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## Eurogroup warns: Greek meat may come from animal suffering

Tourists to Greece be warned: Greek meat may come from animal suffering.

Recent EU report on animal protection shows widespread breaches of animal protection law and lack of controls.

Eurogroup for Animal Welfare is calling on the Commission to take Greece to the European Court for failure to introduce basic standards for the protection of farm animals in transport and slaughter. A newly published report by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), the European inspection service, shows that the Greek authorities are simply ignoring repeated warnings by the EU to respect EU Food safety law.

The conclusions of the various reports over the years give a shocking picture of the animal protection situation in Greece with no improvements since. In all reports the lack of progress is criticized and “serious problems persist”.

Furthermore, it is not only animals who are placed at risk. The 2003 FVO report concluded that since the previous mission “the situation has worsened and serious concerns were expressed concerning establishments considered to impose a serious and immediate public health risk”.

Eurogroup itself has conducted undercover investigations in the past<sup>1</sup> revealing horrendous animal suffering in slaughterhouses due to brutal handling, no proper equipment to stun<sup>2</sup> the animals, goats and pigs having their throats cut and left to bleed to death in agony. Due to the public and political outcry the Greek authorities temporarily closed some of the slaughterhouses but only to continue “business as usual” some time later.

Sonja Van Tichelen, director of Eurogroup has followed this problem for over 10 years and it appalled by the inactivity both of the Greek government and the European Commission who lets this happen: “It is now high time for the Commission to act. We have filed several complaints and the reply from the Commissioners has always been the same. Greece is laughing at EU food safety laws. This is not only unacceptable animal cruelty, it is a human health risk and a bad example to the new Members States and European citizens of how the EU deals with animal health, animal protection and food safety. Tourists to Greece should be made aware that while they enjoy the sun farm animals are inflicted with immense suffering in slaughterhouses.”

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<sup>1</sup> Legal complaint in 1995 on the basis of undercover investigations: pictures and video available from Eurogroup

<sup>2</sup> Under EC legislation animals need to be stunned (rendered unconscious) before being slaughtered