

II

(Acts whose publication is not obligatory)

COUNCIL

COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

of 18 November 1974

on stunning of animals before slaughter

(74/577/EEC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European
Economic Community, and in particular Articles 43
and 100 thereof;

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission;

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parlia-
ment⁽¹⁾;

Having regard to the Opinion of the Economic and
Social Committee;

Whereas the national legislation now in force in the
field of protection of animals presents disparities of
such a nature as to affect directly the functioning of
the common market; whereas the effect of the costs
arising from these requirements are variable from one
Member State to another;

Whereas the Community should also take action to
avoid in general all forms of cruelty to animals;
whereas it appears desirable, as a first step, that this
action should consist in laying down conditions such
as to avoid all unnecessary suffering on the part of
animals when being slaughtered;

Whereas in this respect the practice of stunning
animals by appropriate recognized techniques should
be generalized;

Whereas, however, it is necessary to take account of
the particular requirements of certain religious rites,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

Article 1

1. For the slaughter of animals belonging to the
following species: bovine animals, swine, sheep, goats
and solipeds, Member States shall ensure that suitable
measures are taken to induce death as rapidly as
possible after stunning, in accordance with appro-
priate procedures.

2. For the purposes of this Directive, stunning
means a process effected by a mechanically operated
instrument, electricity, or gas anaesthesia without
adverse effects on the condition of the meat or the
offal, which when applied to an animal puts it into a
state of insensibility which lasts until it is slaughtered,
thus sparing it in any event all needless suffering.

This process must be approved by the competent
authority.

Article 2

1. The competent authority in accordance with
national legislation shall ensure that stunning is
performed by means of equipment approved for the
relevant species, that the equipment is in good
working order and that it is used correctly by a person
who has the necessary qualifications and knowledge.

2. Should restraint prove to be necessary, this
should take place immediately before stunning.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 76, 3. 7. 1974, p. 52.

Article 3

In special cases, especially in respect of emergency slaughtering and slaughtering by the farmer for his personal consumption, the competent authority may grant derogations from the provisions of this Directive. It shall, however, ensure that at the time of stunning and slaughter any cruel treatment or unnecessary suffering on the part of animals is avoided.

Article 4

The present Directive does not affect national provisions related to special methods of slaughter which are required for particular religious rites.

Article 5

The Member States shall not later than 1 July 1975, bring into force the laws, regulations and administra-

tive provisions necessary to comply with this Directive and shall immediately inform the Commission thereof.

Article 6

This Directive is addressed to all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 18 November 1974.

For the Council

The President

Ch. BONNET
