of technology and also in volume thanks to its joining the EU in 2007.

Civil Society expectations and BREXIT were the hot topics of the event.

“We are in front of tremendous changes in the years to come”, said Albert Hortmann-Scholten, Senior Economist at the Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture, in particular regarding animal welfare, environmental constraints, competitiveness and consumer behaviour.

Abel Mariné Font, emeritus professor of Nutrition and Food Science with University of Barcelona, highlighted the trend in dietary habit changes. Consumers are more and more driven by emotion, while meat is an irreplaceable element in the diet, due to the notable presence of vitamin B12, Zinc, iron and OMEGA 3.

Improvement of animal welfare does not require new legislative initiatives, but more effort in the robust enforcement of existing standards.

EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, in the framework of a more demanding society, stressed the importance to ensure better implementation of the existing legislation and full accomplishment of previous commitments.

The recently created EU Platform for animal welfare is a good example of smart cooperation involving the private sector, the competent authorities, the academic world and NGOs.

A non-legislative approach does not mean non-action. On the contrary! The EU Commissioner confirmed the leading role of his institution in the field of animal welfare in announcing the setting-up of a sub-group on animal welfare during transport.

UECBV committed to continuing to be pro-active and supported the goal for better enforcement of standards through non-legislative initiatives in the field of animal welfare, but also in others, such as meat hygiene.

UECBV demonstrated that commitment by submitting a guidance document on hygiene in the meat industry to the EU Commissioner. The document aims at creating a complementary practical tool to prevent contamination of red meat. It is another example of an efficient public/private partnership.

It is a three years' work. It was available for public consultation from June to September 2017. It will now be examined by the EU standing committee (SCoPAFF).

EU Commissioner Andriukaitis warmly welcomed the sector's initiative for better enforcement (photo in the next page).

Finally, on BREXIT, Philippe Borremans, UECBV President, urged the negotiators to decide soon on transitional arrangements protecting businesses. While Heads of State and Chiefs of Government are assessing the progress of the Brexit procedure, the business is facing great uncertainty. Last year, the EU food industry delivering to the UK already had significant losses (higher than €500 million) due to the Sterling impact. That affects many Member States.

Soon, UECBV will release a report on the impact of a cliff edge scenario for the European meat sector. The report will demonstrate that now is the time for constructive decision making by negotiators if the EU wants to avoid a much more severe crisis than the one provoked by the Russian political embargo on EU agricultural goods.



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UECBV is the European Livestock and Meat Trades Union. **UECBV** is an EU association representing in total, some 20,000 firms of all sizes and over 230,000 jobs through its national member federations. The vast majority of these enterprises are small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

UECBV's core objective is to achieve an optimum business climate for the livestock and meat industry across the European Union and to strengthen the competitiveness of the industry as a whole. To achieve this goal, **UECBV represents and defends the meat sector vis-à-vis the European Institutions, promotes EU trade and international trade, deepens the internal market and fights against competition distortions.**