

**Question for written answer E-004029/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Harald Vilimsky (ID)

Subject: Castration of piglets without anaesthetic in the EU

Globally, more than 600 million piglets are castrated without anaesthetic every year. More than 100 million such castrations take place in the EU alone. This involves their spermatic cord being crushed with pliers and their testicles cut off, all of which is done with no anaesthetic whatsoever during the castration or pain relief during the healing process. National animal welfare legislation lays down that no painful intervention on a vertebrate animal may be carried out without anaesthetic. Until now there had been an exemption for the castration of piglets until their seventh day of life, as it was assumed that they were less sensitive to pain than older animals. In the meantime it has been scientifically verified that piglets experience considerable pain and stress during castration.

Will the Commission review the lax Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 currently in force to ensure that the section reading 'castration (...) may be carried out without the application of anaesthesia and/or analgesia' no longer applies?