
WRITTEN QUESTION E-1131/01
by Karl von Wogau (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(10 April 2001)

Subject: Traceability and information system for cattle

The information system allowing cattle movements to be traced gathers all data covering animals. The notification of all animal movements is compulsory.

However, access to these data which can be consulted on the Internet varies considerably. Unlike other interested parties, farmers who have sold the animals have no access to information about the carcass weight of these animals.

What is the justification for this arrangement, and does the Commission intend to amend it, if appropriate?

Answer given by Mr Byrne on behalf of the Commission
(13 June 2001)

With the adoption in 1997 of Council Regulation (EC) 820/97 of 21 April 1997 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products (1), the existing provisions for identification and registration of bovine animals (Council Directive 92/102/EEC of 27 November 1992 (2)) were reinforced. This reinforcement was necessary as experience and notably the bovine spongiform encephalopathy crisis had shown that the implementation of the existing rules for identification and registration had not been entirely satisfactory and needed further improvement.

The obligation on Member States to set up a computerised database was introduced as part of the reinforced system for the identification and registration of bovine animals which in addition comprises of ear tags to identify animals individually, animal passports and individual registers kept on each holding.

These provisions have been carried over in Regulation (EC) 1760/2000 of the Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 820/97 (3).

Hence each Member State shall create a national computerised database which will record the identity of bovine animals, all holdings on its territory and the movement of the animals for the purpose of rapid and accurate tracing of animals for reasons relating to the control of Community aid schemes. Furthermore the localisation and the tracing of animals is of crucial importance for the control of contagious diseases.

Since the database serves for management of Community aid schemes and disease control, the information, which the computerised database must contain as laid down in Council Directive 64/432/EEC of 26 June 1964 on animal health problems affecting intra-Community trade in bovine animals and swine (4) includes information on the date of death or slaughter to be recorded for each animal, but not on the carcass weight. It is not the intention of the Commission at this stage to propose further amendments.

to Regulation 1760/2000 to require information on the carcass weight. In this respect, such information was not considered a priority by the Council or the Parliament in the discussions leading to agreement on this Regulation.

(4) OJ 121, 29.7.1964.

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(2001/C 350 E/085)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1135/01

by Christopher Huhne (ELDR) to the Commission

(10 April 2001)

Subject: Electric shock weapons

Is the Commission aware of evidence that electric shock weapons, for example electric-shock batons, electric-shock shields, stun guns, and lasers are being used in certain countries as instruments of torture?

Will the Commission state which Member States currently impose restrictions on the sale, manufacture, or transfer of such weapons?

Do any EU-wide restrictions on electric shock weapons currently exist and if not, does the Commission consider that such restrictions would be desirable?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission

(18 June 2001)

On 9 April 2001, the Council adopted Guidelines on Union Policy towards third countries on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1). It referred to ongoing work to introduce Community-wide controls on the exports of paramilitary equipment as an example of a measure within the Common foreign and security policy (CFSP) to effectively work towards the prevention of torture and ill-treatment.

The Commission is currently considering a proposal to that end. It is aware of allegations that (high voltage) electro-shock equipment, such as belts and batons, could be used as instruments of torture in a number of countries, for example as mentioned in Amnesty International’s recent report ‘Stopping the Torture Trade’.

In the internal market, manufacturing and trading of high-voltage electro-shock equipment designed for protection against, or controlling of, violent persons is not subject to specific regulation at Community level. However, Council Directive 91/477/EEC of 18 June 1991, on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons (2) provides a general framework for transfers within the internal market. As regards weapons other than firearms, Member States must in particular prohibit their entry into their territory provided that the national provisions of the Member State in question so permit. The fact that Directive 91/477/EEC does not apply to the acquisition or possession of weapons by the armed forces, the police, the public authorities, or collectors and bodies concerned with the cultural and historical aspects of weapons, and recognised as such by the Member State in whose territory they are established, does not appear to have given rise to specific problems in Member States.

Moreover, the abuse of electro-shock equipment for the purpose of torture is a crime in the legal systems of the Member States, as the prohibition against torture is included in a number of United Nations (UN) and Council of Europe Conventions.