

**Priority question for written answer P-002247/2022  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE)**

**Subject:** Derogation for racing pigeons in Delegated Regulation 2020/687 – Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

The consensus among the scientific community is that racing pigeons (*Columba livia*) are not particularly susceptible to infection with the bird flu virus (H5N1) and do not carry it. In the exceptional cases in which individual birds do contract bird flu, these birds are the final host for the virus and do not go on to infect other more susceptible bird species.

Pigeon racing was permitted before the entry into force of Regulation (EU) 2016/429, supplemented by Delegated Regulation 2020/687, while Directive 2005/94/EC confirmed that, based on a risk assessment, it was appropriate to allow the movement of racing pigeons to, from and within restricted zones.

However, this derogation is not included in Delegated Regulation 2020/687, repealing Council Directive 2005/94/EC, meaning that racing pigeons must be treated like any other bird species and that breeders living in restricted zones cannot participate in pigeon races. This affects the animals' wellbeing, particularly that of young pigeons. In the meantime, bird flu has become endemic in many EU countries and is present at all times of the year, including during races.

Does the Commission intend to take heed of the scientific community's view on racing pigeons' risk of being infected with and spreading the bird flu virus (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) and introduce a derogation for racing pigeons to Delegated Regulation 2020/687?