



Animals in Europe

Bringing you the latest developments on animal welfare in the EU

Agriculture Committee reduces protection research animals

On 31 March the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee adopted its report on the revision of the EU Directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes.

Eurogroup was dismayed that some MEPs supported industry amendments which make it easier to use animals for research and would allow them to suffer more. Some MEPs even contradicted themselves by voting to make it easier to experiment on primates while they had previously adopted a resolution (September 2008) calling for non-human primate research to be phased out. Fortunately some very negative changes

made to the Commission proposal, such as the exclusive use of internationally validated alternative methods, were rejected. If accepted, this would have added several years to the validation procedure of alternative methods thereby extended the time needed for acceptance in the EU. Amendments calling for more funding and the promotion of alternatives by



the EU and member states were also maintained.

All eyes will now be on the plenary vote in May. Animal protection groups will be urging MEPs to reject proposals that allow for severe and prolonged suffering and those that will remove the need for the authorisation of tests and weaken the protection of primates. Slovenian MEP Mojca Murko, who withdrew her name from the Environment Committee report out of protest to the pro-animal use amendments has also urged her colleagues to vote for "modern and humane science" during the May plenary.

New Transport rules in Inter-service consultation

The Commission is currently discussing a new proposal for the transport of farm animals. Under the new proposal, animals sent to the slaughterhouse would only travel for a maximum of 9 hours, as demanded by animal protection groups and the European Parliament over a period of many years. Eurogroup is, however, worried that imprecise definitions and exemptions, will leave the door open to infringements. For animals that are transported to be further fattened (which amounts to 70% of the trade), the situation will get worse. Eurogroup is now calling on Health Commissioner Vassiliou, to change the proposal so that it meets the objective of improved protection and better enforcement.

Slaughter proposal: concern over on-farm killing

Work is currently underway on the Commission proposal on the protection of animals at the time of killing. On 16 March, the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee adopted its report which has weakened both the Commission's proposal and the draft prepared by rapporteur Wojciechowski. Eurogroup hopes that exemptions to the training of staff and to the stunning requirements for animals that are slaughtered at home during traditional events will not be accepted in Plenary in May.

The Council is expected to take a decision before the end of the Czech Presidency. Eurogroup has asked Agriculture Ministers not to allow the slaughter of sheep, goats, and even pigs and calves on farm for own consumption, as opposed to a certified slaughterhouse. Apart from the risk for animal welfare and problems of hygiene and public health, Eurogroup questions how Member State authorities will be able to verify that farmers adequately stun the animals before killing.

MEPs say no to food from cloned animals

Eurogroup welcomes the adoption of the European Parliament's report on novel foods which rejects the authorisation of food products from cloned animals and their offspring. MEPs have made it clear during the vote on 25 March that, instead of including rules on cloning for food production in the EU's pending novel foods regulation, they want a specific Commission proposal to prohibit the cloning of animals for food and the import of such products.

Last September a parliamentary resolution called for a ban on the sale of food products from cloned

animals and their offspring. Eurogroup for Animals considers that there is no justification to allow the cloning of animals or the import of products derived from cloned animals.



Citizens and consumers are strongly opposed to cloning and scientists agree that it would increase animal suffering.

It is unacceptable that in the light of such huge opposition and clear scientific evidence that the European Commission is delaying a decision on this issue. Instead the Commission has asked the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for further advice on certain health and welfare implications of animal cloning.

As seal hunt commences, trialogue discusses trade ban

The annual Canadian commercial seal hunt once again caused global outrage as pictures and footage of the cruelty of the seal hunt were widely dispersed by Eurogroup members. The Canadians started their gruesome massacre just a week after the Russian environment minister prohibited the hunting of harp seals in his country and its waters.

The seal hunt currently coincides with a series of discussions between the Commission, Council and Parliament on an EU import ban of seal products. The European Parliament's lead committee has already backed our call for a full ban on the trade in and EU citizens will now be looking to the European Parliament as it votes on the proposal at this Parliament's last plenary session on 7 May 2009. As it stands, most member states support a total ban on the import of seal products.

Commission recognises importance welfare of farmed fish

The European Commission's Fisheries Directorate has published a Communication on the future of

EU aquaculture. Aquaculture or the farming of aquatic animals is a growing industry in the EU and policy makers are looking to increase Europe's competitiveness and sustainability. For aquaculture to be truly sustainable, a range of serious welfare problems need to be addressed with regard to the way fish are bred, transported and slaughtered. The European Food Safety Authority has already clearly proven that fish feel pain.

A sector which is so heavily subsidised by taxpayers' money and seemingly expanding so quickly should also be regulated so that the welfare of the animals is not compromised. The Commission will evaluate fish welfare in aquaculture with a view to possibly introducing legislation which may hopefully be expected in the next few years.

EU celebrates 30th anniversary Birds Directive

The EU celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Bird Directive on 2 April. At a reception Birdlife International praised the Commission for its work for protecting wild birds and biodiversity. In his speech, Environment Commissioner Dimas referred to the Birds

Directive as "one of the great success stories of EU environmental policy" and stressed that "the Birds Directive is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago and has a key role to play in delivering our biodiversity policy for many years to come".



Intergroup for the welfare and conservation of animals

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday
22 April 2009

Animal Experimentation

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