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Force-feeding in the production of foie gras

Written question No. 702 to the Committee of Ministers
by Mr Dirk Van der MAELEN, Belgium, Socialist Group

The production of foie gras in the European Union (EU) is covered by Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes.

This directive reflects the approval by the EU of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes of 1976 (CETS N° 087).

Two Recommendations relevant to the production of foie gras, concerning Muscovy ducks and their hybrids and domestic geese respectively, were adopted under the Convention on 22 June 1999 by the Standing Committee of the European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes.

Despite the fact that the recommendations state that producing countries have to send annual reports to the Standing Committee, and that such organism should have reviewed the Recommendations within 5 years after coming into force, the Standing Committee has been inactive for a long time, therefore such provisions have been totally ignored.

I would therefore like to understand what could be done, either to revive the activities of the Standing Committee, or to get the Recommendations implemented anyway, according to clear indications of the Council of Europe, in relation to their review, and to the provision of detailed annual reports by producing countries.

Mr Van der Maelen,

To ask the Committee of Ministers,

- Are the recommendations still legally valid (the European Commission stated that they are part of EU law), and if this is the case, in the absence of the Standing Committee who is supposed to conduct their review, how and when?
- In the absence of the Standing Committee, are producing countries obliged to send annual reports? If so, to whom?

