



Animals in Europe

Bringing you the latest developments on animal welfare in the EU

Moves to postpone battery cage ban rejected

During the recent Agriculture Council Poland raised its request for the Council to recommend to the Commission that they postpone the implementation of the ban on conventional battery cages by five years, to 2017. The Council rejected this position and the new Health and Consumer Commissioner, John Dalli, stated that he had no plans to consider such a proposal. Eurogroup for Animals and its member organisations strongly believe that there is no reason to offer such a compromise as the 1999 legislation provided for a transition period of a generous 12 and a half years, allowing producers to spread their capital investments for the removal of battery cages over a number of years.

“The European Commission has taken its responsibilities seriously and stood up to this attempt to water down its existing legislation and ensure that the welfare of laying hens is not compromised further by extending the life of battery cages,” said Michel Courat, Policy Officer Farm Animals at Eurogroup for Animals.

“We also believe that if any extension was offered it would have distorted competition and have penalised those producers who have already invested and improved the welfare of their hens. Farmers who have left it too late to change to non-cage or enriched cage systems should not be rewarded for their inaction by a postponement of the ban,” he concluded.



Parliament defends endangered species

The future for some of the world's most endangered animals may be a little less precarious thanks to the European Parliament. During its recent plenary session it endorsed a strong Motion for a Resolution on the EU's strategic objectives for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

This Motion sends a strong message that Europeans want more protection for endangered species such as polar bears, sharks and bluefin tuna and that protection must be maintained for threatened species such as elephants and crocodiles.

Eurogroup, in partnership with its members has also sent letters to Environment Ministers across the globe calling for their support of the U.S. proposal to protect polar bears being traded. Based on the latest science, the polar bear population is predicted to decline by two-thirds by 2050.

The European Commission and EU Member States are urged to take this opinion into account when formulating a common EU position for the CITES Conference of the Parties meeting in Doha next month.

New Commission takes office

The new European Commission has officially taken office after being approved by the European Parliament. Eurogroup is now arranging to meet all of the commissioners and their cabinets to understand how they intend to apply and integrate Article 13 of the Lisbon treaty in their individual policy areas.

Eurogroup would like to see the new Common Agriculture Policy placing more emphasis on and funding for sustainable livestock production. In trade negotiations, before any agreement is signed off, an impact assessment should consider animal welfare.

Finally, Eurogroup calls on Commissioner Dalli to bring forward a comprehensive animal welfare action plan with a wide variety of policy tools and to work to develop a specific strategy to strengthen enforcement.

MEPs support Written Declaration on horse transportation

Much to the delight of animal protection supporters MEPs banded together to meet the required number of signatures for the passing of Written Declaration

54/2009 on the transportation of horses for slaughter in the European Union.

The Written Declaration emphasises the need for



the rigorous enforcement of the EU's current regulation on the transport of live animals (EC/1/2005) and calls on the European Commission and EU Member States to look into the evidence presented by animal welfare organisations on the infringements seriously affecting the welfare of transported horses.

Tabled by MEPs Elizabeth Lynne, Sidonia Jędrzejewska and Carl Schlyter the Written Declaration raised serious concerns about the plight of 100,000 horses needlessly transported across Europe in

horrific conditions every year. This is in spite of the fact that hundreds of slaughterhouses line the transport routes taken which would allow local slaughter and make a carcass-only trade possible.

Evidence shows that long-distance transportation of all farm animals to slaughter across Europe can cause stress, injury, extreme exhaustion and dehydration, as horses are often transported for days on end in unsuitable conditions without sufficient rest, food or water.

Animal welfare discussed at European Parliament seminar

Eurogroup took part in an animal welfare seminar organised by the European Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) at the European Parliament on 4 February. The seminar, entitled *Animal Welfare = Human Welfare* sought to provide a platform for discussion on animal welfare from an economic and scientific point of view. Issues raised included good husbandry, antibiotic resistance, science-based animal welfare indicators and incentives for enforcement. The seminar also covered the evaluation of the first Animal Welfare Action Plan (AWAP) and current plans for the creation of a Second AWAP. Eurogroup's Director, Sonja Van Tichelen, spoke at the seminar and repeated Eurogroup's call for the Commission to publish its proposal for a Second Action Plan quickly.

WhaleWatch calls on IWC commissioners to stand firm

Eurogroup for Animals has joined other animal welfare organisations in writing to the Commissioners of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to urge them to uphold their support for a total moratorium on whaling.

As part of the Whalewatch coalition, Eurogroup would like to express its concerns about recent attempts by whaling nations such as Iceland and Norway to increase their quotas of whales to be killed as well as Japanese violations to the current moratorium. Specifically, the WhaleWatch coalition is worried about recent discussions in which Japan sought to find the Commission's approval for coastal commercial whaling.



Retailers embrace animal welfare concerns

Eurogroup is pleased that retailers are working to incorporate higher animal welfare standards in their food operations.

Albert Heijn, the Netherlands' largest food retailer has entered into an agreement with the Beter Leven label to ensure that only high welfare pork products are sold in its shops. This alone will improve the welfare standards of

over one million pigs every year. Just recently, Freedom Food in the UK reported a record-breaking 532 million farm animals are being reared under its scheme, a 46 per cent increase since 2008.

Eurogroup is increasing its focus on the retail sector and Effiong Essien, Eurogroup's Project Officer for Sustainable Food Chain & Corporate Social Responsibility commented: "Consumers are demanding more products that reach higher animal welfare standards and we are engaged with retailers to help them implement policies and standards that reflect this".

Intergroup for the welfare and

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 25 March 2010 (tbc)

Topic:
Animal welfare in developing countries

For the full agenda and last minute updates:
www.animalwelfareintergroup.eu

For more information, MEPs can call Andreas Erler on +32 478 769 028 or e-mail to a.erler@eurogroupforanimals.org