

Advice of the Brussels Animal Welfare Council - 03/10/2019

concerning a ban on the use and sale of glue traps

In 2018, the Walloon Animal Welfare Council studied the problem of glue traps used to trap mainly mice, but possibly also rats and birds. Glue traps are plates (usually made of cardboard) covered with a glue with a high adhesive strength, which are placed in the path of the animals, and on which the animals get and remain stuck with their legs and/or fur or plumes. The Brussels Animal Welfare Council has also come to know that, despite their well-known animal welfare consequences, glue traps are currently still being sold and used.

The Brussels Council unanimously agrees with the Walloon Council's analysis that the use of glue traps constitutes a violation of Article 15 of the Animal Welfare Act of 14 August 1986¹, since the killing is not carried out by the most selective, the fastest and the least painful method for the animal. The suffering caused to trapped animals can be considerable, depending on the length of time between capture and subsequent death, and on the manner of the latter². Moreover, there is a high risk that traps of this type will trap other animal species and cause them suffering and/or damage, whether fatal or not. Trapped animals may experience prolonged, unavoidable stress and eventually exhaustion (and possibly even injury) due to unsuccessful escape attempts, starvation, dehydration or suffocation³. The duration of this suffering is not regulated and can therefore be several days².

However, alternative, lethal and non-lethal methods are available. Furthermore, the emphasis should be placed on preventive measures, i.e. ensuring that mice and rats cannot find nesting places and/or food, and thus cannot form populations in places where they may cause nuisance or risk (e.g. to safety or public health).

The use and sale of glue-traps are prohibited in Ireland as they are not included in the legislation on authorised methods to trap wild animals^{4,5}. In the Netherlands - as in Belgium - the legislation does not explicitly state that the use of glue traps is prohibited, but their use in controlling mice and rats is punishable, and enforcement is based on the statutory wording that unnecessary suffering must be prevented⁶. However, the sale of glue traps is not prohibited in the Netherlands either, which means that they are still used in practice.

¹ Law of 14 August 1986 on the protection and welfare of animals:

In Dutch: <http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/eli/wet/1986/08/14/1986016195/justel>

In French: <http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/eli/loi/1986/08/14/1986016195/justel>

² Mason, G.M. & Littin, K.E. 2003. The humaneness of rodent pest control. *Animal Welfare* 12, p 1-37.

³ <https://www.ufaw.org.uk/rodent-welfare/rodent-welfare>

⁴ Wildlife Act 1976 (Approved Traps, Snares and Nets) Regulations 2003.

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/si/620/made/en/print>

⁵ <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/major-wholesalers-withdraw-glue-traps-following-unstuck-campaign-121615/>

⁶ <https://www.nvwa.nl/onderwerpen/ongedierte/regelgeving> (in Dutch only)



Conclusion

The Brussels Animal Welfare Council advocates a coordinated approach at Belgian level to legally prohibit the use and sale of glue traps in the three regions. Therefore, the Council asks the Brussels Minister for Animal Welfare to (a) ban the use of glue traps in the Brussels Capital Region and (b) commit himself and his Walloon and Flemish counterparts to work together to secure the appropriate measures at federal level in order to also ban the trade in glue traps throughout Belgium.

