

ORAL QUESTION O-0019/00

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

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to the Commission

Subject: The effects of a British fur farming ban on the Internal Market

The United Kingdom is planning to outlaw fur farming in England and Wales. According to the proposal, the keeping of animals solely for their fur would be banned from 2003 onwards. The House of Commons introduced a Fur Farming Prohibition Bill on 25 February 1999. The bill passed its second reading on 5 March 1999. The bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 22 November 1999. Now the proposal for new legislation is being considered by the Commission.

According to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry, Elliot Morley, the Government believes it is wrong for animals to be slaughtered for their fur. He states that it is not consistent with a proper value and respect for animal life. The reasoning behind the abolition of the British fur industry is based on 'moral grounds' as 'there is no moral justification for fur farming in UK', as Elliot Morley says. According to this view it is not morally questionable to kill a cow for its leather but the killing of a mink for its pelt is condemned on moral grounds.

Has the Commission considered the impact of this planned fur ban – not only on the British fur farming industry – but also on the internal market of the European Union? Would the ban be compatible with the trade rules or might the ban, in the Commission's view, hinder directly or indirectly, actually or potentially, intra-Community trade?

What measures will the Commission take if this ban is realised? Has the Commission considered the fact that banning fur farming in Europe would just result in the industry moving outside Europe and outside the control of the authorities of the European Union and its Member States?

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Deadline for reply: 17.02.2000