



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](mailto: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](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](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

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË - Tel. +32 22991111  
Office: F101 02/076 - Tel. direct line +32 229-92771

Bruno.SAIMOUR@ec.europa.eu

(3) For plants and plant products:.

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/official\\_controls/legislation/imports/plants\\_en](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](mailto: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)