

**Question for written answer E-003587/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Sergio Berlato (PPE)

Subject: Disinformation regarding ritual slaughter for meat production

Last February, a number of Italian media reports appeared in connection with an alleged decision by the Danish Government to ban the practice of ritual slaughter for the production of halal and kosher meat in response to pressure from animal rights associations. The Danish Agriculture Minister, Dan Jørgensen, was quoted as saying that animal rights came before religion. Having devoted ample space to the triumphal reactions of animal rights associations, that have always been opposed to any form of ritual slaughter they consider 'incompatible with international animal rights law', the articles went on to quote the reactions of a number of representatives of the Jewish and Islamic communities concerned, who described the measure as nothing short of 'anti-Semitism', 'blatant interference in freedom of religious belief' and 'an infringement of the rights of a minority that does not have the political power to defend itself'. The LA.I.FF (Italian Union of Migrant Workers), affiliated to the Association of Animal Breeders and Traders ('FederFauna'), has called for an investigation into the accuracy of the Italian media reports so as to establish to what extent Member States are, in response to pressure by the powerful bodies such as the animal rights lobby, able to adopt legislation at odds with Union rules guaranteeing the rights of all European citizens. It would appear, however, that the reports in question are yet again based on unreliable and biased sources and are hence inaccurate. Over the last few days, online sources have revealed that, far from banning ritual slaughter, the Danish authorities simply stipulated that animals must be stunned before or immediately after having their throats cut, so as to reconcile freedom of religious belief with animal rights. For the purposes of ritual slaughter, animals must in fact be in good health, with no signs of illness, injury or any form of physical damage, i.e. in perfect condition, before being killed instantly with single cut to the throat, using an extremely sharp knife that causes massive loss of blood.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission ascertain whether Denmark or any other EU Member State has in fact banned ritual slaughter, a measure that would appear to be at odds with the founding principles of the European Union, or whether these principles have, on the contrary, been respected?
2. Can it outline the measures it intends to take to avoid incitement to hate resulting from intentional manipulation and distortion of the facts?
3. Can the Commission state unequivocally that no international animal rights legislation has been adopted and that animals, as opposed to human beings, have only 'needs' as opposed to 'rights'?