



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 21 January 2013

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VETER 4**

NOTE

from : General Secretariat
to : Delegations

Subject : Compliance with the Directive on welfare of pigs in the Member States:
Implementation of group housing of sows
- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Commission to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 28 January 2013.

AGRICULTURE COUNCIL – 28 JANUARY 2013

WRITTEN INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION SERVICES

"COMPLIANCE WITH THE DIRECTIVE ON WELFARE OF PIGS IN THE MEMBER STATES: IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP HOUSING OF SOWS"

Council Directive 2008/120/EC on the protection of pigs requires, since 1 January 2013, that sows and gilts (immature female pigs) are kept in groups during part of their pregnancy in all pig holdings keeping 10 sows or more.

Council Directive 91/630/EEC of 19 November 1991 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs¹ has been substantially amended several times.² The amendment requiring keeping sows in groups was adopted in 2001 and thus provided a long enough transitional period for the pig sector to adapt.

Member States are primarily responsible for the implementation of Council Directive 2008/120/EC.

The Commission has informed Member States on the state of compliance with the Directive on multiple occasions during the course of 2012.

The Commission will present an update of the state of implementation of group housing of sows across the EU, based on the latest data and information sent by Member States.

The Commission intends to highlight again to Member States the importance to take all necessary measures to enforce Council Directive 2008/120/EC in order to avoid unfair competition between EU pig producers.

The Commission will recall the importance it attaches to the principle of sincere cooperation with the Member States, as envisaged in Article 4, paragraph 3 of the Treaty on European Union, and thus for them to provide transparently and in a harmonised form up-dated data on the implementation of group housing of sows so that the Commission services can regularly assess the situation.

¹ OJ L 340, 11.12.1991, p. 33.

² See Annex II, Part A of Council Directive 91/630/EEC of 19 November 1991.

The Commission will firmly highlight to Member States the importance to urgently take all the necessary measures to ensure compliance with Council Directive 2008/120/EC in order to avoid the imminent launch of infringement proceedings pursuant to Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union as of February 2013 and to continue providing data on the implementation of the measures to date.

Finally, the Commission will take the opportunity to inform the Ministers about future initiatives in this area, including the organization of a meeting with main stakeholders from the pig sector and Member States on 28 January 2013 to discuss further this issue.
