

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3627/09
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to the Commission

Subject: EU art prize for animal torture show

At the EU Theatre Prize Awards in March 2009 in Poland, the work directed by Rodrigo Garcia entitled 'Scatter my Ashes over Mickey' was awarded the New Theatrical Realities Europe Prize, worth EUR 30 000. The work consists of a video back-projection showing the torture of animals. Hamsters are plunged over and over again into a water tank. The animals are not drowned, but their heart-rending cries of distress constitute an 'artistic experience'.

Under its former President, the USA was – rightly – condemned for interrogating suspected terrorists by the practice known as 'waterboarding', whereby the suspects' faces were submerged repeatedly in water. This is recognised as torture. Similarly, the repeated submersion of animals in water is also torture, which should be illegal in the first place, and should certainly not be rewarded with an EU art prize paid for by taxpayers' money, given that public opinion clearly condemns the torture of animals.

Is the Commission aware that a show based on the torture of live animals has been awarded an EU art prize? Does the Commission regard this as compatible with EU animal protection policy, and if not, what measures does it propose to take as a consequence?