

Issue 02 | April 2017

EUROGROUP
FOR ANIMALS

MAGAZINE

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EDITORIAL

WAKE UP CALLS

Early spring the European Union celebrated its 60th anniversary in Rome. Leaders of our Union expressed pride over the longest historic period of peace and prosperity and clear hope for the future. The EU also likes to pride itself for having the highest animal welfare standards in the world, protecting animals in farms, labs, during transport and slaughter. Animal welfare has been a priority for the EU and its citizens as shown again in last years' Eurobarometer.

But when I observe the poor welfare of so many animals on our continent, I always have mixed feelings with this jubilation. Yes indeed, we did achieve crucial legislative protection for several species but there's still a long road to go, justifying Eurogroup for Animals' campaigns.

Over the past six years we have witnessed stagnating progress on animal welfare policies whilst existing legislation is not in line with latest scientific findings and this was evidenced once more in a recent report commissioned by the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions.

The report states that the anomalous situation has major negative effects on animals, on confidence in EU functioning and makes the EU an object of derision in third countries.

The widening divide between the story we like to tell and the often brutal reality became also painfully clear during the launch of the horrendous live animals export investigations of our members Animals International and Tierschutzbund Zurich. These have shown our legislation is failing to protect millions of animals who are transported in awful conditions to be brutally slaughtered in the Middle-East or Northern Africa. Through our EU-wide *StoptheTrucks* campaign over 850,000 citizens have expressed their outrage about live transport of animals and I have no doubt that we will soon be able to hit 1 million signatures.

The daily life of millions of piglets in Europe presents another serious example of the gap between our legislative principles and reality. Newborn piglets suffer immensely whilst being castrated and tail-docked, practises which are often carried out without anaesthesia and/

or pain relief. We have the legislation and alternatives in place to end this today rather than tomorrow but no one feels responsible to turn the tide. Stay tuned for the launch of our *EndPigPain* campaign this April.

Clearly, you will read in this magazine's edition that spring 2017 will see many wake up calls which will hopefully open the eyes and ears of leaders of our Union. In any case Eurogroup for Animals won't rest till the EU walks the talk and delivers its promises to animals.



Reineke Hameleers
Director
Eurogroup for Animals



THEMA

IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS

EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS AND MEPs WORK TOGETHER TO RAISE THE BAR FOR EQUINE WELFARE

Equines have a unique place in European civilisation and history. For half a millennium, they have been used for transport, haulage, construction, leisure, therapy, sport, on farms, and of course for companionship. Whilst this continuing diversity of use has ensured that horses, donkeys and mules have remained close to humans, it has also created problems for their welfare. All too often, these species have many roles within a single lifetime. They are acquired by owners and keepers who live in different environments, with different expectations, outlooks and priorities. It is, in a way, no wonder that their welfare suffers as a consequence.

In 2015, Eurogroup for Animals and World Horse Welfare undertook the first ever [research](#) assessment to outline the scope, sale and welfare challenges facing the EU's equine sector. The results overwhelmingly demonstrated that whilst the diversity of these species is a strength on one hand, it also leads to fundamental welfare challenges on the other. Keeping in unsuitable environments, for instance, is as likely to affect a horse in Bulgaria as one in Belgium. Concerns on the neglect of donkeys are just as likely to be raised in Spain as in Santorini. However, common to most, if not all of these challenges, was that they were due to a basic lack of knowledge amongst owners and handlers. Ignorance, for equines, is certainly not bliss.

This realisation led Eurogroup for Animals to reach out to Julie Girling, a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for South West England & Gibraltar, and a long standing champion for the welfare for equines. Mrs Girling agreed, with the support of Eurogroup for Animals, to work on an initiative designed to fill basic knowledge gaps, thereby lifting equine welfare across the EU, whilst unleashing the full potential of the equine sector as a whole.

And so, this March, the European Parliament adopted a [Resolution on the responsible ownership and care of equidae](#), with the support of 95% of MEPs. This Resolution is a formal communication of the Parliament to which the European Commission must now respond considerably.



Julie Girling, MEP for South West England & Gibraltar, and member of the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals

The document is focussed on three key areas in which it wishes to see action. Fundamentally it asks for:

1. The dissemination of basic information relating to the care of all equines across the EU
2. A quality mark to empower consumers, so they are able to choose businesses that use equines responsibly
3. Funding tools to reward those small farms and businesses that uphold high standards of welfare for their horses, donkeys or mules

The Resolution has also been adopted at an opportune time: It is clear that this draft report is pushing at an open door, and that in lieu of new legal standards, there is a willingness both from the Commission and from Member States to work on non-legislative initiatives which can add value, both to civil society and in terms economic growth. The report has been adopted just weeks before the inaugural meeting of the new EU Platform on Animal Welfare where we see scope for the creation of a subgroup on equine welfare. The resolution provides the perfect basis for the work of such a sub group, taking forward the substantive paragraphs.

After all, the equine sector is the first or second largest rural employer in nearly every Member State, is worth well over €100 billion per year, and it is also clear that this is a priority area for several Member States.

All too often, Eurogroup for Animals' member organisations' shelters are left to deal with the unintended consequences that arise from ignorance: from horses that are abandoned, to donkeys and mules that are overworked.

Whilst the Resolution and the actions that should follow are not infallible remedies they will go a long way to resolving many of the welfare problems that arise each and every day, whilst, at the same time, helping millions of businesses and farms across the EU at time when they need it the most. Horses, donkeys and mules have been left by the wayside by policy makers in Brussels for too long. Now we have a plan and the means to implement it, the work begins to ensure that they are no longer ignored.



INTERVIEW

DONALD M. BROOM, EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ANIMAL WELFARE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE AND AUTHOR OF THE LAST MAJOR EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REPORT ON EU ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY

Where do you see the major gaps in EU Animal Welfare legislation?

We have a situation where if you look at the species which are kept, working animals, companion animals, or farm animals etc., the majority are not protected in their living conditions – where they spend most of their lives – by EU animal welfare legislation.

“ So there are significant gaps for a very large number of animals. If we take into account the numbers of animals suffering, two of the most widespread captive animals in Europe – trout and salmon – are not protected by EU legislation.”

The same goes for breeding birds like broiler breeders and laying hen breeders, but one could also cite rabbits, geese, turkeys, and many more. They represent billions of animals who remain unprotected. So I believe that the biggest issue can be identified by looking at the greatest numbers of animals with unlegislated welfare problems.

What could be the impact of an EU Animal Welfare Framework Law? Do you see a risk that such a law could weaken existing EU animal welfare related legislation or make it obsolete?

For me the biggest advantage would be that this law could cover all species currently kept for different purposes (farm animals, companion animals, working animals, etc.). All would be covered by a general EU law hereby remedying current legislative gaps.

“ An EU Animal Welfare Framework law could and should be written in such a way that it enables further legislation, without reducing any existing law.”

The wording therefore plays an important role; it should definitely prevent reduction of any existing protection. But I don't think it would be approved if it would be seen as weakening established animal welfare legislation. So all in all I believe such an initiative would create a real opportunity. As the EU now has experience with the creation of framework laws, such as the Animal Health Law, I trust the process for the EU Animal Welfare Framework Law will be easier and quicker to put in place, provided the political will is there.

The European Commission has made it clear that there will be no new legislation on animal welfare during this term. Moreover, it is likely that there will be no new EU-Animal Welfare Strategy for the coming years, thus creating a vacuum instead of a roadmap of ambitious EU welfare

actions. Which danger do you see in this complete lack of ambition?

We have extremely good evidence from the last Eurobarometer that across all Member States the public wants better protection of animals.

“ *If the Commission does not move forward with new legislation, there will be an increased mistrust from the public, which is a major danger I see. This could damage the whole structure of the EU. The Commission would lose its reputation with the European public even further as a result.* **”**

Furthermore, so far the influence of the European Union animal welfare policies on other countries in the world has been considerable. EU animal welfare related legislation has inspired many third countries to introduce similar or equal legislation. Australia, New Zealand or Brazil are just a few examples for this. The EU risks losing its pioneer position in this field with its current legislative stagnation. If there are no further developments in the next few years, there is no doubt that other countries will take the lead.

Legislation is the key to cementing welfare improvements around the world. I see the merit of the EU's wish to developing soft policy measures too as information and best-practice sharing can help levelling standards during implementation of laws. But soft law is not enough, if you want the benefits of enforcement mechanisms, you need legislation.

What is your view about the creation of an EU Animal Welfare Platform? Which advice would you give to make sure that it doesn't become yet another forum of debate, delivering little change for animals?

“ *The EU Animal Welfare Platform can be a very positive thing, but for it to be impactful, it needs specific objectives.* **”**

First of all, there should be legislative objectives: what do we need next in terms of legislation. This should be a major part of the platform's activity. Then, there should be objectives in setting standards: drawing together different standards. Finally, there needs to be a set of objectives for animal welfare research. Otherwise the EU Animal Welfare Platform won't achieve much.



Andreas Erler, Senior Political Adviser



SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH STUDIES OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The research services of the various European Parliament's policy departments provide scientific papers, studies, in-depth analyses or briefings which are either produced in house or commissioned to outside researchers. These studies and briefings provide specific background information which facilitates the work of the Parliamentary Committees or other services.

The Parliament already produced several studies related to animal welfare or conservation issues building on Eurogroup for Animals' advice.

After an excellent status report on the implementation of the last EU animal welfare strategy, the other recent document that I have found most helpful for our lobby work is the "Animal welfare in the EU: current situation and future challenges".

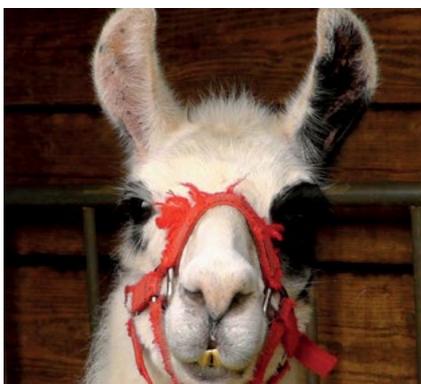
This report was commissioned by the European Parliament and drafted by Donald M. BROOM, University of Cambridge. This study reveals that EU animal welfare policy and legislation has had much positive influence in the world, on the image of the EU as well as for helping animals.

However, 35% of EU animals remain unprotected, involving some of the worst animal welfare problems, and EU legislation obviously needs to go further.

IN EUROPE

#Act4Wildlife

SPANISH REGION OF GALICIA ONE STEP CLOSER TO BANNING WILD ANIMALS IN CIRCUSES



April 2017 saw the Galician government approve the new draft Animal Protection Law which includes a ban of wild animals in circuses among other rather progressive measures. The ban resulted from a campaign of Spanish coalition InfoCircos (including Eurogroup for Animals members ANDA and AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection) and other local partners.

The law will now have to go to the regional Parliament where forecasts of further approval are optimal.

Galicia, one of the most rural and traditional regions of Spain, thus becomes the second Spanish Autonomous Community to formally ban wild animals in circuses, after Catalonia. The ban in Comunidad Valenciana has the unanimous approval of the Parliament but it still needs to be translated into formal legislation. Today 18 EU countries have adopted restrictions in the use of wild animals in circuses.

#Act4FarmAnimals

TOWARDS THE END OF BATTERY CAGES IN NORWAY



Norgesgruppen, which holds 41% of the Norwegian grocery market, has announced its intention to stop selling battery eggs by the end of 2019, with most of their eggs already cage-free in 2017.

Eurogroup for Animals' member Dyreveralliansen started working with Norgesgruppen in 2015, producing a report with detailed advice on the welfare of hens, which resulted in concrete commitments within six months. As a result, there is only one major supermarket chain left in Norway that sells battery eggs, and it can be expected that it is a matter of time before they go cage free too.

Norway currently has more than two million caged hens. The wired floor in the small cage does not provide the opportunity for satisfying important behavioural needs such as scratching.

Norwegian retail status Summary

For Caged Eggs: Norgesgruppen 41% market share. cage-free within 2018/ Rema 1000 - 24% market share. cage-free since 2012 /Coop 28% market share. sells battery eggs.

#Act4FarmAnimals

PHASING OUT THE CONFINEMENT OF SOWS IN GERMANY

According to European and German legislation, sows can be confined from one week before farrowing, during the whole suckling period (3 to 4 weeks) and again during the first 4 weeks of gestation.

A recent decision of the German Federal Administrative Court found that the width of existing crates in the area where sows are kept after insemination was insufficient. As a follow up of that decision, a proposal was made by several federal states to phase out the confinement in individual crates after insemination. In March 2017, the German Federal conference of agricultural ministers agreed with this proposal and the last steps are underway to change the legislation. Although some critical points that still need to be addressed, the proposal is generally welcome as it means a start of the phasing out of the confinement of sows.

#Act4Pets

BETTER PROTECTION FOR KITTENS BRED FOR SALE

The government of England has decided to end the commercial sale of kittens under eight weeks old. It also plans to close the loophole in the law that allows people to run unlicensed pet shops from home by breeding their own cats. Once these regulations are in place, anyone selling kittens as a business will need to apply for an animal activities licence and will be subject to inspections. The government also plans to make enforcement of animal welfare under these licences more effective. This positive legislative step follows the tremendous mobilisation of the English public encouraged by the "True cost of kittens" campaign from Eurogroup for Animals' member Cats Protection.

#Act4FarmAnimals

LATEST FRENCH INVESTIGATION ABOUT THE HORRIFIC SITUATION OF PIGS BRED IN FRANCE



Photo: © L214

After previous shocking videos filmed in slaughterhouses, L214 released new terrible evidence of the way pigs are being bred on a farm in Finistère near Quimper, France.

The images show pigs raised on concrete floors without any access to enrichment or outdoor spaces in 95% of the pig pens investigated. Piglets are born of mothers enclosed in cages barely larger than their bodies, before being themselves crammed into pens for fattening.

In addition to being subjected to routine industrial agricultural practices, the footage shows these pigs are suffering from the utmost neglect. They are forced to live among the bodies of their putrefying pen mates, often left there for so long that only their bones remain. The pigs left living in this intensive breeding environment survive in repugnant setting.

L214 asked the authorities to immediately close this farm (official complaint submitted to the public prosecutor of the Tribunal de Grande Instance, Quimper).

#Act4FarmAnimals

SLAUGHTER WITHOUT PRE-STUNNING TO BE BANNED IN FLANDERS

Slaughter without pre-stunning of animals will be banned in Flanders, including slaughter carried out under the practices of religious tradition. For sheep and goats, stunning prior to bleeding (or pre-cut stunning) will be mandatory from 2019. For cattle, stunning immediately after bleeding (or post-cut stunning) will be mandatory until the reversible stunning technique works flawlessly (more specifically for breeds of cattle raised in Belgium, depending on the weight of the carcasses). A study to perfect this technique is underway at the University of Bristol in collaboration with the University of Ghent. Eurogroup for Animals' Belgian member GAIA has campaigned for this for more than 25 years to spare animals the avoidable suffering of being slaughtered while fully conscious.

#Act4AnimalsEU

DUTCH ELECTIONS: GROWING SUCCESS FOR THE PARTY FOR THE ANIMALS

On 15 March, the Dutch Party for the Animals (PvdD) won five seats at the last Dutch parliamentary elections. This means a gain of three seats equivalent to an increase of 150 %.

The Party for the Animals forms an integral part of an international and growing movement of people and parties working for the rights of animals, nature and the environment in politics and public administration. The Netherlands, Portugal, Germany and Australia already have active representatives of parties for animal in national parliaments while in many other countries, parties for animals have been founded or are in formation.

#Act4Wildlife

ALL BUT 123 MAMMAL SPECIES FORBIDDEN AS PETS IN THE NETHERLANDS



Photo: © InfoCircos

The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs' Positive List for mammals published in February 2017, has finally detailed the species allowed to be kept as pets, as well as the conditions in which the animals should be kept. The list, drafted after a long and thorough process of risk assessment, now includes 123 species. All other mammal species are forbidden.

AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection, Dierenbescherming and the Dutch Animal Coalition, have been advocating for more than 25 years for such a list to avoid the welfare impairments of many unsuitable pets. This new law acknowledges that here are substantial public health risks involved in keeping exotic pets as well as negative consequences when animals are released or escape and become invasive. The overall distinction between suitable and unsuitable animals and the fact that the range of species allowed to be kept has been severely limited should set an important example for other EU members states to follow.



29 March 2017 set the start of the two year negotiation period for Brexit. While this process can bring up some positive opportunities, members of Eurogroup for Animals are joining forces to influence the discussions on both sides of the negotiation table to secure a positive outcome for animals.



MAKING THE BEST OF BREXIT FOR ANIMALS

It is hard to think of a single policy area such as animal welfare that intertwines with so many of the issues that will be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU.

British agriculture has, for example, been the recipient of generous subsidies under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the last 44 years in return for meeting basic standards, including around animal welfare. Last year alone CAP payments to the UK totalled about €3.5 billion, making up 55% of farmers' incomes. Equally, Europe-wide legislation requires national governments to "contribute to the development and validation" of non-animal testing methods. Around 250,000 pets travel between the UK and the mainland continent each year, and it is at European level where one finds the rules that comply with CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and other international conventions.

UNDOUBTEDLY, THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES

We are reassured by UK Ministers, including the Prime Minister, that there is nothing to fear: not for farmers, pet owners, scientists, nor for the animals themselves. Undoubtedly, there are opportunities. The UK will, of course,

be able to introduce standards that have, in some areas, been restrained by the vagaries of qualified majority voting at EU level or the need to ensure a level playing field in Europe which is the world's second largest marketplace. CCTV could be introduced into all slaughterhouses, live exports halted, slaughter without stunning prohibited and the flow of pets better controlled, just by way of examples. However, for all these potential rays of sunshine, there are several dark clouds on the horizon too. These come in the form of market competition abroad, competing economic priorities at home, and the sheer challenge of maintaining many of better aspects of the current regulatory framework.

In terms of market opportunities, some believe that the UK's departure from the Union is a golden opportunity to scale back on, and even end, agricultural subsidies altogether. We hear that the CAP has been hugely distortive, and that it has disincentivised British farms from innovation. The same voices argue that subsidies will only hold Britain back if it is to build new and successful trading relationships globally. After all, the EU is so heavily committed to agricultural protectionism that its ability to sign trade agreements with developing nations has long been restricted. Yet if the UK adopts a different approach, opening up its markets to food exports from, for example, Commonwealth nations, it could gain significant new access for UK companies looking to sell services.

YET OPENING UP MARKETS IS HARDLY SYNONYMOUS WITH HIGHER WELFARE STANDARDS

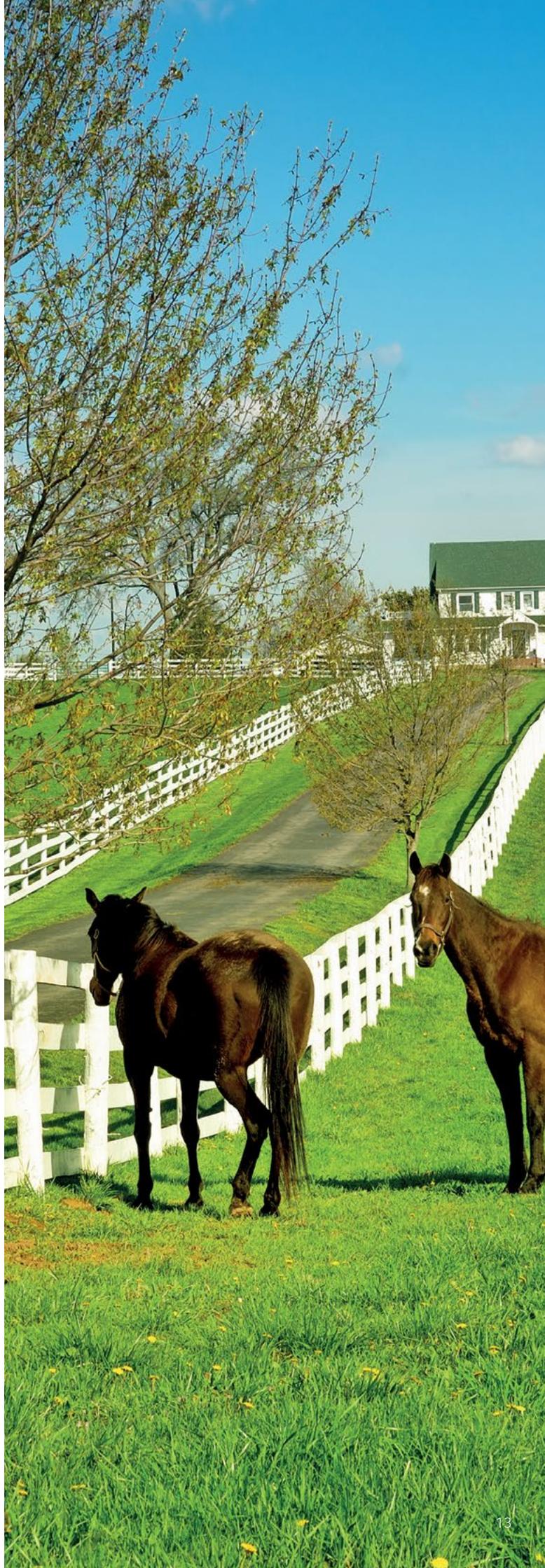
If British agriculture wishes to compete globally, and wants to innovate purely for the purposes of improving agricultural productivity, then current animal welfare standards would very quickly left by the wayside. Many proponents of this avenue cite the success of US agriculture, which is hardly a beacon for animal welfare, where factory farming now accounts for 99% of all animals reared and slaughtered.

Of course, those who wish to see welfare focussed subsidies or grants, of any kind, die a death are also likely to have the wind in their sails. Even taking the UK Government's own £120 billion upward revision of borrowing in the next five years, half of which was related to Brexit, many would agree that there could be a significant hole in UK public finances at a time of higher inflation (due to the fall in the price of Sterling) and rising commodity prices (including for animal feed). Furthermore, with a UK Parliamentary election just around the corner from the date of secession itself, and with creaking, strained budgets for the top two electoral priorities – health and education – it would be all too easy to please both farming unions and doctors, patients, parents and pupils alike. It is common sense that says it's difficult to do more with less.

Finally, the scale of the challenge in terms of simply guarding current standards is truly daunting. The Eurogroup for Animals secretariat has mapped over 180 UK and devolved Statutory Instruments, which implement 18 Directives and enforce 27 Regulations relating to animals and their welfare. However, the provisions of the Regulations, being horizontally directly effective, are not covered in the UK law at all, and would need to be transposed, along with many of the 400 plus pieces of EU level tertiary legislation that contain the detailed rules for many of these laws to work.

JOINING FORCES WITHIN EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS

However, whilst the challenges are daunting, the opportunities are worth fighting for: Brexit is, quite simply, a fork in the road that will determine the standards of the UK's animal welfare legislation for many years to come. It is in this recognition that ten UK-based Eurogroup for Animals' member organisations have joined forces to form the 'Brexit & Animals Taskforce'. With the support of the Eurogroup for Animals secretariat in Brussels, it aims to ensure that key legislation is safeguarded, that higher standards are introduced across all species groups, and that future UK trade policy leads to higher welfare outcomes for animals on both sides of the Channel. The taskforce has already produced a [joint position paper outlining key demands and opportunities based on a thorough study of the legislative impacts of Brexit](#).





MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**FOLLOW OUR WORK FOR
ANIMAL WELFARE**



THE FORGOTTEN ANIMALS: IT'S TIME TO ACT FOR FISH WELFARE

Reineke HAMELEERS, Director

Fish are sentient beings and are capable of feeling both fear and pain. This fact is indisputable. Any piece of writing on fish welfare should begin by stating this because, although this fact is scientifically proven, it is not acknowledged by the public at large and it has not been translated into effective legislation. Studies now show that fish consciously avoid suffering, that they have cognitive abilities which help them navigate adverse situations, and that they show physiological and behavioural stress responses similar to mammals.

Eurogroup for Animals is thrilled to have the opportunity to tackle this vastly important and neglected issue by launching a dedicated Fish & Animal Welfare Program. This is possible thanks to the generosity of the Open Philanthropy Foundation. This effort is absolutely necessary due to the highly organised and effective nature of the fisheries lobby in Brussels and the comparatively weak position of the fish welfare lobby. Now is the time for this to change, with two studies on fish welfare due from the European Commission later this year possibly leading the path to improved legal standards, and Eurogroup's increasing role in the EU's Aquaculture Council.

Not only have farmed fish been neglected in legislation on animal welfare, but wild fish to remain unprotected by European legislation in terms of catching, stunning and killing. This is unacceptable as Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union requires that the EU recognise the sentience of animals, including in fisheries policy. And for those consumers who are aware of the sentience of fish and wish to act on this information, responsible consumption is impeded because effective high welfare schemes and labelling mechanisms are inexistent.

Through its regular collaborative and coordinated EU-wide lobby approach, Eurogroup for Animals is now ready to bring this issue to EU policy-makers in a lively manner. The Program's objectives for the coming two years are to: achieve better legislative standards for fish welfare, ensure the effective implementation of existing legislation for the slaughter and transport of fish, and catalyze farmers' investments in higher welfare practices through the Common Fisheries Policy. The Program will mobilize Eurogroup for Animals' network of national members to raise awareness of fish sentience and welfare needs among European citizens while encouraging retailers to upgrade their procurement policies.



MEPS WANT FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

Ilaria DI SILVESTRE,
Programme Leader – Wildlife



& Iyan OFFOR, Trade and Animal
Welfare Project Officer

On 2 March, MEPs adopted Emma McClarkin's report on '[EU Common Commercial Policy in the context of wildlife sustainability imperatives](#)' by a stunning majority of 579 votes to 15, with 20 abstentions. MEPs note in this new report that '*the world is facing an unprecedented surge in wildlife trafficking*' and that the '*uncontrolled and excessive use of wild animal and plant species represents the second most serious threat to their survival in the wild*'.

This new report supports an approach to EU trade policy that not only prioritises the issue of combating illegal wildlife trade but includes provisions aimed at its reduction and ultimate elimination in all future agreements. The report stresses that nothing in EU trade policy should prevent the EU or its trading partners from taking decisions that are necessary for the protection of wildlife and natural resources. When using trade deals to remove barriers to trade, MEPs believe concrete efforts have to be made to safeguard animal welfare.

The report includes various amendments suggested by Eurogroup for Animals. These include a paragraph about the important role of NGOs in the fight against wildlife trafficking, wording about the prevention of cruelty to animals, a call for a total ban on the ivory trade, supplementary legal provisions on the trade of species that are protected in their country of origin, and a focus on the links between wildlife trafficking and public morality (in order to ensure that EU efforts to tackle wildlife trafficking are fully defensible under World Trade Organisation rules).

This report creates a pathway to mobilize trade policy in support of effective protection for animal welfare. Eurogroup for Animals welcomed this positive step concerning the use of the EU's common commercial policy to improve the lives of animals through our trade agreements. It also addresses important concerns about the risks EU trade policy can present to animals.

Eurogroup for Animals' consistent lobby efforts to forward a positive and responsible trade agenda that respects and protects animal welfare have helped ensure the European Parliament's support for this report.



KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE FOR RESEARCH ANIMALS

Giulia TARSITANO, Animals in Science and Companion Animals Programme Officer

The review process of Directive 2010/63 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, foreseen by the Directive at its inception, is expected to come to conclusion early November this year. Started in May 2016, the consultation process involved the 28 Member States, almost 900 users and more than 50 EU stakeholders, of which the greater part was constituted of animal advocates.

Our magazine's October edition already pointed you to our key demands for improvements in order to achieve the Directive's goal of avoiding and reducing animal suffering used for science purposes. Ahead of the official review report expected later this year, the Commission invited Eurogroup for Animals and other EU stakeholders to an informal consultation so as to present and discuss some preliminary findings. By actively participating in the process, Eurogroup for Animals aims to make a difference from within and deliver the greatest impact for animals.

The EC found that a significant number of EU stakeholders and users consider the new legal framework to have improved both animal welfare and animal care/housing standards. However, feedback received from animal advocacy organizations is less enthusiastic. Many animal advocates point that the early timing of this review process made it difficult if not impossible to draw qualitative conclusions on the practical impact of the Directive for animals used. The majority also believes that an inconsistent implementation across Europe impairs the effective protection of animals used in science. Finally, animal advocates are also more critical regarding progress booked on developing and validating 3R methods. In this specific field, impact will only be possible once the lack of knowledge, scepticism and insufficient investments hurdles are overcome.

The review clearly addresses the necessary improvements Eurogroup for Animals and other animal advocacy organisations have been asking since the start of the review process. It is therefore crucial to keep the pressure so as to ensure the necessary measures we call for are part of the Commission's' final recommendations.



FROM CULLING TO CARING FOR DOGS AND CATS

Joe MORAN, Political Affairs Adviser

The last few years have left an indelible scar on Europe's morality: Dogs and cats in certain European regions and countries have been subjected to blanket culls, most notably in Romania. The outrage from many public quarters has been heard by the EU institutions in Brussels, and by animal advocacy organisations throughout the EU. Sadly, it has too often fallen on ears that may have indeed heard, but were unwilling to really listen.

The European Commission has claimed, partly with some validity, that cat and dog welfare is something that is the responsibility of the EU Member States. Ostensibly, they are right. However, the culls that have taken place have invariably not been undertaken on the basis of animal welfare. Indeed, wilfully killing animals with such means is hardly something that we would associate with welfare – it is plain cruelty. No, instead they have been conducted on the grounds of the disease risk that the animals pose to humans, and this is an area in which the EU institutions can act.

The EU level has a clear role to play when it comes to combatting veterinary public health risks. Indeed the Commission even funds programmes – such as the rabies eradication programme – based on such competences.

Eurogroup for Animals believes that it is time for concrete policy solutions to stop these atrocities to animals, and to explore how the institutions in Brussels can foster a climate of care rather than one of killing. On 26 April, animal health and welfare scientists, animal behaviourists, public affairs professionals, politicians and policy makers will be brought together under the patronage of the European Parliament Intergroup on the Welfare & Conservation of Animals, the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU and the S&D Group in the European Parliament to look at how new legal instruments could be used to coerce Member States into managing cat & dog populations in humane ways.

MEPs will then take forward the conclusions within the European Parliament and will formally ask the Commission to implement the suggestions. With a little imagination and the political will, we can ensure that blanket culls within our common borders become a thing of the past.

GET TO KNOW US

THE STAFF OF EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS

Eurogroup for Animals' team composition today reflects the changing needs of our Brussels-based animal advocacy umbrella towards greater campaigning, communications and political affairs skills. A team of qualified policy specialists drive the organisation's programs and projects, supported by a team of communications, political affairs and international trade specialists. This puts us in the best position not only to successfully run our programs over a longer time period but also to deliver timely impact within strict budgetary frameworks for our projects and campaigns. More than ever we rely on the scientific knowledge, national policy intelligence and public outreach capacity of our 54 members across Europe and beyond to support, in constant dialogue between Brussels and the EU 28 capitals and citizens, a growing advocacy agenda for improved animal welfare.



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Leader



Ilaria di Silvestre
Wildlife Programme Leader



Giulia Tarsitano
Animals in Science and
Companion Animals
Programme Officer



Iyan Offer
Trade & Animal Welfare
Project Officer



Fish Welfare
Project Leader
International Trade
Project Leader (vacant)
Digital Communications
Officer (vacant)

OUR MEMBERS

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

THE EUROPEAN ANIMAL ADVOCACY MOVEMENT IS CONTINUOUSLY CHANGING WHICH CAN ALSO BE OBSERVED IN EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS' MEMBERSHIP. THIS CHANGE REFLECTS THE EVOLVING CONCERN OF CITIZENS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE AND THEIR GROWING ENGAGEMENT VIA ANIMAL ADVOCACY ORGANISATIONS.

Whereas at its inception, Eurogroup for Animals' member organisations all were generalists, covering a wide range of species and issues in their advocacy work, more than a quarter today of Eurogroup for Animals' 54 members focus on a single specie and/or issue.

Some for example only work on the horrific conditions of farm animals, the ethically unacceptable fur industry, the forgotten situation of fish or the welfare of our pets. Many have made that choice because they want to concentrate their limited resources with extreme focus to those issues where they can have the greatest impact. The bulk of the animal advocacy movement's landscape continues to be composed of organisations covering a multiplicity of topics, which is essential to make sure all of the pressing issues faced by animals are being addressed. Nevertheless, more and more single specie and/or issue organisations do benefit from the specific engagement and support of citizens for a particular cause that is close to their hearts.





SUPPORT US

EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS IS A STRONG VOICE FOR ANIMALS IN EUROPE. OUR STRENGTH COMES FROM OUR MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND PARTNERS WITH WHOM WE RELENTLESSLY ADVOCATE TO IMPROVE THE WELFARE OF THE MILLIONS OF ANIMALS LIVING BY OUR SIDES.

But this is an uphill battle. This is why we constantly strive to attract new supporters to join our movement and why we also need your help. Animal suffering is a reality, but there is an alternative. So come and join your forces to ours to fight for a better future for all animals.

There are many ways to help: visit our website, sign our latest petition, follow us on social media, share our posts or contact us to become a member or make a donation.



CONTACT:

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