Resolution on a new animal welfare strategy for 2016-2020

2015/2957(RSP) - 26/11/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 542 votes to 73, with 23 abstentions, a resolution on a new animal welfare strategy for 2016-2020.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA and EFDD groups.

Recalling that animal welfare is interrelated with animal and public health and stressing that the level of animal welfare in the Union is one of the highest in the world, Parliament called on the Commission to evaluate the existing strategy and to draw up a **new and ambitious strategy for the protection and welfare of animals for the 2016-2020 period** in order to build on the work of the previous strategy and ensure the continuation of a framework for delivering high animal welfare standards across the Member States.

Members called on the Commission to ensure an updated, comprehensive and clear legislative framework. They reiterated, however, that under no circumstances must animal welfare levels be lowered on account of administrative simplification.

The resolution stressed that **improving the enforcement of, and compliance with, existing legislation** should be the key goal of all animal health and welfare rules.

The Commission is invited to:

- monitor closely the implementation in the Member States of the EU legislation relating to animal welfare;
- adapt policy instruments or introduce new ones where there is clear scientific evidence demonstrating animal welfare problems;
- be more ambitious in including and **prioritising reciprocity** of animal welfare standards as a non-trade concern in its trade policy and when negotiating international trade agreements;
- promote animal welfare in **third countries** by requiring equivalent welfare standards for imported animals and products, accompanied by strict controls;
- develop, exchange and disseminate **scientifically based best practices** and to support innovation and research on the development of new animal welfare techniques and technologies.
- Parliament underlined the importance of **funding for the common agricultural policy** which is adequate and compatible with the level of our ambitions, in order to prevent the relocation of production and trade to countries and continents with lower animal welfare standards.

Lastly, Members stressed that this **European strategy should not further increase the existing burden** and stressed the need to ensure stability and predictability of investments in the sector, while ensuring fair competition internationally.