

**Question for written answer E-001683/2015**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Franz Obermayr (NI)**

Subject: Cruelty to animals for the sake of down feathers

The clothing and bedding industries make frequent use of down feathers. These come either from geese or ducks, and are produced worldwide. In recent weeks, the plucking of feathers from live birds has come to the public eye. 'Live plucking' of down and other feathers is prohibited in the EU, but goes on in many countries, and Hungary and Poland are hotbeds of the practice in the EU. Live plucking means that, three or four times in a bird's lifetime, the feathers are plucked from its live body, often causing it serious injury. Seals of quality, certifying that this has not happened, have proved questionable and inaccurate.

Can the Commission provide answers to the following questions:

1. What does the Commission know about the extent of live plucking within the EU?
2. What measures are planned to end the practice of live plucking?
3. Does the Commission plan improvements to the existing system of seals of quality for down feathers?