



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

General Affairs
Legal affairs

Brussels,
SANCO A2 14. 01. 2013
ARES(2013) 39315
Ms Ewa Staniak
Ul.11 Listopada 29, 28-300
Jedrezejow,
Poland

Dear Ms Staniak,

Subject: Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing.

Ref.: Your letter of 23 November 2012 (our ref ARES(2012)1512054)

In your above-mentioned letter you provide information regarding the practice of ritual slaughter of animals in Poland, in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) 1099/2009 *on the protection of animals at the time of killing*¹.

In particular, you describe that in the past Poland had not made use of the derogation provided in Directive 93/119/EC as regards the ritual slaughter of animals without prior stunning. This was because the percentage of Polish population that would prefer such meat due to religious reasons is negligible² and can be supplied through imports. Despite this, as you further state, ritual slaughter is widely used in Poland for commercial reasons so that half of Poland's meat is produced this way for export mainly to Muslim countries.

To your appreciation this is due to extended use of a regulation initiated by the Minister of Agriculture of Poland in 2004 which permits derogation from the requirement to stun animals prior to slaughter. You fear that the Polish government will apply Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 to allow slaughter without stunning also for commercial purposes. To your consideration this does not conform with EU law which permits slaughter without stunning only for religious reasons and only to meet the religious needs of the local community.

The Polish Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development has, however, informed us that a ban on slaughtering animals in slaughterhouses without stunning will apply in Poland from 1 January 2013.

¹ The legislation of the European Union is available for free in 23 official languages at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/de/index.htm>.

² You estimate 0.01% of Poland's population

This is in line with Article 26(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1099 and moreover implements a Polish Constitutional Court judgment which annulled, with effect from 31 December 2012, Article 8(2) of the Regulation of the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of 9 September 2004 *on the qualifications of professional slaughterers and the rules and methods for slaughtering and killing animals*³. The latter allowed animals to be slaughtered without stunning in the case of slaughter using particular methods prescribed by religious rites.

In view of the above your concerns appear to have become unfounded. We will therefore not further pursue the matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Demetris Vryonides', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Demetris Vryonides

³ Polish Journal of Laws No 205, item 2102, as amended