Belgium’s Walloon region to end slaughter of animals without pre-stunning

Posted: Thu, 11th May 2017

A committee of the Walloon Parliament has voted to ban the slaughter of animals without pre-stunning, a move welcomed by secularists and animal rights campaigners.

The Parliament's environment committee voted unanimously to end non-stun animal slaughter, following a recommendation by Piet Vanthemsche, a leading veterinary surgeon. The full parliament will vote on the proposal later this month.

If approved, the ban would come into effect in September 2019.

EU law requires animals to be "stunned (made unconscious) prior to killing, so that death should be painless."

In Belgium, as in the UK, the only exceptions to this requirement are for religious communities, in order to meet Jewish and Muslim religious requirements.

All kosher and some halal food is prepared without stunning of animals prior to slaughter.

The European Jewish Congress has reacted angrily to the decision and described it as "scandalous".

Dr Moshe Kantor, president of the congress, said, "We call on legislators to step back from the brink of the greatest assault on Jewish religious rights in Belgium since the Nazi occupation of the country in WWII.

He said that the decision "sends a terrible message to Jewish communities throughout our continent that Jews are unwanted."

Dr Kantor vowed to "not rest until this ban is overturned and Jews in Europe are able to practice their most basic religious rights."

Stephen Evans, National Secular Society campaigns manager, said it was "disappointing to see religious leaders deploying such alarmist rhetoric in order to influence animal welfare policy.

"In 21st Century Europe, there's no good reason why animal welfare should be subservient to religious dietary rules. Requiring all animals to be effectively stunned before slaughter would remove unnecessary suffering – and is therefore the humane thing to do."

- Share on What's App
- Share on Facebook
- Share on Twitter
- Share on Email
- Subscribe to RSS Feed

Tags: Slaughter

Related Campaigns

- **End non-stun slaughter**

  No more religious exemptions from animal welfare laws.

  Read More

Related Articles

NSS slams government for backtracking on non-stun slaughter labels

Defra consultation on "fairer food labelling" omits slaughter, despite 97% supporting labels for slaughter method. Read More »

Ritual slaughter: is the government about to renege on its commitment to consult?

Stephen Evans criticises the government's U-turn on animal welfare and says food labelling policy should serve consumers rather than religious interests. Read More »

Wales Green Party drops pledge to ban non-stun slaughter

Members vote to monitor slaughter "without prejudice towards minority religious and cultural groups". Read More »

Clear support for mandatory labels for non-stun meat, report finds

There is significant support for mandatory labels for meat from animals slaughtered without stunning, a government... Read More »

Policy could drive up non-stun meat in public sector, NSS warns

Policy changes could lead to more meat from animals slaughtered without stunning supplied in the public sector, the NSS has warned. Read More »