

**Question for written answer E-005633/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Sarah Wiener (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Breeding problems with laying hens

In an information note from the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting of 12 and 13 December 2021¹, the Danish Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Rasmus Prehn called for a common EU approach to reduce the number of keel bone fractures in laying hens, which are considered to be the result of breeding strategies 'aiming at small hens with a low food intake and at the same time high egg production with an early start of lay and big eggs'. As the majority of laying hens in Europe come from the same breeding companies, these fractures are most likely common throughout the EU and even worldwide. A recent study by the University of Copenhagen shows an 'alarming incidence of keel bone fractures in laying hens' from all production systems – enriched cages, floor housing, free range and organic.

1. Can the Commission confirm through monitoring measures that this is an EU-wide problem?
2. To what extent does the Commission plan to involve breeding companies in the adaptation of selection methods and include breeding strategies as well as measures to promote old robust animal breeds in the revision of the relevant animal welfare legislation?
3. Is the Commission aware of this issue in laying hens?

¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14413-2021-INIT/en/pdf>