



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Directorate F – Health and food audits and analysis  
**Director**

Grange,  
SANTE.F2 DM/jh

Dear Petitioner,

**Subject: Petition calling on the European Commission to take action and end pig mutilations**

On behalf of Commissioner Andriukaitis I would like to thank you for presenting a petition<sup>1</sup> calling on the European Commission to take action and end pig mutilations.

The Commission has prioritised improving compliance with the requirements of Council Directive 2008/120/EC on minimum standards for the protection of pigs<sup>2</sup> and is implementing the final stages of a three year (2017-2019) project to reduce animal suffering during the rearing of piglets by improving the application of the Directive.

The project focusses specifically on the rules on the avoidance of routine tail-docking of piglets and the provision of manipulable material. The Commission has been working intensively with Member States to improve the application of existing legal requirements arising from Council Directive 2008/120/EC and Council Directive 98/58/EC<sup>3</sup> on rearing conditions for pigs.

I am fully aware that the application of the legislation concerning pig mutilations is not satisfactory. This is a topic where little progress has been made by Member States over many years.

However, recently planned actions should, if implemented effectively, and provided they are properly enforced, provide improvements in the way management measures are implemented on farms, improve compliance with legislation, and thus improve the welfare of pigs. This should in turn enable the pig sector to gradually reduce the number of tail-docked pigs over time.

---

<sup>1</sup> Your e-mail refers to a "petition", which in the framework of EU Law is used for petitions addressed to the European Parliament pursuant to Article 227 TFEU. Your letter is dealt with by the Commission according to the rules for correspondence with citizens.

<sup>2</sup> Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs (OJ L 47, 18.2.2009, p. 5)

<sup>3</sup> Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes (OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23)

The Commission does not underestimate the challenge of bringing about change on this issue and it is committed to ensuring that the Member States take appropriate action to end the practice of routine tail-docking as soon as possible.

The most recent action being taken by the Commission in this regard is the establishment of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare<sup>4</sup> that brings together Member States and stakeholders from different backgrounds to enhance dialogue on animal welfare issues.

For this purpose, a subgroup on pig welfare has commenced its work within the context of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare at its first meeting in November 2018. This will be an appropriate forum to raise non-legislative initiatives and exchange potential solutions in the area of enforcement of EU legislation on the welfare of pigs.

Please rest assured that the Commission will continue to closely monitor the situation and pursue its actions to improve the implementation of EU legislation on the welfare of pigs within the remit of its competence.

Yours sincerely,

*(e-signed)*

Paola Colombo  
Director

---

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare_en)