Question for written answer E-001189/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: Access to open air areas for young organic poultry

Regulation (EU) 2018/848 (Regulation on Organic Products) requires poultry to have access to open air areas ‘from as early an age as practically possible’, which can be interpreted as from the first day of life (Annex II, Section 1.9.4.4(e)). This rule is neither conducive to animal welfare nor practical and creates health risks for young poultry, especially in the first weeks of life.

Chicks are particularly susceptible to diseases, sensitive to the cold and at risk from predators at this early stage of development. Premature access to open air areas increases the risk of infection, as the immune system is only fully developed from the third or fourth week of life. In addition, it leads to greater energy consumption, and damp bedding can cause health problems.

Many farms also face insurmountable infrastructural challenges, as their existing housing facilities are not designed to provide access to open-air areas at such an early stage. Strict implementation of the provision could significantly reduce organic poultry farming and jeopardise the survival of many farms.

1. How does the Commission intend to ensure that the requirement for access to open air areas only applies when this is actually possible without causing problems, in line with the physiological development of the animals, and does it intend to consider clarifying or adapting the requirement?

2. What measures does the Commission intend to take to enable Member States and certification bodies to implement the regulation flexibly so that businesses are not forced to take measures that are contrary to animal welfare?

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