EUROGROUP MAGAZINE



THEME:
Mink farming
risks health
of animals
and humans

6
INTERVIEW:
Anja Hazekamp
MEP GUE/NGL
Netherlands

JOINING FORCES: Stop Circus suffering

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Design: BakOS DESIGN

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EDITORIAL

As I'm writing this editorial, 3,400 young bovines have been criss crossing the Mediterranean sea for over 3 months and will probably be killed as they are no longer 'fit' for travel and production. Treating animals as pure commodities, this utterly tragic case illustrates the serious shortcomings of our current legislation and its enforcement. Some people ask me why such a crisis is still happening as the EU likes to pride itself as a global animal welfare leader and our highest legislation is recognising animals as sentient beings? Sadly there is still a wide gap between what the EU says it believes in honouring the wishes of the vast majority of EU citizens, and what it actually still allows.

This year presents fresh opportunities for the EU's leadership to live up to its reputation. After 10 years of legislative stalemate, the Commission is in the process of reviewing the appropriateness of the existing animal welfare legislation. This can potentially

have a big impact on the wellbeing of billions of animals and hopefully avoid situations as with the bovines on the Mediterranean sea. We need to see an ambitious reform, not just an upgrade of existing systems, giving the animals a bit more space or some enrichment material. Apart from the immense suffering of animals, this Pandemic is teaching us clear lessons on the need to fundamentally change our relationship with nature and animals. To get that right we need a profound system change.

We know it can be done. There are so many positive examples around us leading the way towards a different kind of society. Over the coming months we will inspire the EU decision makers to end the animal welfare crisis and embrace humane, sustainable and resilient models that already exist. Let's make the suffering of the 3,400 bovines count for a much better future.



Reineke Hameleers CEO, Eurogroup for Animals

EUROGROUP EANIMALS





MINK FARMING RISKS HEALTH OF ANIMALS AND HUMANS

On fur farms, mink are crammed into tiny cages, providing the ideal breeding ground for infectious diseases."

Thomas Pietsch, fur expert at FOUR PAWS

In a grisly development last November, some of the thousands of tonnes of coronavirus-infected mink culled in Denmark were pushed to the surface by decomposition gases from their insufficiently deep mass grave. Despite being dubbed "zombie mink", the corpses were not a health-risk in themselves and local authorities moved quickly to bury them under more earth. However, fears about contamination of groundwater linger, as do more significant concerns. Breeding these naturally solitary animals in high-density farms provides ideal conditions for rapid transmission and the emergence of new variants that may not respond to current COVID-19 vaccines, not only increasing the risk to humans and other animals, but also possibly establishing permanent viral reservoirs.

November's decision to slaughter Denmark's up to 17 million mink was taken following the discovery of a **mutated version of COVID-19 in fur farms**. The mutation — with the potential to weaken the effectiveness of vaccines — had already infected a considerable number of people in the north of the country, where many of its 1,100 farms are located. The authorities suspended mink farming until 2022 and ordered a blanket cull, hoping to eradicate the disease. However, this **dangerous 'Cluster 5' variant has recently been discovered in German patients**.

Mink-to-human transmission was first identified in the Netherlands through whole genome sequencing, while cases of infection have led other EU countries to take steps to ward off the risk (see infographic). Outside the EU, mink-related mutations in humans have been found in South Africa, Switzerland, the Faroe Islands, Russia, Canada and the United States.

SPILLOVER THREAT

There are indications that the virus was rapidly spreading in Danish mink fur farms before it was detected. Mink are not alone in being susceptible to catching SARS-CoV-2 from humans, but new mutations develop faster in the animals, while their unnaturally close proximity raises stress levels and diminishes immunity, boosting the spread of the infection.

Obviously escaped mink could infect their wild cousins, but these high mutation rates also make it possible for the virus to adapt to a variety of hosts, giving it the potential to turn into a panzootic disease. Spillover of the infection to other mustelids, such as otters and badgers, could lead to the parallel circulation of viruses, threatening these species and potentially causing further outbreaks among humans.

PRIORITISING PUBLIC HEALTH

These dangers have been recognised in Brussels. A few days after the mutation was detected, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) warned that new strands of coronavirus could undermine international efforts to combat it. The authority conducted an EU Rapid Risk Assessment with the European Medicines Agency and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). At November's Agri Council meeting, the German agriculture minister, Julia Klöckner, questioned whether mink farming still has any future at all. Her counterparts agreed that this is a European health issue, requiring a harmonised response.

The EFSA report recommends "monitoring and surveillance of mink farms... for as long as SARS-CoV-2 exposure from humans to mink cannot be excluded," calling for weekly surveys and testing of dead minks as well as "systematic genotyping" of detected strains and "the genome sequences from all infected animals (to be) shared." The report also underlines that the rapid spread among mink renders periodic testing of random samples essential, rather than farmers waiting until they see signs of the disease among the animals.

Pierre Sultana, director of the FOUR PAWS European Policy Office is eagerly awaiting a Commission working paper on the issue of COVID-19 and mink production: "We hope the Commission will adopt a precautionary approach and recognise that the issue can have severe consequences on human health. Allowing the continuation of mink farming by putting niche economic interests over public health should not be an option."

Unfortunately, though the Commission acknowledges the need to take urgent, harmonised action on this issue and has asked Member States to monitor and report animals susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 infection, its December implementing decision falls short of effectively addressing the serious public health risks linked to mink farming.

URGENT NEED FOR AN FU-WIDE BAN

Fur farming is not only cruel and unethical, but it also constitutes a real risk for the health of European citizens. The EFSA report acknowledges that all mink farms that are not yet infected should be considered at risk of infection. The priority is to prevent the establishment of viral reservoirs in mink farms. Despite enhanced biosecurity, early warning surveillance and immediate culling of animals in infected farms, experience in Denmark and the Netherlands has shown that it has been impossible to stop the transmission of the virus. Then, the Commission must avert the spread of an emerging virus in a new host which may lead to an accumulation of mutations and resistance to available vaccines.

"It is more urgent than ever, in times where new mutations of this deadly virus are starting to emerge in animals and humans," said Joh Vinding, chair of the Fur Free Alliance.

In an open letter to the Commission published on December 15, 2020, 47 Eurogroup for Animals and Fur Free Alliance member organisations from all EU countries called on the executive to urge Member States to close all mink farms permanently. To tackle the issue effectively, the Commission must adopt emergency and proportionate measures by suspending all mink farming, including breeding — and all in-country and cross-border transportation of live mink and their raw pelts, both inside and outside the European Union. As millions of animals would be culled, they should also monitor that this is done humanely, and according to EU legislative requirements.

NO FURTHER FOR FUR

Fur farms cause massive animal suffering and now we know that they also pose an enormous health risk for humans. A large majority of EU citizens reject fur farms and support a ban of this outdated industry which is already illegal in a growing number of Member States.

The demand to suspend mink production is supported by a statement signed by numerous scientists from the fields of virology, infectious diseases, clinical microbiology, veterinary medicine and environmental health, which confirms the serious threat that fur farming poses to human health."

Reineke Hameleers, CEO of Eurogroup for Animals.

8 EU MEMBER STATES

have officially identified COVID-19 positive animals on mink farms:

Denmark	289 farms	
France	1 farm	388 FARMS
Greece	12 farms	
Italy	1 farm	
Lithuania	1 farm	
Netherlands	70 farms	
Spain	1 farm	
Sweden	13 farms	

Not only are the costs to the fur farming industry dwarfed by the economic damage of the pandemic, but implementing biosecurity and monitoring measures is as expensive as it is ineffective: there is no rational basis to delay an end to this cruel and unhealthy business.

Fur farming is banned in the United Kingdom. It has already been prohibited and/or is in the process of being phased-out in Austria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Luxembourg and Belgium. The Netherlands brought forward its ban on mink farming from 2024 to 2021. In Ireland, where a ban on fur farming was already pending, the Department of Agriculture recommended that farmed mink should be culled and restocking prohibited on its remaining three fur farms. Legislative proposals to ban fur farming are currently also under consideration, or have been announced, in six countries, Poland, Lithuania, France, Ireland, Bulgaria and Estonia.

Germany has adopted stricter regulations, effectively eliminating the breeding of all animals for fur. Sweden similarly eliminated fox and chinchilla production in this way. Hungary has announced a ban on mink, fox, ferret and coypu production as a precautionary measure due to animal welfare and COVID-19 concerns to prevent fur producers from moving their operations there. Denmark has also prohibited and is phasing out the breeding of foxes on animal welfare grounds.



Scientific statement on public health risks from SARS-CoV-2 and the intensive rearing of mink

EFSA Report

<u>Position Paper Eliminating a potential reservoir</u> of SARS-CoV-2 virus on EU fur farms



ANJA HAZEKAMP

MEP GUE/NGL, Netherlands

Anja Hazekamp is a biologist and animal advocate. She has been a Member of the European Parliament since 2014, representing the Dutch Party for the Animals. Anja is vice-president of the committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, and Member of the committees for Fisheries and Agriculture & Rural Development. Since 2019 Anja is also the president of the parliamentary Intergroup on welfare and conservation of animals. Recently Anja was appointed as the ENVI-rapporteur for the EU Farm to Fork Strategy.

Anja is an expert in animal welfare issues: she worked as a scientist at the Department for Lab Animal Issues at Leiden University/University of Utrecht, and as a policy advisor for several animal welfare NGOs and animal rescue centres, such as the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals, the Seal Rehabilitation and Rescue Centre and AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection.

What do animals mean to you personally?

Animals have always played a big role in my life. Since my childhood, I grew up with pets and I've always been taught that we should treat animals well. In today's world, animals are not able to defend themselves, so the responsibility for their welfare lies in our hands.

Years ago you worked in a rescue centre for exotic animals belonging to one of our Dutch member organisations, AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection. What did you learn from this experience and how has this contributed to your political career?

When I was working with NGOs, such as AAP, I saw many helpless animals that had been abused in laboratories or for entertainment purposes. As a rescue centre for animals, AAP is doing a fantastic job, for example by taking care of animals that have been exploited in circuses, by giving them medical care and the chance to exercise their natural behaviour again. Furthermore, AAP is also active in stimulating political solutions, which is essential to structurally solve animal welfare problems.

During the last months we've been working extensively to stress the connection, and the threat, of fur farming and COVID-19. What could Member States and or the Commission do to help prevent this threat?

COVID-19 outbreaks on fur farms in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, Greece, Italy, France, Lithuania and Poland – as well as in the US and Canada – have confirmed that mink are highly susceptible to the disease. The fact that the SARS-CoV-2 virus spreads rapidly among these undomesticated animals and has been found to also be transmittable back to humans, confirms that fur farms can act as an animal reservoir for this coronavirus. It may now be reasonably concluded that the industry is quite literally sickening and that it is time to call time on fur farming.

Some countries, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, have recently introduced bans on fur farming. The European Commission should not wait any longer and introduce an EU-wide ban on fur farming. Furthermore, EU-countries that have already introduced a ban on fur farming, should also halt the import of fur products to avoid the relocation of fur farming to other countries. Existing contamination risks and the major animal welfare problems in the fur farming industry can not be solved if activities are moved to other parts of Europe or to third countries.

You took part in several field missions to assess animal welfare during transport, if you had to define what you have seen in one word, which one would you choose?

Heartbreaking.

The European Parliament has traditionally been the biggest champion of animal welfare amongst the EU institutions. However, recent votes on the new CAP saw animal welfare amendments watered down or rejected. Should this worry us with new animal welfare proposals due in 2023?

The CAP proposal that is currently on the table contradicts and undermines the EU's climate- and biodiversity goals.



This CAP is not future-proof and not planet-proof and should therefore be rejected.

Regarding animal welfare, there are a lot of MEPs that are very committed to improving animal welfare legislation and to fighting animal abuse. We often see broad support for initiatives of the Animal Welfare Intergroup.

One problem is however that in many cases the primary responsibility for animal welfare legislation is assigned to the AGRI-committee of the European Parliament. This committee is heavily influenced by the agro-industry and many of its members have direct or indirect interests in the agricultural sector. This often causes a conservative approach to animal welfare. The wellbeing of animals is a responsibility that should be borne by all of us, not just by one committee.

On the positive side, every single political group in the European Parliament has a number of Members that are active on animal welfare and we are all fighting together to achieve improvements for animals.

Tens of millions of Europeans have found comfort in their pets during lockdowns across our Union. In this period of remote working, do you have any 'pet colleagues'?

Yes! My hamster, named Ariel, is very good company. I adopted her from a Belgian shelter and I'm very happy to have her as my 'pet colleague'!





Andreas Erler, Senior Political Adviser

THE ANIMAL WELFARE INTERGROUP'S NEW WORKING GROUP ON COMPANION ANIMALS

Since the end of last year, the Animal Welfare Intergroup has a new working group on companion animals which provides MEPs with a specific forum of debate to raise and discuss pet related issues with experts and to join forces for the promotion of specific initiatives

Petras Auštrevičius (RE-LT), Manuela Ripa (Greens/EFA, DE) and Martin Hojsík (RE-SK) are the Board members of this group. New memberships are warmly encouraged and will come with time. The group's co-ordinator is Iwona Mertin, Companion Animals Programme Leader at Eurogroup for Animals.

The working group will address a variety of pet related issues. This year, it will closely follow the legislative reports on the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act with the objective to include wording on the specific responsibilities of online platforms to fight and remove illegal goods and content, including illegal pet advertisements.

The working group will raise awareness in the European Parliament about the serious welfare issues surrounding companion animals and will address them with the European Commission and the Member States so as to find solutions. It will host and participate in pet related events in the European Parliament and will work together with NGOs and other stakeholders. It will support specific campaigns at Member State level and will act as spokesperson where needed. Applying pressure and drawing attention to an issue can prompt press interest in Brussels and elsewhere in the EU.

The working group can also grant the status of observers or permanent observers to NGOs or other stakeholders according to specific rules of procedure. The organisations Four Paws and the EU Dog & Cat Alliance already have a permanent observer status.

A dedicated <u>page</u> on the Animal Welfare Intergroup website provides more detailed information about the working group.

MARCH 2021

ANIMAL NEWS

IN EUROPE

#Act4Pets

BREXIT AND PETS - IMPORTANT NEW RULES

The new rules entered into force on January 1st since Great Britain is now listed as a territory under the provisions of Article 13(2) of Regulation (EU) No 576/2013. Northern Ireland, however, continues to be treated as an EU Member State with this regard, as per the provisions of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, as part of the Withdrawal Agreement.

Non-commercial movement of pets (cats, dogs, ferrets). This means pets coming on holidays with us. What are the new rules for pets resident in Great Britain and visiting the EU and Northern Ireland?

- The "EU pet passport" is no longer valid.
- An animal health certificate issued by an official veterinarian is required for each entry and only remains valid for a period of up to four months from the date of the documentary and identity checks. This certificate must attest a valid anti-rabies vaccination.
- In addition, prior to entry into Finland, Ireland, Malta or Northern Ireland from Great Britain, pet dogs need to be treated against echinococcus multilocularis (a form of tapeworm) and this treatment

must be attested by the official or authorised veterinarian in the animal health certificate.

• Pets entering the EU or Northern Ireland after the end of the transition period (from January 1st) MUST be presented to a designated travellers' point of entry in order to undergo the necessary compliance checks.

What are the new rules for pets resident in the EU and Northern Ireland visiting Great Britain?

- The "EU pet passport" is still valid your pet needs to be vaccinated against rabies at least 21 days before entry, identified with a transponder, and needs to be at least 12 weeks old (although this may increase).
- From July 1st pets need to be presented to a designated travellers' point of entry into Great Britain.
- When pets return home with you they also need to be presented to a designated travellers' point of entry.

When dogs return to Finland, Ireland, Malta and Northern Ireland they need to be treated against echinococcus multilocularis.

These rules seem complicated but no worries, they're feasible! You only need to check with your vet before traveling.

Pets being moved for **commercial purposes** and pets **rehomed by charities** are subjected to **different rules** than pets travelling with their family just for holidays. Read more.

#Act4LabAnimals

NGOS AND COSMETICS BRANDS DEFEND ANIMAL TESTING BANS

The <u>EU Cosmetics Regulation</u> has set an example to the world: demonstrating that cosmetics testing on animals can and should be phased out worldwide. These bans have now been significantly threatened by a series of decisions taken by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), and supported by its Board of appeal.

The Cosmetics Regulation's goal is the protection of consumers. ECHA is now requiring some widely used cosmetics ingredients to be tested on thousands of animals to be in line with the REACH regulation to ensure workers safety. However, those ingredients have a long history of safe use by consumers and have been handled by workers in factories for many years. The EU ambitions for chemical safety cannot be addressed with more animal testing: Animal-free solutions will be an absolute necessity to guarantee the safety of humans, animals and the environment under the goals of the EU Green Deal. Read the full article here.

#Act4Wildlife

THE STEPS TO BAN IVORY TRADE IN EUROPE

Across Europe, ivory continues to be traded online, in auction houses and in markets. Europe and Japan are among the last countries with large, legal domestic ivory markets, while other major markets in the US, China and UK are now closed or in the process of closing.

In January the European Commission published draft measures aimed to effectively ban EU trade in ivory which have then undergone a public consultation phase until the end of February. After the public feedback the draft regulation and guidance will be adopted by the European Commission.

Luckily, there is wide support in the EU for the closure of domestic elephant ivory markets, both from the EU Council and the Parliament. and among EU citizens and civil society. The European Commission has the mandate to introduce comprehensive measures aimed at closing the EU domestic ivory market, thereby showing global leadership. Only by so doing, the EU will remove any financial value from ivory, reduce the opportunity for new ivory to be laundered through legal markets, and send a clear message to the rest of the world that the EU no longer considers ivory a commodity.

Eurogroup for Animals welcomed the European Commission's draft measures and urged Member States to support and implement them without further delays. However, we ask for the changes made to the guidance document on the EU regime governing trade in ivory to be integrated into the EU Commission Regulation, in order to ensure that the guidance becomes legally binding and there is a consistent language in both the Guidance and the proposed Regulation. Check the latest updates on the ivory trade dossier.

#Act4AnimalsEU

ANIMAL WELFARE IN EU-AUSTRALIA TRADE NEGOTIATIONS AND COMMERCIAL KANGAROO HUNTING



The EU and Australia have been negotiating a trade agreement since July 2018 and the agreement is foreseen to include provisions on animal welfare cooperation. This agreement is also likely to further open the EU market to Australian animal products, notably beef and sheep meat, which raises concerns as Australian animal welfare standards are below the European ones.

These negotiations are also an occasion to put the spotlight on other issues, such as the commercial hunting of kangaroos. **Europe is Australia's main market for kangaroo exports**; the main importers of kangaroo meat for pet food and human consumption are Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and France, while the main importers of their skins, hides and leather are Italy and Germany.

Kangaroo hunting poses severe threats for public health, animal welfare and conservation. Read our report Kangaroo: From Australian Icon to Meat and Luxury Leather for the EU and watch the recording of the event we organised with the support of the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals.

#Act4FarmAnimals

ANIMAL WELFARE VICTORY ON MANDATORY PRE-SLAUGHTER STUNNING



Last December the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) clarified that Member States are allowed to impose mandatory pre-slaughter stunning. The case raised from the ban adopted by the Flemish Government (BE) in July 2019 which made stunning compulsory also for the production of meat by means of traditional Jewish and Muslim rites.

The verdict ruled that the EU Governments can legitimately introduce mandatory reversible stunning in the framework of Art. 26.2(c) of the Council Regulation 1099/2009 (Slaughter Regulation), with the aim to improve animal welfare

during those killing operations carried out in the context of religious rites.

The judgment considers the latest development on reversible stunning as a method that successfully balances the apparently competing values of religious freedom and animal welfare, and it concludes that "the measures contained in the (Flemish) decree allow a fair balance to be struck between the importance attached to animal welfare and the freedom of Jewish and Muslim believers to manifest their religion".

The case now goes back to the Belgian constitutional court which will have to confirm and implement the CJEU's ruling. The imminent revision of the Slaughter Regulation, as announced by the European Commission in the framework of the EU Farm to Fork strategy, gives the chance to further clarify the matter by making preslaughter stunning always compulsory in Europe. Read our summary on the court case.

#Act4Fish

MORE FISH IN THE SEAS?

That's the title of the own-initiative report by French MEP Caroline Roose (Greens/EFA) adopted by the European Parliament in January. The report calls for strong measures to protect not only the oceans but also the welfare of wild-caught fish, focusing on the urgency of setting fishing quotas at sustainable levels, expanding and improving Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and restricting bottom trawling.

With this report, the European Parliament calls on the European Commission to consider these requests and to respond to them in a new action



plan to preserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems. It is now up to the Commission to show how seriously they take their promise to follow-up on this report to tackle the damaging standard practices in wild fisheries. Read more.

MARCH 2021

SUFFERING 10 **EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS MAGAZINE**





ON MARCH 3RD WE CELEBRATED WORLD WILDLIFE DAY WITH THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE "EU STOP CIRCUS SUFFERING" CAMPAIGN, CALLING FOR AN EU BAN ON THE USE OF WILD ANIMALS IN CIRCUSES.

Wild animals in circuses are destined to a life of physical abuse and mental torture moving around Europe and being transported across Member States. Circuses pose severe public safety and animal health and welfare risks. **That's why we call for an EU wide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses**, since bans at the national level won't prevent these movements with all the risks and distresses for the animals.

CURRENT SITUATION

23 Member States have already adopted national legislations restricting the use of either all, or exclusively wild, animals in circuses, reflecting the public's position on ethical and animal welfare grounds. <u>Statements</u> from scientists and veterinary bodies backed up these decisions.

Whilst there has been several positive National developments (ban in Lithuania to come in November 2021, positive announcements for France), in practise today, France, Germany, Italy and Spain don't have any national restrictions and Czech Republic, Finland and Hungary only adopted restrictions on the use of some species of wild animals. Circuses in these countries are therefore still using wild animals and are travelling through other member states which have restrictions in place.

This is why an EU ban is very much needed to confirm a coherent and common EU answer to the suffering of these animals and the cross-border aspect of the issue.

EU COMPETENCY

The EU is competent to prohibit the use of wild animals in circuses. Travelling circuses are a service, in line with the definition provided by Article 4(1) of the Services Directive, which the EU legislator has the competence to regulate pursuant to Article 114 TFEU. An alternative legal basis for an EU ban would be Article 192(1) TFEU which provides for the protection of natural resources, including the protection of fauna and flora species.

the end of this outdated entertainment and provide a coherent and effective solution to the physical and emotional suffering of wild animals in circuses. The Commission should take the wishes of EU citizens very seriously and use their powers to finally end this unnecessary suffering while confirming the EU as the International leader for animal welfare."

Reineke Hameleers, CEO, Eurogroup for Animals.

WILD ANIMALS IN CIRCUSES

A SURVEY IN COLLABORATION WITH SAVANTA COMRES

69%

think circuses that still use wild animals must reinvent themselves by developing high quality shows with human performers

83%

think the European Union should quarantee that cruel uses of animals are not allowed

62%

think the European Union should ban the use of all wild animals in circuses

68%

think the use of wild animals in circuses is cruel and they should not be used for public entertainment



THE SUPPORT OF EUROPEANS

The battle to stop the use of wild animals in circuses has been fought for years by several member organisations of Eurogroup for Animals, both at National and EU level. This topic has always received a very strong ground of support from our members' supporters and the general public.

This has again been reflected in a February 2021 **opinion poll**. Eurogroup for Animals commissioned the survey from Savanta ComRes who interviewed citizens from Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Spain. **The results clearly show there's no more room for this cruel entertainment**:

- The use of wild animals in circuses is cruel and wild animals should not be used for public entertainment: 68% agree
- The European Union should ban the use of all wild animals in circuses: 62% agree
- The European Union should guarantee that cruel uses of animals are not allowed: 83% agree
- Circuses that still use wild animals must reinvent themselves by developing high quality shows with human performers: 69% agree
- Circuses showing wild animals is educational: 20% agree

Nearly 1 million citizens have already signed the <u>Infocircus</u> <u>petition</u>, started in 2018, thanks to, amongst others, AAP Primadomus, Faada and ANDA. With the <u>Stop Circus Suffering campaign</u> we will keep backing the strong public support and move a step further bringing this request at the institutions level.

At AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection, we rescue many wild animals, including chimps, lions and tigers, that were used in European circuses. Years of forced performing and wasting away in circus trailers leave scars. At AAP, we can offer some of these former circus animals a brighter future, but only the EU can save all wild animals from having to endure this unnecessary suffering in the first place, with an EU ban on the use of wild animals in circuses."

David van Gennep, CEO of AAP

The way European citizens consider animals is changing and the public is now very much aware of the suffering endured by wild animals in circuses. This industry needs to evolve and reinvent itself to allow entertainment without abuse. Yes to circuses, No to circuses with wild animals."

Elodie Gérôme-Delgado, Fondation Brigitte Bardot

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EUROGROUP EANIMALS



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

FOLLOW OUR WORK ON ANIMAL WELFARE



White Paper on the revision of Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005





LIVE TRANSPORT: TIME TO CHANGE THE RULES

Francesca Porta, Farmed Animals Programme Officer

On January 27th, we published <u>Live transport: Time to change the rules</u>, a white paper in response to the <u>European Commission's commitment</u> to revise the EU Regulation 1/2005: to align it with the latest scientific evidence, broaden its scope, facilitate enforcement, and ensure a higher level of animal welfare.

In the paper we propose a centralised monitoring and reporting system to maximise compliance and increase transparency, as well as **species- and category-specific minimum requirements** and clear definitions for all the animals being transported.

Indeed it's not only terrestrial farm animals who are being transported. We suggest a **targeted approach to equines**, thus effectively responding to EFSA's conclusion that these animals differ markedly from other commonly transported farmed species.

We also took stock of the Guidelines developed by the EU Animal Welfare Platform, putting forward proposals for the commercial transport of **cats and dogs**.

Another category of currently neglected animals are the ones used for **scientific purposes**, since there are no rules for their transport.

Finally, we lay down provisions for the transport of **terrestrial and aquatic farmed animals** to ensure proper protection and to build up a sustainable and short food chain, aligning the revised Transport Regulation to the EU Farm to Fork strategy's main objective.

We launched the white paper during an event opened by the EU Commissioner for Agriculture <u>Janusz Wojciechowski</u> who welcomed the Paper and reiterated his commitment to providing tools to support local productions.

Read <u>Live transport: Time to change the rules</u> and watch the introductory video.



NON-ANIMAL METHODS IN BIOMEDICINE

Luisa Bastos, Animals in Science Programme Leader

Non-animal methods have the potential to deliver better understanding and more effective treatments of diseases. This is one key message found in the reviews of non-animal methods in biomedicine, carried out by the Commission's Joint Research Centre. However, it is also clear from these reviews that the development and **use of non-animal methods is far from being the norm in scientific research**.

The lack of investment in innovation is out of phase with the many EU initiatives to forefront scientific excellence and the ambitions to deliver the best possible healthcare to EU citizens. Research on human diseases uses animal models extensively, while effective new therapies for serious conditions are still lacking, because they often poorly represent human physiology and pathology. Yet, more than four hundred thousand animals were used to study the respiratory system and diseases in the span of 3 years in the EU, but only 188 advanced human-based models of the same system were found in the scientific literature since 2008.

Together with our members, we are making sure that every major research funding body and researchers are aware of the current complex models and the future need to prioritise their further development and use. Still, the Commission also needs to play its part in ensuring that this knowledge will inform the policies in every EU initiative that intersects with health sciences. It is time to make sure that any health science action and project under Horizon Europe, the European Innovation Council, Research Area, Research Council and Institute of Innovation and Technology contribute to making advanced human-relevant non-animal models and technologies the new normal in biomedical science.

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WHAT COULD THE EU AND CHINA DO FOR ANIMALS?

Stephanie Ghislain, Trade and Animal Welfare Programme Leader

The EU and China are two very important global players in the agri-food sector and they are both facing common challenges: **climate crisis, zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance**. **As unsustainable food production** lies at the heart of those challenges, animal welfare can play a key role in finding solutions to them.

In November 2020, we published the new briefing What could the European Union and China achieve for animals? exploring how improving **animal welfare**, as well as moving towards more sustainable production and consumption patterns which rely less on meat and dairy products, can prevent future pandemics.

The briefing was launched during a high level event hosted by MEP and member of the EP delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China Niels Fuglsang (S&D, DK). The first of its kind gathering, opened by Janusz Wojciechowski, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Dr. Xiao Xiao, OIE animal welfare China liaison, was the opportunity for **European and Chinese experts to discuss sustainability**, a key topic for both partners, and its link with animal welfare.

Improving animal welfare in production systems could contribute to achieve numerous SDGs: building resilience in the food production sector (SDG 2); improving human health by helping to reduce the risk of zoonoses; lessening the use of antibiotics in animal productions (SDG 3); fighting the climate crisis (SDG 13), and generating concrete economic benefits (SDG 8).

Even more positive effects could be achieved with moving towards more **sustainable production and consumption systems**, specifically **reducing** the production and consumption of **meat and dairy** products, as this could benefit public health, lowering cases of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases (SDG 3). It would also benefit climate and environment since the dairy and meat sector represents around 14.5% of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions (SDG 13n) and it is a massive source of water pollution (SDG 6, SDG 15, SDG 14).

Watch the event recording and download the briefing.



DIGITAL SERVICES ACT & ONLINE SALES

Iwona Mertin, Companion Animals Programme Leader

The large majority of cats and dogs from cross-border illegal trade are sold or advertised online, and this lucrative trade is booming, especially now at the time of COVID-19 when people are craving company.

With <u>limited requirements</u> in place, poor enforcement and anonymity, it is easy to acquire and sell animals regardless of their origin, putting animal health and welfare, but also human health and public finances, at risk and fuelling criminal activities.

The annual pet trade value in Europe is estimated in billions of euros, however, due to underreporting and lack of standardised data collection, the real scale of the problem is unknown and so are the exact numbers of traded animals across European borders.

At the moment the pet trade market does not provide a level playing field for the breeders and sellers and is fragmented with various minimum requirements to sell pets online. However, the upcoming Digital Services Act could provide a response to the issue of responsibility and information duties of online platforms and social media.

As showed in our key recommendations in the <u>Illegal Pet Trade</u>: <u>Game Over</u> report, it's clear that there is a role to play for the EU. <u>Examples like Ireland</u> show that legislative solutions can be put in place with sufficient political will and existing infrastructure in terms of identification and registration of pets. However, **only an EU wide solution will be able to respond to an EU wide problem**.

The Croatian Presidency workshop Illegal Pet Trade: Game Over, confirmed the sentiment among the majority of experts, including EU Member States, where 92% declared a need for EU wide rules for the trade of pets, 93% stated that online platforms should be made responsible for verification of sellers' information, and 90% indicated that only registered cats and dogs can be advertised. It is now up to the European Parliament and the Member States to decide to what extent protecting the health and welfare of traded pets, consumer rights and public health is relevant.















GET TO KNOW US

WORLD FEDERATION FOR ANIMALS

On February 8th we launched an exciting new global initiative in the field of animal protection: the <u>World Federation for Animals</u> (WFA). WFA is an international animal protection membership organisation aiming to achieve global impact for animals by providing a platform for the animal protection movement on the international stage.



The WFA fills a major gap and maximises the efforts and resources of the movement as a whole. Creating a coordinated structure which increases the animal protection movement's influence on the global stage will establish **animal protection as an issue of global relevance and concern**, amplifying and paving the way for efforts at local and national level worldwide.

Over the past three years, together with other pioneers, Eurogroup for Animals has been working on setting up the World Federation for Animals, which has a democratic governance with its membership consisting of animal protection organisations from around the world.

Currently there are eighteen other leading animal protection organisations who constitute the founding members of this new federation which is registered in Boston, Massachusetts. We now invite other organisations across the globe to join and share our common goals.

The first global appointment was the 5th United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA5) moderated from Nairobi, Kenya





OUR MEMBERS

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS WELCOMES FOUR NEW MEMBERS!

In February the Board approved 3 new members and we're thrilled to introduce them.

CAAI **BULGARIA**

https://caai.bg





Equalia SPAIN

https://www.equaliaong.org

Founded in 2018, Equalia, has already managed to obtain Mandatory CCTV cameras in all Spanish slaughterhouses, thanks to their investigative reports. Equalia is also very active on broiler chickens, to ensure a greater uptake by industry of the European Chicken Commitment, and on laying hens to advance cage-free systems. In their future plans fish welfare has a central spot.





Hellenic Animal Welfare Federation GREECE

https://hellenicanimalwelfare.org

Established in 2007, HAWF unites the Greek animal welfare organisations in a single body capable of bringing tangible results in all areas of animal protection. The federation primarily works with volunteers and has supported the StopTheTrucks and EndTheCageAge campaigns. Now they are going to work on corporate and political campaigns for improved laying hen standards.



Valencia Animal Save

SPAIN



https://vlcanimalsave.org

Created in 2019, VAS relies on volunteers and is active on different fronts: street actions. animal vigils at slaughterhouses, lectures, campaigns, political advocacy actions and supporting animal sanctuaries. An active partner in the Infocircos campaign for 2 years, they obtained a ban on the use of wild animals in circuses in their region.

SUPPORT US

We are a strong voice for animals in Europe and our strength comes from our members, friends and partners with whom we relentlessly advocate to improve the welfare of millions of animals across Europe and beyond.

As you can imagine, it's an uphill battle. That's why we constantly strive to attract new supporters to join our movement and why we also need your help. Animal suffering is sadly still a reality, but we can change it together.

There are many ways to help: <u>visit our website</u> to check the latest campaigns and activities, <u>read our publications</u> and follow us on social media.

You can also contact us to become a member or make a donation.

Join us to fight for a better future for all animals!



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ANIMALS IN EUROPE PODCAST



Guided by our host and CEO Reineke Hameleers, we dive into news and current events surrounding animals in Europe, listen now on our website or find us on your regular podcast platform.



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