



COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION 2024/266

of 17 January 2024

designating a European Union reference centre for the welfare of aquatic animals in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council

(notified under document C(2024) 209)

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to 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) ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 95(1) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EU) 2017/625 lays down rules for the performance of official controls and other official activities, including for the selection and designation of European Union reference centres for animal welfare. European Union reference centres for animal welfare support horizontal activities of the Commission and of the Member States in the area of welfare requirements for animals, which is referred to in Article 1(2), point (f), of Regulation (EU) 2017/625.
- (2) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/329 ⁽²⁾ designated a European Union reference centre for animal welfare that, according to its work programme, focuses on pigs. Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1685 ⁽³⁾ designated a European Union reference centre for animal welfare for poultry and other small farmed animals. Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/755 ⁽⁴⁾ designated a European Union reference centre for animal welfare for ruminants and equines.
- (3) In accordance with Article 95(2), point (a), of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, the Commission carried out a public selection process through a call for selection and designation of a European Union reference centre for the welfare of aquatic animals. The evaluation of the applications received was carried against the requirements and responsibilities set out in Articles 95(3) and 96 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 and against the criteria set out in the call for selection.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/625/oj>.

⁽²⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/329 of 5 March 2018 designating a European Union Reference Centre for Animal Welfare (OJ L 63, 6.3.2018, p. 13, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2018/329/oj).

⁽³⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1685 of 4 October 2019 designating a European Union Reference Centre for Animal Welfare for poultry and other small farmed animals (OJ L 258, 9.10.2019, p. 11, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2019/1685/oj).

⁽⁴⁾ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/755 of 6 May 2021 designating a European Union reference centre for animal welfare for ruminants and equines in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 163, 10.5.2021, p. 5, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2021/755/oj).

- (4) Based on the results of the evaluation, the consortium led by the University of Crete (Greece), and also composed of the Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Parasitology (Czechia) and the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain) (the 'consortium') should be designated as the European Union reference centre for the welfare of aquatic animals. The consortium will be responsible for the supporting tasks included in the European Union reference centre's annual or multiannual work programme. This work programme is to be established in accordance with the requirements of Article 16 of Regulation (EU) 2021/690 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁵⁾.
- (5) Article 95(2), point (b), of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 requires that the designation of a European Union reference centre for animal welfare is to be limited in time or reviewed regularly. Therefore, the designation of the European Union reference centre for the welfare of aquatic animals should be reviewed every 7 years from the date of application of this Decision.
- (6) The designated European Union reference centre for the welfare of aquatic animals should be given time to prepare its work programme for the next budgetary period. Therefore, this Decision should apply from 1 February 2024,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

1. The following consortium is hereby designated as the European Union reference centre for the welfare of aquatic animals responsible for supporting horizontal activities of the Commission and of the Member States in the area of welfare requirements for aquatic animals:

Consortium led by the University of Crete (Gallos University Campus, 741 00 Rethymno, GREECE) and also composed of the Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Parasitology (Branišovská 1160/31, 370 05 České Budějovice, CZECHIA) and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Edifici A – Campus UAB, 08193 Bellaterra, Cerdanyola del Vallès, SPAIN).

2. The designation referred to in paragraph 1 shall be reviewed every 7 years from the date of application of this Decision.

Article 2

This Decision shall apply from 1 February 2024.

Article 3

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels, 17 January 2024.

For the Commission
Stella KYRIAKIDES
Member of the Commission

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/690 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing a programme for the internal market, competitiveness of enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, the area of plants, animals, food and feed, and European statistics (Single Market Programme) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 99/2013, (EU) No 1287/2013, (EU) No 254/2014 and (EU) No 652/2014 (OJ L 153, 3.5.2021, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/690/oj>).