



EU Platform on Animal Welfare Tenth meeting

WebEx video conference

Tuesday, 10 November 2021, 09.30 – 17.30 CET, Brussels time

The meeting was web streamed. Click [here](#) to access the recording.

– MINUTES –

The 10th meeting of the EU Platform on Animal provided the opportunity to present an update on the progress of the Fitness Check of the EU animal welfare legislation and to exchange with the members on possible approaches to the future revision of the legislation based on the Commission Inception Impact Assessment and positions of various stakeholders. In addition, the Commission presented the new working methods for the Platform with, in particular, the creation of six thematic subgroups devoted to the specific parts of the animal welfare legislation.

Opening by Chair Claire Bury, Deputy Director General for Food Sustainability, DG SANTE

The Chair welcomed the attendees, especially the new Platform members. She wished all a good start to work under the new Platform mandate. In this context, the Chair underlined the importance of the Platform work, in particular in the current very dense period of the preparation for reviewing of the EU animal welfare legislation. The [agenda](#) was adopted.

Speech by Commissioner Stella Kyriakides ([video message](#))

Commissioner Kyriakides welcomed all members, in particular the new ones. She stressed the specificity of the current period when several animal welfare initiatives are undertaken as reflected in the meeting's agenda, e.g. revision of the legislation and its fitness check, the Commission response to the European Citizens' Initiative "end the cage age", the inception impact assessment roadmap and the public consultation. She pointed out that the Platform needs new working methods aiming to help the Commission facing up these challenges.

Outcomes of the call for applications for the Platform members [[PP](#)] and Information on the Platform's digital tool [[PP](#)]

The Head of Unit 'Animal welfare, Antimicrobial resistance' (SANTE G5), presented both topics, including the list of the new Platform members.

Questions & Answers

Responding to the *Eurogroup for animals'* question, the Commission said that the role of the Platform under the new mandate would be to support the EC in revising the legislation. While it is

true that professional organisations are more represented in the Platform than NGOs, the latter are very effective in conveying their views.

Some members expressed their hope for a constructive and realistic dialogue across the sectors (ELPHA, UECEBV and EFAB).

Sustainable food system framework [PP]

Policy officers from SANTE G5 presented the legislative initiative on an EU framework on sustainable food system which is one of the actions of the Farm to Fork Strategy aiming to ensure that all foods placed on the EU market increasingly become sustainable through a socially responsible food value chain.

Questions & Answers

In their questions/comments, some members pointed out that there is a need to shift to more plants based diet, so to reduce the production of farm animals (*HIS, Eurogroup*). Some asked for scientific sources used by the Commission for the provisions of the presented expected economic, social and environmental impacts listed in the document (*ELPHA, Ms Sossidou*), and the Commission clarified that the Inception Impact Assessment only lists expected impact, which will then need to be confirmed (or not) by the actual Impact Assessment. Some wondered about the current WTO rules and the possibility of requesting equivalence at import (*AVEC, CLITRAVI*) and the way regional differences and possible conflict of interests will be taken into account in the future food framework (*FESSAS*). Some enquired about the sustainability and animal welfare labelling (*Sweden, Eurogroup, Vier Pfoten*).

In its answers, *the Commission* stated that the impact assessment would answer the issues of different types of consequences of the implementation of the framework as well as the issues linked to the WTO agreements. The sustainable labelling part of the presented legislative initiative would likely build up on existing relevant work strands, including animal welfare labelling.

Update on the progress of the Fitness Check of the EU animal welfare legislation and exchange of views based on a survey conducted among the Platform members [PP]

This point, presented by *a policy officer from SANTE G5*, included the list of identified shortcomings of the current legislation to steer the discussion, and presented the outcome of a survey carried out with members of the Platform. In conclusion, the Commission called members of the platform to submit, by the end of December, data available that can help measure the level of progress (or lack thereof) made on animal welfare since the adoption of the existing legislation.

Exchange on possible approaches to the future revision of the legislation based on:

- a) Inception Impact Assessment (presented by the Commission): presented by *the Deputy Head of Unit 'Animal welfare, Antimicrobial resistance'*, [PP]

- b) Position paper on a new EU legislative frame for animal welfare submitted to the Commission by Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden: presented by *the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration* [PP]
- c) Eurogroup for animals' campaign 'No animal left behind': presented by *the Chief Executive Officer at Eurogroup* [PP]
- d) Copa - Cogeca position: presented by *the Chair of Copa Cogeca Working Party on Animal Health and Welfare* [PP]

Questions & Answers

The following issues came up in the debate:

- The commercial arguments should not take over the animal welfare and the inhumane ways of production of animals. Disappointment that a ban on fur farming was not considered in the inception impact assessment (*HIS*) as animal welfare is not compatible with fur farming (*Vier Pfoten*).
- Future legislation has to be science based, sustainable (also for the farmers) and be easy to enforce. A plea to the Commission to include the welfare of dogs and cats, especially those involved in the commercial activities. In this context, traceability has to be assured by a uniform EU database (*FVE*).
- A request that fish should be included in the future legislation and a view that animal welfare labelling should be mandatory (*CIWF*).
- Comments arguing that the Platform to find a common ground among different stakeholders' interests and positions, e.g. animal transport which is crucial to the farming industry to maintain its activity; economic situation of farmers (*EFFAB, Joe Collins, COPA-COGECA*).
- The transport of live animals to Third Countries has to be stopped until there is an enforceable legislation (*Animal Welfare Foundation*).
- The improved welfare conditions through better legislation will help to reduce animal diseases in farming (*Vier Pfoten*).
- The animal welfare labelling has to be voluntary (*COPA-COGECA*).

The Commission informed that a mandate on fur animals would be send to EFSA but likely not before 2026. On cats and dogs, the issue of the database is more related with the animal health requirements. From the animal welfare side, the Commission envisages to work on the welfare of cats and dogs during transport. Concerning fish, the Commission will address mandates to EFSA after 2023. Regarding the labelling, the Commission is waiting the results of an ongoing study and an impact assessment study will be launched next year. The Commission also informed about the stakeholders' conference taking place on 9 December.

Role of the Platform in the revision of the EU legislation: creation of new subgroups

[[PowerPoint Presentation \(europa.eu\)](#)]

The Commission presented the Terms of Reference for six new subgroups aiming to contribute to the analysis of the different options developed in the context of the preparation of the revision of the animal welfare legislation. The call for applications to the following subgroups was announced:

- **Pigs**
- **Poultry**
- **Calves/dairy cows**

- **Transport**
- **Animal welfare labelling**
- **Slaughter/killing**

Members of the platform are invited to propose experts with specific knowledge of the concerned area for these subgroups.

The applications, to be send by 2 January 2022, have to comply with the requirements set-up in the Terms of Reference. The Commission pointed out that the subgroups will work as consultative bodies for a specific topic to contribute to the Commission’s reflection. There will not be a need to agree on conclusions within the subgroups but simply to report to the Platform on the discussions held.

Commission answer to the European Citizens’ Initiative “End the Cage Age” presented by *a policy officer of SANTE G5* [[PowerPoint Presentation \(europa.eu\)](#)]

The Commission presented its answer to Citizens’ Initiative “end the cage age” as adopted in a Commission Communication in June 2021. In its response, the Commission committed to propose, as part of the 2023 legislative proposal, to phase out and finally prohibit cages for the animal species and categories mentioned in the citizens’ initiative. EFSA opinions, an impact assessment and a public consultation will be taken into account to define the conditions of this phasing out, in particular the duration of the transition period and the issue of imports.

Questions & Answers

The following issues came up in the discussion:

- Some requested confirmation that the Commission will look at the feasibility of enacting the legislation by 2027 (*Eurogroup for animals*)
- Some flagged the uncertainty of the current situation, which leads to investments being put on hold (*European Meat Network*) and asked how farmers will be compensated for the lack of export opportunity (*Cogeca*).
- Some stressed the need to identify practicable solutions (*FESSAS*)
- On the use of the CAP by Member States, some suggested to do a special training for civil servants in Member States (*BE*).

In its answer, *the Commission* clarified that it will look at the feasibility of an entry into force of the legislation by 2027, that the suggestion of a training on the CAP would be explored, that the different options for the trade dimension will be considered in the impact assessment.

Update on the work of the voluntary initiative on the welfare of equidae and on the welfare of pullets

Denmark informed that the initiative on equidae will continue its work and will concentrate now on the equines in tourism and in therapy. In addition, the group will work on elaborating the fiche based on the guidelines on the welfare of donkeys. As to the initiative on the welfare of pullets, a decision was taken to close the group for the moment.

Information and knowledge sharing

Presentation of the H2020 PPILOW project aiming to improve animal welfare in poultry and pig low input outdoor and organic production systems [\[PP\]](#)

Conclusions and closing of the meeting

The Chair informed that all presentations and documents will be published on the digital tool and DG SANTE website and stressed that the creation of the sub-groups will continue to be an important step for the future work of the Platform.

Annex: List of participants