



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate G - Veterinary and International affairs
Animal Welfare

Brussels,
SANCO G3 DS/ap D(2011) 984831

Dear Mr Courat,

Thank you for your email of 18 August 2011, also addressed to Mr Vassallo, Member of the cabinet of Commissioner Dalli, concerning the slaughter of animals without stunning within the European Union.

In your message you refer to a press article published in Germany and Switzerland which mentions a Commission report, dated from 18 May 2011 concluding that 75% of animals slaughtered within the EU are not stunned prior to slaughter. You also asked which further steps the Commission will take after the collection of data from the Member States on this issue.

The Commission has not adopted any report on slaughter without stunning. As you know, we collected data in 2010 from the Member States on the use of the derogation from stunning. This data was communicated to you on 24/6/2011 (ares 680057) following your request to access these documents under the provisions of Regulation 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

One can conclude from the data received from Member States, that the percentage of animals slaughtered without stunning is far below the one mentioned in the article you refer to. The excessive use of the derogation from stunning seems to exist only in a few Member States, as your organisation and some of your members (GAIA and Fondation Brigitte Bardot) pointed out in a meeting with the cabinet of Commissioner Dalli in April 2011.

With regards to what further step the Commission will take, as a first step, the Commission has contacted the Member States concerned in order to establish what measures they intend to take to improve the level of compliance with EU legislation in this area.

The French authorities replied in July 2011 that they are preparing a draft decree before the end of 2011, which will oblige operators wanting to slaughter without stunning to apply for a specific derogation. This derogation will only be granted if the slaughterhouse has a mechanism in place to ensure that the number of animals slaughtered without stunning does not exceed the number of animals required to fulfil a specific order.

Mr. Michel Courat
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As a second step, the Commission plans to draft guidelines for the use of the derogation from stunning, based on the experience of Member States.

Yours sincerely,



Andrea Gavinelli