

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001218/24
to the Commission
Gabriel Mato (PPE)
(24 April 2024)**

Subject: Best practices for fish slaughter: scientific opinions and international standards recommend using procedures that induce unconsciousness until death

Until there are other feasible methods available, ice asphyxiation will continue to be a standard practice for species like European seabass and gilthead seabream. In November 2022, in response to Written Question E-003361/2022 ⁽¹⁾, the Commission stated that it was planning to adopt proposals on the current animal welfare legislation to include provisions for the killing of certain fish species. It is important that these proposals are drawn up with the effective participation of the aquaculture sector and other stakeholders.

1. Is the Commission considering alternatives to ice asphyxiation?
2. Will the Commission include species-specific provisions for the killing of European seabass and gilthead seabream upon demonstration of good management practices and on the basis of solid scientific evidence and, if so, when?

Submitted: 24.4.2024

**Answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission
(13 June 2024)**

Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 ⁽²⁾ requires fish to be spared any avoidable pain, distress or suffering during their killing and related operations.

The scientific opinions on welfare of seabass and Seabream at slaughter adopted by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in 2009 concluded that there are indications of poor welfare when killing fish with the methods commonly used under commercial conditions (e.g., asphyxia and chilling on ice).

In the revision of the EU animal welfare legislation ⁽³⁾, the options examined include more specific requirements for the killing of the main species of farmed fish.

The Commission will consider the available scientific opinions, international applicable standards, and the ongoing assessment of the economic, social, and environmental impacts of these options.

In December 2023, the Commission adopted proposals on animal welfare during transport ⁽⁴⁾ and welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability ⁽⁵⁾.

The work to revise EU rules on the welfare at farm level, and at the time of killing and to establish new EU rules on animal welfare labelling is ongoing.

The designation, in January 2024, of the EU Reference Centre for the welfare of aquatic animals ⁽⁶⁾, whose activities cover the entire production chain, including welfare at the time of killing, is also an important step to promote scientific and technical expertise on animal welfare and develop indicators.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003361-ASW_EN.html

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32009R1099>

⁽³⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/evaluations-and-impact-assessment/revision-animal-welfare-legislation_en

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2023:770:FIN>

⁽⁵⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2023:769:FIN>

⁽⁶⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/266/oj