

Brussels, 0716 28.03.00

Dear Mrs Lucas,

Thank you for your letter addressed to myself, Mr Fischler and Mr Solbes concerning the Eid-el-Kabir festival in France.

I have been informed about the treatment of the animals during the Eid-el-Kabir festival in France. The inadequate slaughterhouse capacity in certain urban areas appears to be one of the reasons for the observations made with regard to treatment of animals during the festival.

The Commission considers that the French authorities must find a practical solution for the problem concerning slaughterhouse capacity. On the other hand, treatment of animals that causes suffering during restraint and slaughter is not acceptable.

Member States are responsible for the enforcement of Community legislation concerning the slaughter and killing of animals in accordance with the provisions of Council Directive 93/119/EC on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing.

I have been in contact with the French authorities concerning the need to improve the arrangements. I understand that steps have recently been taken to involve the different Islamic cultural groups more widely in discussions on this issue in order to improve the situation with the view to achieve better animal welfare and hygiene conditions. It was also stressed that progress needs to be obtained through consultation and consensus.

We are keeping the situation under review and in the light of developments will decide whether further initiatives are necessary, including opening of Article 226 infringement procedures.

Yours sincerely,


David BYRNE

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