

**Question for written answer E-002327/2019  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**

**Subject:** Official controls in the areas of animal health, veterinary public health and food safety - situation in Portugal and other Member States

I have learned of a letter sent by a group of Portuguese veterinarians to the Commission on the dismantling of the 'structure of the competent authority in Portugal, the Directorate-General for Food and Veterinary Matters, ending its official services and exposing the agri-food sector and food safety to economic predators'.

The veterinarians are concerned about 'the difficulty that small local municipal structures (...) will face in carrying out the many complex official controls in the areas of animal health, veterinary public health and food safety', stressing that at stake are 'technical matters whose volume, importance, scientific density and health and economic consequences' make them significant. They also consider that 'the requisite national implementation of health and food safety policies that overlap with EU policies in the sector and the communication of the results of plans adopted and official controls carried out will be put at risk'. They highlight the existing risks 'with regard to zoonoses control', which could 'break down and render ineffective a service that should be undivided and responsive'. Lastly, they take the view that 'the supervisory obligations of the Portuguese State should be protected from private-sector predators'.

What view does the Commission take of this letter and of the situation in other Member States in this area?