

Question for written answer E-003421/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR)

Subject: Dutch penalties for the unintended EU ban on catching poultry by the legs

On 21 July 2026, the Dutch Trade and Industry Appeals Tribunal (CBb), one of the Netherlands' highest administrative courts, ruled that catching poultry by the legs is prohibited under Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. Dutch operators must discontinue this practice by 1 January 2027, after which non-compliance may result in penalty payments of up to EUR 60 000. The prohibition is not enforced in other Member States.

Moreover, the UK Government concluded that Regulation 1/2005 was not intended to prohibit lifting poultry by the legs and considered the failure to exempt poultry an 'inadvertent drafting error'. The UK consequently amended legislation in 2025 to permit two-leg catching. The Commission's proposal for a new Animal Transport Regulation likewise explicitly allows birds to be caught, lifted and carried by both legs under specified conditions.

1. Does the Commission agree that the current Dutch enforcement, including penalty payments, is inappropriate considering the apparent lack of an original intention to prohibit this practice, the lack of similar enforcement in other Member States, and the Commission's proposal to explicitly allow this practice?
2. What action can the Commission take to ensure this enforcement is no longer required, and is it willing to take such action before 1 January 2027?

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