C/2025/3123

6.6.2025

COMMISSION DECISION

of 5 June 2025

amending Decision 2017/C 31/12 establishing the Commission Expert Group 'Platform on Animal Welfare'

(Text with EEA relevance)

(C/2025/3123)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Whereas:

(1) Commission Decision 2017/C 31/12 ([1]) established an expert group named 'Platform on Animal Welfare' ('the Platform'). The main tasks of the Platform are to assist the Commission with the development and exchange of actions contributing to the implementation of Union animal welfare legislation and the understanding of Union legislation and international standards on animal welfare, to facilitate the development and use of voluntary commitments on animal welfare, to encourage dialogue on Union matters related to animal welfare, and to promote exchanges of scientific and technical knowledge, innovations, and good animal welfare practices.

(2) The period of application of Decision 2017/C 31/12 was initially set until 31 December 2019, and was extended first until 30 June 2021 by Commission Decision 2019/C 405/05 ([2]), and then prolonged until 30 June 2025 by Commission Decision 2021/C 185/04 ([3]).

(3) The Platform has become a widely recognised forum for keeping an open dialogue on animal welfare and sharing good practices aimed at improving animal welfare. While the Platform originally focused on assisting the Commission with the implementation of Union animal welfare legislation, among other tasks, the recent and future development of new and updated Union legislation on animal welfare means there is a need to collect the Platform's input and views, this being one of several lines of consultations by the Commission in accordance with Better Regulation principles.

(4) Furthermore, in the context of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([4]), the Platform can assist the Commission with the development of guidance documents, or the preparation of non-legislative acts, by providing input on technical and scientific issues as well as practical experience in this area.

([1]) Commission Decision of 24 January 2017 establishing the Commission Expert Group 'Platform on Animal Welfare' (OJ C 31, 31.1.2017, p. 61).

([2]) Commission Decision of 29 November 2019 amending Decision 2017/C 31/12 establishing the Commission Expert Group 'Platform on Animal Welfare' (OJ C 405, 2.12.2019, p. 5).

([3]) Commission Decision of 7 May 2021 amending Decision 2017/C 31/12 establishing the Commission Expert Group 'Platform on Animal Welfare' (OJ C 185, 12.5.2021, p. 7).

([4]) Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 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, amending Regulations (EC) No 999/2001, (EC) No 396/2005, (EC) No 1069/2009, (EC) No 1107/2009, (EU) No 1151/2012, (EU) No 652/2014, (EU) 2016/429 and (EU) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulations (EC) No 1/2005 and (EC) No 1099/2009 and Council Directives 98/58/EC, 1999/74/EC, 2007/43/EC, 2008/119/EC and 2008/120/EC, and repealing Regulations (EC) No 854/2004 and (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Directives 89/608/EEC, 89/662/EEC, 90/425/EEC, 91/496/EEC, 96/23/EC, 96/93/EC and 97/78/EC and Council Decision 92/438/EEC (Official Controls Regulation) (OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/625/oj).

(5) Following the adoption by the Commission of the proposal for a Regulation on the welfare of dogs and cats ([5]) and their traceability, the Platform should broaden its membership by including experts in the area of the welfare of dogs and cats. For this reason, the number of members of the Platform should be increased by three members representing general business and professional organisations having activities at Union level, concerning animals or animal products, and products intended for animals, with specific competence in the sector of breeding and trading of dogs and cats and two members representing organisations from civil society having activities at Union level in relation to animal welfare, specifically competent in the area of the welfare of dogs and cats. The selection of these new members should be carried out via a public call for applications, to be published on the Register of Commission expert groups ('the Register of expert groups') and on dedicated websites.

(6) Decision 2017/C 31/12 does not specify whether third countries may be observers. It should be clarified that the competent authorities of third countries may be granted observer status in compliance with Commission Decision (2016)3301 ([6]). Furthermore, given the relevance of their technical expertise for the tasks of the Platform to promote the exchange of experiences and good practices, scientific knowledge and innovation related to animal welfare in the Union, the EU Reference Centres for Animal Welfare designated in accordance with Article 95(1) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 should participate in the Platform as observers for their respective designation period. The number of observers should, therefore, be increased to a maximum of 20 observers.

(7) It is also appropriate that the period of application of Decision 2017/C 31/12 be extended by five years until 30 June 2030.

(8) Decision 2017/C 31/12 should therefore be amended accordingly,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

Decision 2017/C 31/12 is amended as follows:

1. in Article 4, paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

   '1. The Platform shall be composed of not more than 85 members.';

2. in Article 5, paragraph 5 is replaced by the following:

   '5. Members shall be appointed until 30 June 2030. They shall remain in office until the end of their term of office. Their term of office may be renewed.';

3. in Article 7, paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

   '2. In principle, the Platform shall meet at least twice a year either at the premises of the Commission, or online, or in hybrid format, and whenever the Commission considers that a meeting is necessary.';

4. in Article 10, paragraphs 1 and 2 are replaced by the following:

   '1. Individuals, organisations, public entities and the competent authorities of third countries may be granted observer status, in compliance with Commission Decision (2016)3301, either by direct invitation or as a result of a call for applications.

   2. Organisations, public entities and the competent authorities of third countries appointed as observers shall nominate their representatives.';

([5]) Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability (COM(2023) 769 final).

([6]) Commission Decision C(2016) 3301 of 30.5.2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups (https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/commission-decision-c2016-3301-final_en).

5. in Article 10, paragraph 4 is replaced by the following:

'4. The Platform shall not have more than 20 observers.';

6. Article 16 is replaced by the following:

'*Article 16*

Applicability

This Decision shall apply until 30 June 2030.'.

Done at Brussels, 5 June 2025.

For the Commission
Olivér VÁRHELYI
Member of the Commission