

**Question for written answer E-009501/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Jill Evans (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Plucking feathers from live birds

Several of my constituents have written to me to express their concerns surrounding the issue of plucking feathers from live birds.

Although Article 23(3) of the 1999 Council of Europe recommendation concerning domestic geese states that 'feathers, including down, shall not be plucked from live birds', it allows for the harvesting of feathers from live geese during the moulting period as it has been deemed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) that this practice causes no harm to the birds. Nevertheless, several Member States, in particular Poland and Hungary, continue to pluck feathers from live birds, even when they are not moulting. Plucking feathers from live birds outside of the moulting period causes great pain, injury and distress to the animals.

Furthermore, Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes states that Member States must ensure that 'animals are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury'.

1. What is the Commission doing to ensure that Member States comply with Directive 98/58/EC, particularly in the area of plucking feathers from birds?
2. What is the Commission's view on the continued practice by some Member States of plucking feathers from live birds outside of the moulting period?
3. Is the Commission currently taking any action with regard to Member States that do not comply with Directive 98/58/EC? If so, what action is being taken and is the Commission currently taking action regarding any Member States that pluck feathers from live birds outside of the moulting period?