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ON THE WELFARE  
& CONSERVATION  
OF ANIMALS**

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Established 1983

Mrs Androulla Vassiliou  
Commissioner for Health  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi, 200  
1049 Brussels

4th February 2009

Ref. 911 AE/1

Dear Commissioner Vassiliou,

## **Urgently needed improvements for slaughter**

On 14 January 2009, the EP Animal Welfare Intergroup has held a session on the Commission proposal for a Council Regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing with presentations by Janusz Wojciechowski MEP, the AGRI-rapporteur, Jens Holm MEP, the ENVI draftsman and Michel Courat, an expert for farm animal protection. The Commission proposal was welcomed by all but in the debate three issues were highlighted where improvements are still urgently needed.

On behalf of the Intergroup I therefore call on the Commission when discussing with the Council to suggest the introduction of changes for the following issues that raise major animal welfare concerns:

### **Water electrical baths associated with the use of live shackling must be phased out within 5 to 10 years, for the following reasons:**

- The current proposal, in its recital 6, is going against EFSA's conclusions concerning the detrimental effects of this method on animal welfare.
- Economically viable alternatives already exist (e.g. CAS- Controlled Atmosphere Stunning) for large and medium size abattoirs
- Improvements of Annex II point 5 are to be implemented only in small slaughterhouses where phasing out could be economically difficult.
- The use of water electrical baths could be considered to be in contravention with IPPC Dir. 96/61 on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control and the notion of Best Available Technique (BAT).

### **If a derogation for slaughter without stunning is granted according to article 4.2, the operator must comply with all the following conditions, that could be listed in a separate Annex:**

- Immediate post-cut-stunning (within 5 seconds)
- Presence of an Official Veterinarian to check conditions of slaughter
- Strict monitoring by an Animal Welfare Officer
- Time between start of bleeding and start of any other dressing procedure to be sufficient (20 seconds for sheep, 120 seconds for cattle)
- Commitment from the manager to apply ritual slaughter practices only in accordance with the effective market demand for halal or kosher meat.
- If meat has to be proposed to non-religious customers, clear information on conditions of slaughter has to be communicated to the customers (labels or other methods)
- A Specific Certificate of Competence has to be required from all staff involved in the handling or killing of animals without prior stunning.

### **The slaughter of fish:**

The publication of seven EFSA reports on the stunning and killing of different farmed fish species is due in May 2009. The Animal Welfare Intergroup would like a commitment from the Commission to adopt a timetable for the rapid introduction of standards for stunning and killing farmed fish. With the rapid increase of fish farming, these standards are urgently required. Crustaceans and cephalopods whose sentience has been demonstrated should also be covered.

We hope that the Commission will be able to fulfil these requests so that the welfare of countless animals can be improved at the most dramatic moment in their life.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Parish MEP  
President

C.c.: Janusz Wojciechowski MEP,  
Jens Holm MEP,  
Michel Courat, Eurogroup for Animals

