

**Question for written answer E-011524/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE)

Subject: Live plucking/gathering feathers from live geese

With regard to live plucking and gathering feathers from live geese, Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes states that it must be ensured that animals are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury. The EFSA published a report in 2010 concluding that the procedure could be performed without causing pain to the birds, but that painful plucking of feathers was unavoidable under currently typical conditions. It therefore recommended introducing a control system to ensure that only moulting feathers are gathered from live geese. The Recommendation of the Standing Committee of the European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes of the Council of Europe, on domestic geese, states that "feathers, including down, shall not be plucked from live birds". However, the number of cases of animal cruelty coming to light is constantly increasing (particularly in Hungary and Poland).

Could the Commission answer the following questions on this issue:

1. What is the Commission's view, in general, of the legal situation regarding live plucking? What is its assessment of the various legal instruments? Under what circumstances is it permissible to gather feathers from live geese?
2. Which EU Member States have signed the European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes? How has implementation been monitored to date? What information has been gathered regarding the procedures used and inspections?
3. What further steps has the Commission taken following the EFSA's report and its recommendation that a control system should be introduced? How does the Commission propose to ensure that European consumers are informed about how goose feathers are obtained, or have the opportunity to access such information? Are there plans for a European quality system?
4. What further steps does the Commission plan to take to ensure that the situation finally improves, particularly in Hungary and Poland?
5. What is the Commission's assessment of the initiative currently being pursued by European non-governmental organisations to ban live plucking/gathering feathers from live geese completely?