

E-0570/09EN

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou  
on behalf of the Commission  
(2.3.2009)

Derogation from stunning is permitted in slaughterhouses under Article 5 (2) of Directive 93/119/EC<sup>1</sup> on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing. The directive does not require Member States to report on the implementation of this provision.

However, some data are available from the impact assessment that accompanies the current Commission proposal<sup>2</sup> to revise the directive. The data mainly originate from a study carried out by an external consultant mandated by the Commission<sup>3</sup>. The results of the study were published on the Commission's website in 2007.

From data collected, it appears that some Member States have no religious slaughter without stunning, because it is forbidden (Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania and possibly some Austrian Landers) or not practiced (Cyprus, Denmark).

In the other Member States, it appears that the percentage of unstunned lambs, sheep, calves and adult cattle varies considerably between Member States where data are available (see Annex sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat). Many factors may influence this situation, in particular the proportion of Muslim communities<sup>4</sup> compared to the rest of the population. The attitude of slaughterhouses' operators may also play a role, in particular if they give priority to slaughter without stunning in order to facilitate the marketing of their meat.

Since the publication of the study, the French authorities have also provided the Commission with updated data collected in 2007, where the percentage of animals ritually slaughtered is respectively 49% for sheep and goats, 13% for calves and 12% for adult cattle (total average in France 32% of animals out of 10 million animals from bovine, caprine and ovine species slaughtered in 2007).

In addition it should be noted that the Community has also funded a research project called DIALREL<sup>5</sup> which is expected to provide more data on the subject by the end of 2009.

However, the Commission would like to draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the fact that this data should be interpreted with care. Up to now, and except in the case of France where a specific study was performed for that purpose, most information on the subject is based on estimates collected from different sources. Methodologies may greatly differ between the data. Some information is also missing from certain Member States despite their sizeable Muslim communities.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 340, 31.12.1993

<sup>2</sup> COM(2008)553final.

<sup>3</sup> The study may be consulted at the following webpage :  
[http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/slaughter/background\\_of\\_proposal\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/slaughter/background_of_proposal_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> The size of the population of Jewish communities is comparatively far less important.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dialrel.eu/>