

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY  
Directorate G – Crisis management in food, animals and plants  
**Animal Health and Welfare**

Brussels,  
SANTE G2/BB/rb D(2016) 3356283

Dear Petitioner,

**Subject: Welfare of quails**

Commissioner Andriukaitis asked me to thank you for your letter of 2 June 2016 and to reply on his behalf. You are concerned about the welfare of quails farmed in certain Member States. You are therefore requesting the Commission to draft specific legislation to protect this type of poultry and furthermore to ban the use of cages.

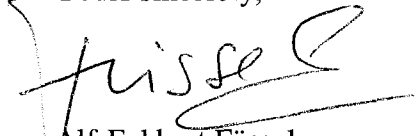
Currently all animals bred or kept for farming purposes within the EU are protected through the provisions of Directive 98/58/EC<sup>1</sup>. Member States are due to transpose this legislation into their national context and are primarily responsible for its enforcement.

As such the owners and keepers shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of animals under their care and to ensure that those animals are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury<sup>2</sup>. In this context the Annex to the Directive sets out general rules concerning e.g. freedom of movement, accommodation, equipment, feed and water.

You refer however to investigations made by Compassion in World Farming in 2015/2016 and allege that there are numerous breaches of Union law. As you may be aware, to improve compliance was one of the strategic actions of the *EU animal welfare strategy 2012-2015*<sup>3</sup>. Although the strategy has ended, the Commission of course remains committed to enforcement of the EU animal welfare rules. However, there is a need to prioritise the work and at present highest priority has been given to the proper application of the pig Directive<sup>4</sup>, and to the welfare issues related to live animal exports.

I much appreciate your concern for the welfare of one of the minor farmed species in the EU and thank you for bringing to the Commission's attention the findings of Compassion in World Farming.

Yours sincerely,



Alf-Eckbert Füssel  
Acting Head of Unit

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes; OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23

<sup>2</sup> Article 3 of Directive 98/58/EC

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/docs/aw\\_eu\\_strategy\\_19012012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/docs/aw_eu_strategy_19012012_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Council Directive 2008/120/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs (codified version); OJ L 47, 18.2.2009, p. 5