Humane trapping standards: Agreement between EC and the United States on international standards of trapping

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An agreement between the European Community and the United States on humane trapping standards was rejected - by 17 votes to one with one abstention -by the Committee on the grounds that it will not prevent cruelty to animals. The agreement, negotiated by the European Commission, has been submitted by the Council to Parliament for its opinion. However, as Parliament only has consultative status in this matter, Council can ignore Parliament's view and approve the agreement anyway, as it did in the case of a similar agreement recently concluded with Canada and Russia. In his non-legislative report advocating rejection of the agreement - in line with Parliament's long-standing position on the matter - the committee's rapporteur, Mr Carlos PIMENTA (EPP, P), maintains that as a result of the failure to take adequate account of animal welfare "millions of animals will continue to be subjected to the indiscriminate cruelty of leghold traps for many years to come". He accuses the Council and Commission - out of fear of breaching World Trade Organization rules - of ignoring their existing statutory obligation (under Council Regulation (EEC) 3254/91) to ban, in certain circumstances, the import of furs caught with leghold traps.