

MEMORANDUM ON ANIMAL WELFARE TO THE EU ELECTIONS 2009

Preliminary Remark

VIER PFOTEN is an international Animal Welfare organization working in seven European member States : Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Romania, United Kingdom, since September 2007 an EU office in Brussels is coordinating the political work. VIER PFOTEN is representing more than 400 000 European citizens.

With this Memorandum we want to point out that Animal Welfare policy in the EU is crucial .Therefore we ask the politicians of the new European parliament for a respective and sustainable animal welfare policy and we motivate our European citizens to take their opportunity of giving political power also to the animals and vote – vote for good European animal welfare policy in the next five years.

OUTCOME

More than two thirds on all legal topics are decided in the EU. That means also for the protection and welfare of animals that the European decision making level is crucial. The Animal welfare organizations are therefore more and more working also on this level, VIER PFOTEN as well.

To handle Animal Welfare Policy in the EU is quite difficult as it no political field on its own like e.g. the environment policy. The competences are spread in the EU Commission to different General Directorates (DG). But the EU Commission has recognized the lack of comprehension animal welfare policy and has raised two political strategies, the Community Animal Welfare Action Plan and the Animal Health Strategy, to get a more horizontal and summarizing approach.

The only directly elected European Institution is the European Parliament and up to now the political power of the European Parliament is limited – but, if the Lisbon Treaty will come up, the European Deputies can act regularly and not only as derogation on the co-decision legislation procedure and even decide on the very important Agriculture and Fisheries Policies, currently those decisions of DG AGRI have no formal parliamentary control.

However, the European Parliament has an increasing political power and the citizens are more and more aware on the protection and welfare of animals then ever before, as it is shown in some European barometers (surveys). And finally it is a basic legal obligation for the European Union to take the responsibility on the animals:

Following The Treaty of The European Union : Animals are “Sentient Beings”

The animals are protected by a protocol (No 31) of the Amsterdam Treaty since 1998 as “sentient beings”. And in the foreseen Lisbon Treaty this protection is even implemented in the text of the contract not any more a protocol. But the derogations there are opening many doors as it is said “...while respecting the legislative or administrative provisions and customs of the Member States relating in particular to religious rites, cultural traditions and regional heritage”.

Nevertheless the EU is also obliged in its legislation procedures to some other basic rules influencing the Animals – as it is for example the principle of sustainability.

VIER PFOTEN is demanding a comprehensive animal welfare policy in the future European Union of all EU institutions

Animal Welfare is in cause of the above mentioned lack of a political field on its own and without direct competences in the EU always linked to other political fields – such as human health, food, trade, agriculture, science. Related to these topics there are millions and billions of animals suffering, are used and misused. We are demanding the EU on its also ethical responsibility for the animals as sentient beings, laid down in the Treaty.

VIER PFOTEN is demanding the future European Parliament to use its political decision-making power with respect also for the animals as Sentient Beings

We ask the European Parliament– particularly, if and when the Lisbon Treaty will be valid - to use its increasing power for the animals by correcting old directives and regulations at one hand, to take the chance of ongoing new European legislative procedures at the other hand and to initiate new rules . Animals are part of the European civilization and representing the European citizens it is of high importance to bring the respect for all sentient beings in an ethical balance.

VIER PFOTEN’S DEMANDS

FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION AND WELFARE ASPECTS PARTICULARLY FOR THE FOLLOWING CONCRETE TOPICS

Laying Hens and Eggs labelling

Legal bases of the Minimum standards of the protection of Laying Hens is the Council Directive 1994/74/EC with the ban of battery cage by end of 2011. The Commission Directive 2002/4/EC is the legal basis for the labelling of eggs due to the source, the Laying Hens establishment.

Currently there is a political threat by letters of Member States to the EU Commission asking for postponing the ban of cages. And some other Member States tried to use loop holes with new cages called in a misleading way “small groups”.

Therefore VIER PFOTEN is demanding

- **to keep the legislation on the ban of battery cages end of 2011 without any delay of implementation**
- **the Member States to avoid so called “Kleingruppenhaltung”**
- **to insist on a clear labeling of the eggs and packages, not the latest to have transparency for the consumers**
- **Transparency by labeling all processed food (eggs)**

Animal Welfare Label

In the EU there is a *GREEN PAPER on agricultural product quality: product standards, farming requirements and quality schemes*, (COM(2008) 641 final) on the way.

VIER PFOTEN is demanding:

- **not to water down existing animal welfare standards**
- **to implement transparency by a label**
- **to implement labeling standards in the processed food (eggs)**

Live Animals Transports

planned revision of the regulation 1/2005 still in 2009

We are basically asking to strengthen the system of cold storage plants instead of any animal transportation for slaughter . But on the way to this objective we ask

- **for a limit of transport to 8 hours**
- **The animals have to be transported in best condition, for example with appropriate space, provided with water and a good air condition**
- **improved education of drivers and transportation staff for better treatment of the animals**

Farmed Rabbits

In the European Union there are no specific rules with standards for farmed rabbits. Beyond China the main producing EU Member States are Italy, France and Spain. The consumption of rabbit meat is increasing rapidly. Most of the rabbits are suffering in battery cages. The scientific committee EFSA has in 2005 pointed out the need for minimum standards of animal welfare aspects.

The goal of VIER PFOTEN is to stop the battery cages and to keep rabbits in free range systems

As it is not yet sure that the current negotiations in the Council of Europe for a recommendation for minimum standards for farmed rabbits will come to a result, VIER PFOTEN is demanding :

- a European wide labelling of the husbandry of rabbit products
- to ban European wide the caging of rabbits for farming purposes

Animals in Experiments

Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes of 5 November 2008 (COM(2008)0543)

The EU Commission has proposed a draft revision on this directive and the European Parliament has done its first vote on 6 May 2009. The revision directive has implemented some good steps forward such as the 3 R principle but the EU Parliaments vote had missed the chance for important progress in this issue.

We ask the European Parliament to take its responsibility in the upcoming consultations and the next reading.

VIER PFOTEN is demanding for the following legislative procedure :

- **Implementing the prohibition of non human primates for all procedures**
- **ex post evaluation for all procedures**
- **an catalogue of criteria for the severity of the suffering of the animals**
- **a systematic integration of ethical criteria in the decision making process on the the procedures**
- **transparency by databases**
- **higher protection of the laboratory animals**
- **replacing the animal experiments by alternative methods**

Wild Animals in Zoos and Circuses

The *EU Council Directive 1999/22/EC* provides a common basis for Member States' legislation with regard to the licensing and inspection of zoos, the keeping of animals in zoos, the training of staff and the education of the visiting public. But there are severe deficits in executing this Directive in the Member States.

VIER PFOTEN is demanding:

- **a revision of the directive in the upcoming period with the objective of a proper enforcement in the Member States**

The transport of Wild Animals of Zoos and Circuses is not clearly in the scope of the the above mentioned live Animals Transport Regulation although circus animals are transported up to 60 times a year . VIER PFOTEN is demanding

- **to include in the protection of circus animals in the scope of the revised version of the animal transport regulation**

Stray Animals in Europe

The EU Commission launched the Community Animal Health Strategy in October 2007.

The Companion Animals are mentioned in the scope of the Strategy. The European Parliament had voted in a huge majority in a Decision in June 2008 that the stray animals have to be implemented in the scope of the Strategy as part of companion animals. The goal is to stop the suffering of hundreds thousands of stray animals in Europe, in some member states still killed in brutal way. VIER PFOTEN is demanding

- **competence of the EU for these animals in an appropriate legal way as soon as possible**
- **clarification that stray animals are not interpreted as wild animals**
- **that in the planned new legal framework of the animal health the stray animals will be part of, (prevention program by identification, registration, vaccination, deworming and birth control) as kind of companion animals**
- **a registration directive including all companion animals, private ones in households, public ones in shelters or community dogs, or dogs in public services, breded dogs and wildered ones (stay dogs).**

CONCLUSION

Political need for a strong Animal Welfare Policy

In today's Europe there are basic ethical aspects the European citizen is asking for and they have to be considered. Looking at the following figures per year:

- ▶ 12 Millions of animals are used in the EU due to Animals in Experiments
- ▶ 250 Millions of pigs and 30 Millions of cattle is slaughtered in the EU
- ▶ 360 Millions of animals (even more included poultry) are transported in the EU
- ▶ 365 Millions of healthy one day old chickens are culled

There is a basic need for a strengthened animal welfare policy in Europe. At the same time the global trade has to be faced by the EU as a political body speaking with one voice. Some new technologies like cloning of farm animals in combination with transgenetic engineering will threaten Europe in competition with other continents' economies - and ethical attitudes. Finally the growing importance of the climate change and the environment policy has to be considered .

To enable the European Union to an impact of European wide animal welfare policy that can take the challenges mentioned above, VIER PFOTEN is demanding - like the environment policy -

1 A COMPREHENSIVE ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

2 ANIMAL PROTECTION AND WELFARE AS A POLITICAL FIELD ON ITS OWN

VIER PFOTEN
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