

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003066/25
to the Commission
Pascal Arimont (PPE)
(23 July 2025)**

Subject: Animal welfare during the stunning of pigs in slaughterhouses

Annex I of Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing includes stunning methods for the slaughter of pigs that involve carbon dioxide at high concentration. However, high concentrations of CO₂ cause pigs to suffer from respiratory distress and hyperventilation before they lose consciousness, which is associated with a high level of stress for the animals. The reason given by the Commission for maintaining this practice is that there is no commercially viable alternative ⁽¹⁾. In the ‘PigStun’ project, the EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare (EURCAW-Pigs) has now investigated various alternatives to high CO₂ concentration stunning of pigs ⁽²⁾.

1. What conclusions has the Commission drawn from the findings of the project?
2. Is the Commission prepared to implement the recommendations?

Submitted: 23.7.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(23 September 2025)**

The PigStun project ⁽¹⁾, financed by the Commission, aimed to encourage EU pig slaughterhouses using carbon dioxide at high concentration for stunning pigs to replace this stunning method with alternative stunning methods.

Launched in 2023, the initiative focused on evaluating non-aversive gas mixtures and other promising systems to identify alternatives to high concentration CO₂ stunning.

The project delivered concrete results, highlighting actionable solutions to enhance existing stunning practices to address operational challenges linked to them and mitigate welfare consequences associated with the use of CO₂ at high concentration for stunning. Proposed alternatives include improved electric stunning methods, inert gases systems and enhanced CO₂ protocols.

Each alternative method proposed presents a unique balance of welfare, economic, and practical considerations (e.g., cost, ease of implementation).

All the alternatives evaluated in the PigStun project are already included in the positive list of stunning methods in Annex I of Regulation (EC) 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing ⁽²⁾.

Therefore, they are authorised stunning methods in the EU so operators can use them without this use requiring changes to EU legislation.

¹ https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-animal-welfare-legislation/laughter-stunning_en

² <https://eurcaw-pigs.eu/dossier/pigstun>

⁽¹⁾ <https://eurcaw-pigs.eu/dossier/pigstun>.

⁽²⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing.