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Subject: Animal welfare and foie gras

Dear Honourable Members,

Thank you for your common letter on the foie gras production and the welfare of animals.

In your letter you propose the Commission to either end force feeding or as an alternative you suggest deleting the minimum liver weights laid down in Article 1, point 3 of Regulation (EC) No 534/2008.

The production of foie gras in the EU is covered by Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes¹. This Directive reflects, within Union legislation, the approval by the Union² of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes ("the Convention").

Two Recommendations³ of this Convention concerning the welfare of geese and ducks were adopted by the Council of Europe in 1999 with the support of the Union. These two Recommendations do not prohibit as such the production of foie gras in the countries where it

¹ OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23

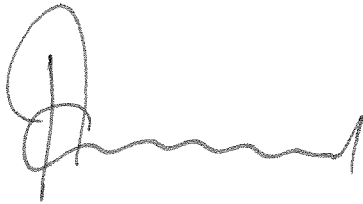
² The Community approved this Convention by Decision 78/923/EEC (OJ L 323, 17.11.1978, p. 12).

³ http://www.coe.int/t/c/legal_affairs/legal_co-operation/biological_safety_and_use_of_animals/farming/A_texts_documents.asp#TopOfPage

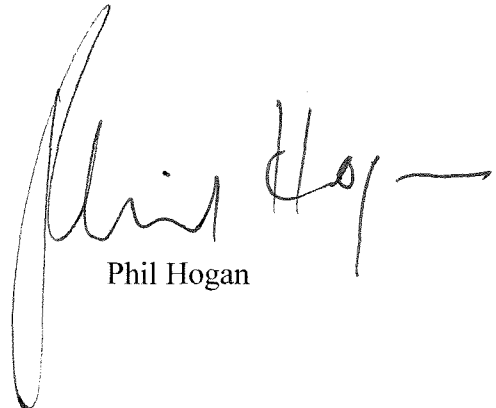
was current practice at the time of adoption. The Recommendations put the countries allowing foie gras production under certain obligations. Against this background the Commission does not envisage banning force feeding.

Regarding amending Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 of 16 June 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards the marketing standards for poultry meat, as the Commission pointed out in its answer to written question E-000356/2017, *"the Commission will be launching an external evaluation of EU marketing standards covering various agricultural products, including poultry meat. As part of this exercise, the relevance of different aspects of poultry meat including, inter alia, those on 'foie gras' should be examined. The extent to which technical parameters, such as specific liver weights will be included, has yet to be decided."*

Yours sincerely,



Vytenis Andriukaitis



Phil Hogan