



Lithuania: experience and challenges during implementation of animal welfare rules

Ramūnas Žalys, DVM, MS, PhD
State Food and Veterinary Service
Food and Veterinary Policy Department
Animal Welfare Division
Senior Specialist

www.vmv.lt

October | 2025



Lithuania's integration into the EU

- In 1995, Lithuania signed the European (Association) Agreement, opening the path to membership
- In 1998, Lithuanian Parliament adopted the National Acquis Implementation Program, which included reforms in various areas, including animal welfare
- Official negotiations began in 2000, and Lithuania became an EU member in 2004

First steps – 1997 legislation

- The first animal welfare-related law in Lithuania was adopted in 1997, before the official accession process
- This initiative was led by NGOs, which continued to play an active role in policy formation

Europeanization and EU pressure

- Lithuania, in its pursuit of membership, experienced the so-called "adaptive pressure" - the need to adapt to EU standards
- This led to the creation of legislation, institutional restructuring, training, and inspection systems





Alignment of the legal framework with EU requirements

- The State Food and Veterinary Service (SFVS) has played an important role in harmonizing Lithuanian legislation with EU animal welfare standards. This included:
- Translating EU legislation into Lithuanian
- Developing national legislation in line with EU directives
- Implementing it in practice in the veterinary and animal protection fields

Alignment of the legal framework with EU requirements

Early Translation Challenges

Translators worked without modern tools, using paper dictionaries and manual methods for complex legal texts

Legal and Language Skills

Effective translation required both strong language ability and understanding of legal norms and contexts

Process Improvement Over Time

Despite initial difficulties, the translation team gained experience leading to increased efficiency over time

EU requirements

- Standards for keeping farm animals
- Transport conditions (watering, feeding, journey times)
- Slaughter practices (stunning)
- Protection of wild animals, control of zoos
- Ratification of the Convention for the Protection of Domestic Animals (2004)

Challenges on farms

- Old farms did not comply with EU directives
- Major modernization was needed
- Although the requirements were transposed, implementation lacked public understanding

Transport and slaughterhouse problems

- There was a lack of suitable vehicles
- Conditions for long journeys were not ensured
- Urgent modernization of slaughterhouses in accordance with EU norms



Institutional aspect

- State Food and Veterinary Service (SFVS) – main implementer
- 2002 Strategy – preparation of legal acts in accordance with the Acquis
- 2005 – “animal health and welfare” is established in the mission
- 2007 – international accreditation in control



The role of NGOs

- Initiated the first animal welfare legislation
- Pressured politicians when political will was lacking
- Raised public issues (e.g. the issue of homeless animals).

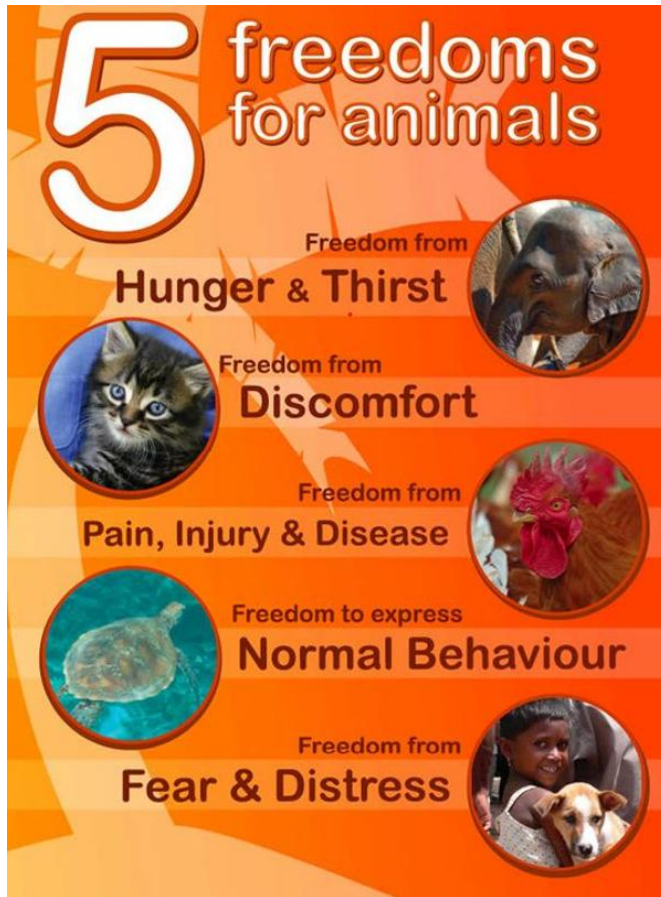
Legal difficulties

- Requirements were transposed, but often remained "dead letters"
- Lack of control mechanisms and inspectors
- Lack of public awareness

Positive changes

- The institutional framework for animal welfare has been strengthened
- Lithuania has become part of the EU's animal welfare policy
- Pressure from NGOs and society has been increasing





Conclusion

- EU accession is a major challenge, but also a boost to modernization
- The process was hampered by a lack of awareness and political will
- The issue of animal welfare has become of great importance in Lithuanian politics



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