



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR TRADE
Sustainable Development Economic Partnership Agreements - African, Caribbean and Pacific; Agri-food and Fisheries
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY
Crisis management in food, animals and plants
The Directors

Limited
Ref. Ares(2020)1749411 - 25/03/2020

Brussels 24 March 2020
Trade.dga1.d.3/HS/is(2020)1979068

Subject: Export certificates for animals, plants and their products

Excellency,

We would like to refer you to the letter in Annex, which the European Commission recently sent to all trading partners to inform them that electronic export certificates and scanned copies would be accepted for imports into the European Union, waiving the requirement to present original paper certificates as a temporary working solution in the context of COVID-19.

EU exporters of animals, plants and their products have likewise experienced difficulties in presenting original paper certificates issued by EU competent authorities to your border inspection posts. This is due to the serious restrictions applied to airplane transport and affecting the courier services used to deliver those certificates, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We would therefore like to ask you to adopt reciprocal measures to ensure that consignments originating in the EU will be accepted on the basis of scanned copies of the original paper certificates whenever it is not possible to present the original paper certificate and provided that the original form follows at a later stage. If your country is a user of the TRACES platform, the scanned copies could be replaced by the EU harmonised export certificates issued and transmitted through TRACES. We would also like to ask your authorities to inform all EU Member States, the EU Delegation in your country and the European Commission (contact: trade-SPS@ec.europa.eu) as to the steps that exporters need to take in order to benefit from such a trade facilitating measure with regard to certification.

I look forward to your swift follow-up on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

[E-signed]

Ewa SYNOWIEC

[E-signed]

Bernard VAN GOETHEM

Enclosure: European Commission letter on export certificates due to COVID-19 dated 20 March 2020.

To trading partners of the EU

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË - Tel. +32 22991111

Electronically signed on 24/03/2020 19:23 (UTC+01) in accordance with article 4.2 (Validity of electronic documents) of Commission Decision 2004/563

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Crisis management in food, animals and plants
The Director

Brussels
SANTE.DDG2.G/BVG

Subject: Export certificates

Your Excellency,

In the context of COVID-19, several trading partners of the European Union (EU) informed that they are facing issues to present to the EU border control posts (BCPs) the original paper certificates issued by your domestic competent authorities, where such certificates are accompanying animals, plants and their products exported to the EU by maritime transportation. This would be due to the serious restrictions applied to airplane transport and affecting the courier services used to deliver those certificates, as a consequence of the measures introduced to protect human health.

In order to facilitate international trade, I would recommend the use of the TRACES platform (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tracesnt/ecas-login>) allowing sanitary and phytosanitary certifications of animals, plants and their products exported to the EU. If your country is already using TRACES, I invite you to enter, as much as possible, all your export certificates in the system and to seek TRACES helpdesk assistance (sante-traces@ec.europa.eu) if needed. As a temporary working solution to prevent disruptions of trade, the EU BCPs will accept to perform their documentary checks based on the information available in TRACES, although the capacity to provide electronic signatures is not yet operational.

Concerning those which are not using TRACES, I recall that the original certificates should, as much as feasible, accompany the consignments in their means of transportation. In the case where it would not be possible, I will propose to the EU BCPs to accept scanned copies of original paper certificates provided the following applies:

- Scanned copies of original paper certificate are sent by electronic messages, from a mailbox belonging to your central competent authorities to the mailbox belonging to the BCP of the point of entry in the EU, available at the following DG SANTE webpages:
 - (1) For animals and animal products:
https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/vet-border-control/bip-contacts_en
 - (2) For food and feed of non-animal origin:
https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/official_controls/legislation/imports/non-animal_en

Letter to the Ambassadors of countries
exporting animals, plants and their products
to the European Union

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Office: F101 02/076 - Tel. direct line +32 229-92771

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(3) For plants and plant products:
https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/official_controls/legislation/imports/plants_en

- Original paper certificates are sent to the EU BCPs as soon as technically feasible, at a later stage, when the restrictions referred to above have been substantially reviewed or lifted.
- Your mission in Brussels nominates a contact person and transmits to our service (e-mail: sante-d2-imports@ec.europa.eu) the contact details of such person to whom our service can refer, should questions be raised by EU BCPs, as to the administrative arrangements in your country.

The working solution proposed above is only intended to cover the contingency situation linked to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

I will keep you informed when arrangements may be reviewed in the light of further evolutions of the situation.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Van Goethem
(signed electronically)

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