



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

Travelling with pets: Commission acts to protect Member States from tapeworm

Brussels, 14 July 2011 – The Commission today adopted a regulation permitting, as of January 1, 2012, a pre-movement treatment for dogs travelling to listed Member States claiming echinococcus-free status.

Finland, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Malta are the Member States currently on the list.

To be on the list, these Member States are obliged to introduce surveillance programmes and report the results to the Commission once a year. Positive findings need to be transmitted to the Commission and the other Member States immediately.

Before travel to one of the four Member States, a dog needs to receive a specific treatment administered by a vet. The details of the treatment should then be introduced by the vet in the pet's passport and the owner can travel with his pet from 24 hours to five days (120 hours) after treatment.

The regulation harmonises treatment requirements and travel times following treatment for the listed Member States facilitating pet owners' travel thereby.

What is *Echinococcus*

Echinococcus multilocularis is a tapeworm.

The typical transmission cycle of the parasite in Europe involves wild carnivores, such as foxes, as definitive hosts and several species of mammals, notably small rodents, as intermediate hosts. The rodents become infected by ingesting *echinococcus* eggs that are disseminated through foxes' or dogs' faeces.

Dogs can catch the worm by eating infected rodents. They may then serve as a source of infection for humans and a source of contamination of the environment. The human infection is called alveolar echinococcosis. It is a rare zoonotic disease and is considered as one of the most severe human parasitic diseases in non-tropical areas.

While the *Echinococcus multilocularis* infection in animals occurs in the northern hemisphere, including the central and northern parts of Europe, it has never been recorded in certain areas of the European Union.

Background

According to the rules laid down in [Regulation \(EC\) No 998/2003](#) (known as 'the Pet Regulation'), pet dogs, cats and ferrets travelling with their owner for non-commercial movements to another Member State must be accompanied by a passport, or when imported from a third country by a certificate, providing proof of a valid anti-rabies vaccination. The regulation also grants a transitional period (to expire on December 31, 2011) to **Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom** making the entry of pet animals into their territory subject to compliance with certain additional requirements in relation to rabies, echinococcosis or ticks.

Sweden is not on the list of Member States claiming echinococcus-free status because it reported its first *echinococcus* cases in wild carnivores in January 2011.

The Commission's action today is based on the advice of the **European Food Safety Authority**. EFSA considered that the risk of the introduction of *Echinococcus multilocularis* into parasite-free areas through the movement of infected dogs is greater than negligible. That risk, EFSA concluded, could be mitigated if dogs from endemic areas were to be treated prior to entry into echinococcus-free areas.

Using its delegated powers conferred by Article 290 of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Commission today adopted the measures mentioned above. They will now be transmitted for scrutiny by the European Parliament and the Council – a procedure that will last about four months. If neither Institution opposes, the delegated regulation will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union and will enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication.

Using the same powers, the Commission today also adopted another delegated regulation amending the technical requirements for the anti-rabies vaccination set out in Regulation (EC) No 998/2003. The new rule clarifies that the date of vaccination must not precede the date of microchipping or tattooing indicated in the passport or the accompanying health certificate (in case of movement from a third country).

For more information please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/index_en.htm

[MEMO/09/277](#)

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