

# The protection and welfare of animals for 2006-2010

2006/2046(INI) - 19/06/2006

The Council held an exchange of views on the Communication on animal welfare. The Council also took note of the Presidency conclusions which summarise the main points of concern that emerged from a Conference on animal welfare held in Brussels on 30 March 2006. At that conference, representatives of the Member States, of the European Institutions, international parties and a wide range of stakeholders representing the whole of the food chain discussed the Communication, which mainly covers the welfare of animals kept for food production. The debate was broadcast to the public.

The Presidency conclusions insist in particular on the setting up of a European network of scientific institutes and laboratories responsible for questions relating to animal welfare, and stress the need for an impact assessment and that the need to legislate must be based on the results of sound scientific studies which demonstrate necessity and feasibility. Objective and measurable indicators on animal welfare are also considered a high priority. It is also envisaged that the Commission will investigate possible options for an animal-welfare labelling scheme at EU level.

Finally, the conclusions support the mutual recognition of animal welfare worldwide on the basis of multilateral standards.

The Communication outlines the Commission's intentions regarding future animal welfare initiatives.

On 20 February the Council held a first exchange of views on the Communication on the basis of a questionnaire. During that exchange of views, a majority of delegations insisted on the need to check the socio-economic impact on producers and consumers before any amendment of the existing minimum requirements; several Member States agreed on the need for a sound-scientific basis for updating the existing minimum requirements; several delegations were in favour of an information campaign in order to inform farmers, retailers and consumers better on existing Community animal-welfare rules and on their application.