

**Question for written answer E-001763/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Ritual sacrifice - when religious exception becomes the norm

Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 requires all animals to be stunned before being killed, except in the case of religious slaughter. This is an exception that has become the norm and it now takes place in 150 of the 250 abattoirs operating in France.

Although each carcass is labelled according to its slaughter method when leaving the abattoir, that distinction disappears when it reaches the shelves. In order to reduce losses, some producers are selling meat slaughtered in accordance with cultural requirements via conventional channels.

When slitting the oesophagus and trachea of an animal that is not stunned, there is a high risk of the stomach contents spilling onto the front of the animal. Full of bacteria, the stomach is a significant source of contamination and could pose a health risk because of the presence of germs from the digestive tract.

Therefore:

1. Is the Commission aware that by granting this derogation it is creating a loophole that many producers are exploiting to maximise their income?
2. Does the Commission deny that it is putting the health of millions of Europeans at risk in the name of religious freedom?
3. Does the Commission plan to introduce compulsory labelling allowing consumers concerned about animal welfare to differentiate between the various types of slaughter methods?