

## **INFORMATION**

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**Brussels, 17 September 2008**

### **Slaughter proposals hailed as boost to animal welfare**

Eurogroup for Animals has welcomed Commission proposals to overhaul the current slaughter directive with improvements such as introducing animal welfare officers in slaughterhouses and requiring all staff working with animals to have their competence assessed. The planned revision of directive 93/119/EC on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing also includes the creation of animal welfare reference centres in each member state, which can be used to get technical advice. They will also be responsible for assessing new methods, equipment and technologies.

Sonja Van Tichelen, director of Eurogroup for Animals, said: "These proposals are a step in the right direction and will benefit millions of animals. It is unacceptable in a civilised society that animals have to suffer in their final moments. So much of their suffering can be avoided or decreased by having well-trained staff and by using appropriate stunning techniques.

"These plans also mean that the industry will have to take up responsibility for the welfare of animals. The appointment of an animal welfare officer who will be responsible for supervising the treatment of animals in slaughterhouse will do much to benefit them."

The animal welfare office must be available at all times when there are live animals on the premises and have the authority to take whatever action which may be necessary to safeguard the welfare of animals.

Although the Commission proposal would be a significant improvement of the current directive, there is still scope to reduce suffering at slaughter even further. Eurogroup is calling for the phasing out of live-shackling, which involves hanging poultry upside down while alive. Currently poultry are shackled on automated lines whenever electrical waterbaths are used to stun the animals. This causes the birds to suffer stress, pain and injuries. In addition Eurogroup would like to see a timetable for the introduction of standards for killing farmed fish. With the rapid increase of fish farming, these standards are urgently required.

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*Pictures showing live-shackling are available on request.*

*For more information call Steven Blaakman, senior press officer at Eurogroup, on 0032 (0)27400823 or email him on [s.blaakman@eurogroupforanimals.org](mailto:s.blaakman@eurogroupforanimals.org). Outside office hours please call 0032 (0)475 731066.*

Notes:

- Eurogroup for Animals represents animal welfare organisations in nearly each of the European member states. Since it was launched in 1980, the organisation has succeeded in encouraging the European Union to adopt higher legal standards of animal protection. For more information about Eurogroup, visit [www.eurogroupforanimals.org](http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org).