

PUTTING ANIMAL WELFARE AT THE HEART OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014



EUROPEAN
ELECTIONS

2014 *putting
animal welfare
at the heart*

june 2013

BACKGROUND

Citizens are concerned about animal welfare: they have signed petitions, joined campaigns and sent numerous letters to Members of the European Parliament since it was created. As a result, the European Parliament has for years supported many initiatives to improve the welfare of animals. The European Parliament being the only EU Institution directly elected by citizens, it is essential that it continues to respond positively to these expectations from the citizens they represent. It is thus vital that members of the European Parliament and the political groups they belong to clearly state how they plan to improve animal welfare in their programmes for 2014-2019.

As the Federation of Animal Protection Organisations in the European Union, Eurogroup for Animals believes that there is a need for both new policies and legislative initiatives and for better enforcement of existing ones. We are concerned that there is currently at EU level little political will to adopt policies leading to better animal welfare. We believe that future members of the European Parliament and their parties should show their engagement in favour of improved animal welfare as a central factor to promote good animal and public health, as well as environment protection. This would be fully in line with Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which states that:

“In formulating and implementing the Union’s agriculture, fisheries, transport, internal market, research and technological development and space policies, the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals, while respecting the legislative or administrative provisions and customs of the Member States relating in particular to religious rites, cultural traditions and regional heritage.”





**EVERY YEAR,
MORE THAN
300 MILLION
LIVESTOCK
AND ABOUT
5 BILLION
POULTRY
ARE REARED
IN THE EU**

(EUROSTAT)

Consequently, we call on all political groups to include the following points in their manifesto for the 2014 elections:

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVE: SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ANIMAL WELFARE FRAMEWORK LAW

The European Commission is currently discussing the possibility of adopting an overarching animal welfare framework law, as provided for by the second strategy on the welfare of animals. It is a unique opportunity to show that the EU is serious about animal welfare. Such a law must cover all groups of animals, including pets (cats and dogs) and wild animals. It should allow for new standards for these species for which none exist yet and create tools to improve the protection of all animals through better education and training, thorough citizen awareness and improved enforcement of existing legislation. This is also the right opportunity to show that Article 13 of the Treaty is properly taken into account by ensuring coherence and consistency with other policy areas.

1. Improve farm animal welfare

There is an ever-increasing tendency in the EU to move to industrial ways of farming which impact negatively on the welfare of animals. The welfare of farm animals can be improved by supporting a move from over-intensive to innovative animal welfare friendly systems of production, taking fully into account the impact of transport and slaughter. In the near future the European Parliament must support animal welfare improvements every time a relevant policy is discussed which could be detrimental to the well-being of farm animals, be it in the area of climate change, resource efficiency, sustainable food policy or rural development and the CAP. There is a need for legal standards to be adopted to protect the welfare of dairy cows, farmed fish and beef cattle, among others. Citizens demand products which come from systems with better welfare and they should be better informed about methods of production and how animals have been treated at slaughter and how long they have been transported. MEPs should fight for it and promote win-win solutions for the animals, the farmers and the other actors in the food chain.

2. Reduce the number of animals used in research and testing

Despite the EU commitment to reduce the number of animals used in research and safety testing, new technological developments have led in recent years to an increase in these numbers. The future European Parliament should support the adoption by the European Commission of an EU wide strategy for the development, validation, acceptance and use of non-animal testing methods, in the context of the revision of EU legislation (for example on authorisation of feed and food) and in the context of new technologies (such as nanotechnology) to guarantee that the impact of these new rules on animal testing is fully considered.

The strategy should include: the implementation of data sharing, to avoid duplication of animal testing and the inclusion of non-animal test methods and 'Intelligent/Integrated testing strategies' in data requirements for authorization, as well as the promotion of alternative, non-animal test methods.

3. Protect cats and dogs

Cross-border activities involving cats and dogs have a huge impact on human and animal health and welfare, consumer protection as well as on the functioning of the internal market. Despite this fact, the welfare of cats and dogs is currently only regulated at EU Member State level with no pan-EU approach. In November 2010, the Council of Ministers adopted conclusions calling



**12 MILLION
ANIMALS
ARE USED
IN SCIENTIFIC
PROCEDURES
IN THE EU**

(EU STATISTICAL REPORT)

on the Commission to take action to deal with the welfare of cats and dogs. The European Parliament also adopted a resolution and the EU strategy on the welfare of animals provides for a study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices. Political groups should ensure adequate protection of cats and dogs by supporting the following in their election manifestos:

- EU rules to improve the breeding and sale of cats and dogs.
- Compulsory identification and registration in an appropriate database, which is linked to an EU database.
- Licensing of cat and dog breeders and traders.


4. Improve the welfare of wild animals

Wild animals are protected in the EU mostly through the Habitats and the Wild Birds Directives for native wildlife, and by EU Wildlife Trade Regulations and the zoo Directive for exotic wildlife. These laws however only briefly touch upon animal welfare and are not properly enforced, leading to major problems due to inadequate transport or keeping conditions. Political groups are urged to firmly engage in safeguarding the welfare of both native and exotic wild animals in the EU by including the following objectives in their manifestos:

- Banning the import of wild-caught animals and restricting the number of exotic species that can be imported and traded in the EU, in line with EU policies which tackle related concerns including human health, animal health and the protection of the environment.
- Developing a dedicated overarching legislative framework to protect marine mammals from all threats, similar to that which already exists in the US (Marine Mammal Protection Act US, 1972), Mexico and France.
- Creating and adequately funding the implementation of an action plan to tackle wildlife trafficking. Specifically, the action plan must tackle enforcement, anti-poaching and demand reduction in source, transit and demand countries.

5. Use EU trade agreements to boost animal welfare in partner third countries

The EU is currently negotiating several trade agreements with non-EU countries, including the US. It is a major opportunity to call for the inclusion of animal welfare as an important concern of EU citizens. The European Parliament should not only call for measures to ensure that animal welfare standards are not undermined in the EU, it should also take this opportunity to push for better considerations for animal welfare in trade partner countries. Not only farm animal welfare must be safeguarded but the protection of wildlife should be guaranteed through the inclusion of specific considerations in trade agreements.



**THE EU
IMPORTED
€ 6.4 BILLION
WORTH
LIVE REPTILES
IN 2011**

(DG TRADE STATISTICS)



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