

**Question for written answer E-001798/2024**

**to the Commission**

Rule 144

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Subject: Protection of wild animals during the harvest season

During the harvest season, wild animals are often seriously injured by combine harvesters, especially by the cutting unit<sup>1</sup>. The resulting mutilation can lead to an agonising death<sup>2</sup>.

This is not only a problem of species protection or animal welfare, but also requires action from a health-policy perspective, as it can result in contamination of the crop. These risks to food and feed production must be minimised, which can be ensured by using thermal drones.

1. What long-term strategy does the Commission envisage to protect wild animals during the harvest season and thus also ensure consumer protection?
2. What concrete measures does the Commission plan to undertake to raise awareness across the EU of the problem of wild animal mutilation<sup>3</sup>, to promote measures to prevent it, to reduce regulatory barriers for technical solutions and to provide funding?
3. Does the Commission plan to recommend or mandate that Member States establish thermal drone programmes to protect wild animals?

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<sup>1</sup> Roe deer fawns have no flight reflex, their only form of protection is to crouch down motionless.

<sup>2</sup> In Germany alone, around 90 000 fawns die in this way every year.

<sup>3</sup> This particularly concerns fawns, but other wild animals are also affected.