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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(24.8.2026)

Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009¹ establishes rules for the protection of animals at the time of killing. These rules include the obligation to prevent animals from experiencing any avoidable pain, distress or suffering.

Where firearms using free projectiles are used, Regulation (EC) No 1999/2009 specifies the conditions but does not explicitly require a site plan or an expert ballistics report. A site plan and a ballistic report can help to demonstrate that the shooting location is safe for both the animal and persons present, and the firearm is working properly. Responsibility for implementing and enforcing the obligations laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1999/2009 lies primarily with Member States, through their competent authorities.

Regulation (EC) No 853/2004² lays down the food safety rules applicable during slaughter. It includes the possibility to allow slaughter on farm with the aim to avoid animal welfare issues during transport. National rules may be adopted and must be notified to the Commission and to the other Member States that must express their agreement. For that reason, the Commission does not feel that they may constitute a disproportionate administrative or financial burden for small family farms, mobile or regional slaughterhouses.

To support harmonised application of the possibilities laid down by Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 across the EU, the Commission has published a Guidance document on the implementation of certain provisions of this Regulation on the hygiene of food of animal origin³. The Commission also published a series of factsheets⁴ intended to help farmers and workers in small slaughterhouses apply EU animal welfare rules.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing (OJ L 303, 18.11.2009, pp. 1–30), p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1099/oj>.

² Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2004/853/oj>).

³ https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ce8efc9d-8750-4b75-9563-7427da889666_en.

⁴ https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-animal-welfare-legislation/slaughter-stunning/2018-factsheets_en.