

Brussels, 11 January 2007

Eurogroup delighted as EU bans the import of wild-caught birds for the pet trade

Eurogroup for Animals welcomes the new Regulation agreed today by the European Commission's Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, which bans the import into the Community of birds caught in the wild. From 1st July 2007, only birds which are bred in captivity in approved establishments in a small number of countries may be imported.

The animal welfare implications of this decision are significant although the aim of this new Regulation is primarily to protect animal and human health. A recent report by the European Food Safety Authority had highlighted serious risks relating to various stages of this trade. The EU scientists confirmed that 40-60% of trapped birds die during capture and transport before reaching the EU. Before the temporary ban in place since October 2005 as part of Avian Flu prevention, the EU imported annually more than one million wild caught birds.

Eurogroup's Director Sonja Van Tichelen says: *"This is a happy day for the millions of birds which will be saved by this measure. Eurogroup and its member organisations have campaigned against these imports for many years and it is encouraging that the EU has finally listened to the overwhelming scientific arguments about the disease risks and to public concern about the animals' suffering and the sustainability of the trade. We will now monitor how these new rules are implemented both by the member States and by the third countries which will export captive bred birds"*.

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Eurogroup's report: <http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/policy/pdf/birdsreport0606.pdf>

Eurogroup webpage on birds: <http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/policy/wildbirds.htm>

EFSA report: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/ahaw/ahaw_opinions.html

Wild bird declaration: <http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/policy/pdf/wbdec.pdf>