



18.12.2015

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition no 1701/2014 by Roy Smith (British) on halting the veterinary use of diclofenac in EU countries

1. Summary of petition

Diclofenac is a medicine whose use the petitioner would like to see banned as a veterinary medicine. The use of the medicine has caused the virtual extinction of vultures on the Indian subcontinent and has caused serious environmental and health problems. There is now evidence that the medicine can also affect birds of prey. The use of diclofenac to treat animal diseases should be banned as a precaution.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 3 June 2015. Information requested from Commission under Rule 216(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 18 December 2015

Diclofenac is authorised for veterinary use since 1993 in Italy for cattle, pigs, and horses not intended for human consumption. It has been authorised since then in a few other Member States in 2009 and 2013 (Spain) without any evidence of vulture poisoning.

The authorisation of a generic product in Spain in 2013 triggered reactions from wildlife conservation NGOs, the general public and politicians who initiated a wide campaign to ban this substance from its use as veterinary medicine.

It should be stressed that the situation in the EU varies greatly between Member States as regards vulture population (number of animals varies between Member States from around 100 birds up to around 30 000, there are also many Member States that do not have any vultures at all) and as regard the veterinary use of diclofenac (from non-existent or marginal to more significant).