

**Question for written answer E-006866/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Auke Zijlstra (ENF)

Subject: Meat from ritually slaughtered animals on the internal market

According to the 7 September 2016 issue of 'Het Nieuwsblad'¹, 94% of sheep, 48% of calves and 21% of cattle at, for example, Belgian slaughterhouses are killed without stunning. It transpires that much meat is sold to consumers on the Belgian market without their being informed about this, for example by means of labelling. Freedom of religion for one group does not mean, incidentally, that another's freedom of religion can be restricted.

Council Directive 98/58/EC and Article 13 TEU require animal welfare to be respected. Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 stipulates that animals must lose consciousness and sensibility before being slaughtered. A derogation from this legislation is granted for ritual slaughter.

As more than half of the meat offered for sale on the Belgian market comes from animals that have been slaughtered without stunning, which is not commensurate with the number of believers who wish them to be slaughtered in that way, Directive 98/58/EC and Article 13 TEU are not being complied with, Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 is being circumvented and a disproportionate amount of suffering is being inflicted on animals.

1. What view does the Commission take of the fact that consumers are being compelled to respect a conviction by not being offered any choice as to whether to eat halal or kosher meat?
2. What will the Commission do to combat this cruel slaughter of animals?

¹ http://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20160907_02457207.