



Animals in Europe

Bringing you the latest developments on animal welfare in the EU

New animal welfare strategy fails to address citizens' concerns



Eurogroup for Animals expressed its deep concern after the European Commission unveiled its new animal welfare strategy on 19 January. The document which outlines

the future actions proposed to improve the treatment and welfare of animals up until 2015 clearly lacks any ambition and is a missed opportunity to highlight the role the EU can play in translating citizens concerns into action.

The strategy follows an evaluation of 20 years of animal welfare policy which concluded that current rules need to be better enforced and that some animal groups currently outside the scope of EU protection, such as dairy cows and pets, could benefit from harmonized EU laws. Sadly, however, the new strategy ignores these findings and does not recommend actions to address the concerns raised. On top of that, some high profile issues such as live animal transport, the cloning of animals for food and animal testing for cosmetics are not even mentioned in the document.

Danish Presidency committed to Animal Welfare

Eurogroup welcomes the new Danish Programme of the European Council Presidency, which commits to assign a priority to animal welfare, especially in the framework of the upcoming publication of the new animal welfare strategy as well as the Commission report on the regulation on the protection of animals during transport.

Also of interest in the scope of animal welfare, the agenda set by the Danish Presidency promotes green and sustainable growth, especially in the context of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020, reforms of the common agricultural and fisheries policies and resource efficient goals to be achieved by 2020 and 2050. Lastly, the Danish Presidency also announced it will work for a strong European voice at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

It is even more alarming to see that the industry and farming lobby interests prevail in the new strategy under the pretext that EU animal welfare policies have undermined the competitiveness of EU producers. While such claims remain unfounded, the European Commission sends a clear sign that it is ignoring the concerns of Europe's citizens and the European Parliament as well as the animal welfare sector.

The Lisbon Treaty requires consistency between its policies and Article 13 demands that full regard is paid to animal welfare by EU policy-makers. However, except for agriculture policy and trade, this strategy does not mention the need for coherence with other policies such as research, wildlife protection, consumer protection or sustainable development and this will undoubtedly cause further animal suffering.

To read the new EU strategy on animal welfare (2012-2015), go to http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/actionplan/actionplan_en.htm

Following the publication of the new strategy, Eurogroup for Animals issued a briefing available at http://eurogroupforanimals.org/files/news/downloads/315/eqfabriefing_new_aw_strategy.pdf

Own initiative report on the protection of animals during transport

MEP Janusz Wojciechowski has been appointed as rapporteur for an own initiative report on animal transport which will be part of the Agriculture Committee's work programme for the coming months.

Eurogroup for Animals is very pleased with the news, as Mr. Wojciechowski has already expressed animal welfare friendly views on the subject. During the 277th session of the Animal Welfare Integroup he indeed stated that Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 is adequate but not sufficient to ensure the protection of animals during transport and urged the need for more action in this area, especially in control systems.

Animal Welfare Intergroup elects new President and Vice-President

During its 279th session held in Strasbourg on 19 January, the European Parliament's Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals elected MEP Dan Jørgensen (S&D DK) as its new President, succeeding Carl Shlyter after two years in this role.

Being one of the most active MEPs on issues related to animal welfare, Mr. Jørgensen is taking over the role in a specific context where the Danish Presidency has just been launched and it intends to prioritise work on the

New report on EU-Mercosur potential trade agreement

The European Commission published a study which explores the impact of a FTA between EU and Mercosur countries. The report compiles the results of two statistical models based on hypothetical scenarios of a bilateral FTA between the two regions, including both the eventual success and failure of the WTO's multilateral negotiations on Trade.

With regard to agriculture and more specifically to livestock, the study shows that a bilateral agreement will have a negative impact on the EU sector, especially in the field of meat production. While meat consumption in the EU is expected to increase, the study anticipates a fall for all meats and more dependency to imports of beef and poultry.

The study is undoubtedly providing another tool to EU decision makers in order to evaluate the possible impact of a potential FTA on the EU agriculture and offer arguments in favour of the protection of the livestock sector in Europe.

This study can be found at http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/Vol%201_MAIN%20RESULTS_JRC67394.pdf

Animal welfare standards in Free Trade Agreements negotiated by the EU

Recently, Eurogroup for Animals prepared a question for the European Commission on animal standards in free trade agreements negotiated in 2011 and 2012. The question was addressed by MEP Jörg Leichtfried, an expert in Trade matters and vice-president of the Animal Welfare Intergroup.

In its answer, the European Commission detailed its position on the FTA being negotiated with Ukraine, but also on the up-coming "Deep and Comprehensive Free

newly released EU Animal Welfare Strategy for 2012-2015.

During the same meeting MEP Andrea Zanoni was also elected as the second Italian vice-president of the Intergroup. Zanoni (ALDE, IT) has been a strong supporter of animal welfare and has been an active member of the Intergroup since becoming an MEP, especially in the field of the Common Agricultural Policy and in opposing the hunting of protected species.

Trade Agreements" with Georgia and Moldavia and Association Agreements with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

To read the answer, go to: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2011-010201&language=EN>

Court upholds Austrian ban on wild animals in circuses

Eurogroup welcomes the news that the Austrian Constitutional Court has dismissed the complaint filed by the German Circus Krone against the existing ban on the keeping of wild animals in circuses.

In its ruling, the court noted there is a difference between animals being kept in zoos and those held by circuses.

The decision also sends a clear signal to the German Federal Government, on its way to implement the same ban, but which unexpectedly blocked the bill during a plenary session in the Bundestag in mid-December.

The press release from the Court can be found at <http://www.verfassungsgerichtshof.at/>

Stricter rules for ritual slaughter in France

The French Government recently decided to impose stricter rules for national slaughterhouses to prevent any abuse in the practice of ritual slaughter without stunning.

The new rules require a prior authorisation for carrying out slaughter without stunning of animals identified for kosher or halal consumption. In the past, slaughterhouses had the possibility to use the exemption from the mandatory requirement to stun the animals without seeking authorisation if it was intended for religious purposes.

The Netherlands proposes new law on sale of pet animals

The first official text for the new law on the sale of pet animals was sent to the Dutch Parliament on 22 December. While the sale at markets will not be banned, it will be strictly regulated. This new law will cover all types of pet animals and not simply cats and dogs as previously regulated. It is anticipated that the earliest date for the law to come into force would be 1 July or more realistically January 2013.

The full text of the proposed law can be found at <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen>

Member States adopt common position at the IWC

At the last Environment Council on 19 December, Member States adopted a common position to be the basis for EU votes at the next three annual meetings of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) i.e. from 2012 to 2014. This common position relates to the proposals for amendments to the International Convention on the Regulation of Whaling and its schedule.

In more practical terms, the 25 EU Members of the IWC commit to maintain the suspension on commercial whaling, to support the creation of whale sanctuaries and to push for proposals to end the so-called 'scientific whaling' programs.

Intergroup for the welfare and conservation of animals

Next Intergroup meeting
In Brussels - date to be confirmed

Topic for this 279th bis session
Commissioner John Dalli presents
the new animal welfare strategy

Get more details and updates at:
www.animalwelfareintergroup.eu

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