

Protection of chickens kept for meat production

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The Council took note of a presentation by Commissioner Kyprianou of a proposal for a Council Directive laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production ("broilers").

The Council also took note of the Commission's intended strategy in the area of Mr Kyprianou's responsibilities as well as the intention of the Presidency to make progress on this file in order to come back on these strategic issues before the end of the year.

The German, Swedish and Danish delegations expressed their broad support for the proposal tabled by the Commission, warning against the risk of excessive stocking density of broilers. The Danish and Swedish delegations also indicated that they currently applied national rules as regards requirements for slaughter and maximum stocking densities.

The Slovak, Czech and French delegations expressed their concerns as regards the possible loss of competitiveness of the EU poultry industry on the world market and the possible loss of market shares in the EU, the need to take due account of the economic aspects and the geographical positions of the Member States, as well as the schedule of implementation of the proposed Directive. The French delegation suggested submitting the impact assessment study of the Commission on the proposal to the examination of the Special Committee on Agriculture.

The Greek delegation underlined the need for sufficient protection for broilers as well as a secure framework in this area and stressed the importance of a cost/benefit balance.

Commissioner Kyprianou underlined his awareness as regards the importance of competitiveness for the EU broiler's industry with regard to third countries' production. He also indicated that his Institution would report to the European Parliament and to the Council on a voluntary labelling scheme.