Basic information

2012/2043(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
EU srategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015 **Subject** 3.10.04.02 Animal protection	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	PAULSEN Marit (ALDE)	20/12/2011
	Shadow rapporteur JEGGLE Elisabeth (PPE) SÂRBU Daciana Octavia (S&D) EVANS Jill (Verts/ALE) EICKHOUT Bas (Verts/ALE) WOJCIECHOWSKI Janusz (ECR) LE HYARIC Patrick (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	LIOTARD Kartika Tamara (GUE/NGL)	26/03/2012
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

TRAN	Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PECH	Fisheries	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
CULT	Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
JURI	Legal Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
LIBE	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PETI	Petitions	BOŞTINARU Victor (S&D)	19/03/2012

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Health and Food Safety	DALLI John

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/01/2012	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2012)0006	Summary
15/03/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/06/2012	Vote in committee		
27/06/2012	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0216/2012	Summary
02/07/2012	Debate in Parliament		
04/07/2012	Decision by Parliament	T7-0290/2012	Summary
04/07/2012	Results of vote in Parliament		
04/07/2012	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2012/2043(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AGRI/7/08668

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE480.644	01/03/2012	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE485.896	04/04/2012	
Committee opinion	PETI	PE486.080	10/05/2012	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE486.180	05/06/2012	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0216/2012	27/06/2012	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0290/2012	04/07/2012	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission document (COM)	COM(2012)0006	19/01/2012	Summary

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	FR_ASSEMBLY	COM(2012)0006	17/11/2020	

EU srategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015

2012/2043(INI) - 19/01/2012 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present a European Union Strategy for the protection and welfare of animals for the period 2012-2015.

BACKGROUND : in recent years, the Union has dedicated on average **nearly EUR 70 million per year to support animal welfare,** of which 71% is directed to farmers as animal welfare payments from the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development.

The Community Action Plan on the protection and welfare of animals 2006-2010, adopted by the Commission, grouped the various aspects of EU policy on animal welfare governing the keeping of billions of animals for economic purposes in the EU.

A horizontal directive (Directive 98/58/EC) covers the different aspects of the welfare of farmed animal. Specific aspects are covered by EU legislation on transport and slaughter. Specific EU requirements apply to the keeping of calves, pigs, laying hens and broilers. Animals used for experimentation are also subject to specific rules on animal welfare.

Yet, over the years **it has become increasingly clear that simply applying the same sector specific rules to animal welfare does not always yield the desired results.** Problems of compliance to sector specific rules point the need to reflect on whether a **"one size fits all"** approach can lead to better welfare outcomes across the Union.

The following factors have been identified as the main common drivers affecting the welfare status of animals in the Union:

- lack of enforcement of EU legislation by the Member States is still common in a number of areas;
- consumers lack appropriate information on animal welfare aspects;
- many stakeholders lack sufficient knowledge about animal welfare;
- lastly, there is a need to simplify and develop clear principles for animal welfare.

The present Communication builds on the experience gained through the 2006-2010 Action Plan **to propose lines of EU action for the next four years** taking advantage of the scientific and technological advances made to reconcile animal welfare with economic realities in implementing existing legal provisions. This strategy is a continuation of the Action Plan as recommended by most stakeholders consulted and by the European Parliament.

CONTENT : this strategy is based on **two complementary approaches**:

1°) some common problems need to be tackled in a different and holistic manner through the establishment of general principles in a consolidated revised EU legislative framework. The Commission will consider the feasibility of introducing **a simplified EU legislative framework** with animal welfare principles for all animals kept in the context of an economic activity including where appropriate pet animals, with a specific attention on simplification, reduction of administrative burden and the valorisation of welfare standards as a means to enhance competitiveness of EU food industry including the value added potential of animal welfare standards.

It would consider:

- the use of science-based animal welfare indicators as a possible means to simplify the legal framework and allow flexibility to improve competitiveness of livestock producers;
- a new EU framework to increase transparency and adequacy of information to consumers on animal welfare for their purchase choice;
- the establishment of a European network of reference centres;
- the creation of common requirements for competence of personnel handling animals.

2°) It is necessary to reinforce or better use certain measures already taken by the Commission. Accordingly, in addition to the simplified legislative framework envisaged, the Commission proposes the following:

Developing tools, including where relevant implementing plans, to strengthen Member States' compliance: the Commission will address the **issue of compliance** as a matter of priority, since compliance can only be achieved through actions of enforcement performed by or under the responsibility of the Member States. However, the Commission has an important role to play in ensuring that compliance is met in a uniform manner in the EU. It is essential to ensure that **equal conditions** apply to all EU producers and to ensure that animals are treated in a proper way.

Support international cooperation: a **level playing field on animal welfare is important at international level** to ensure global competitiveness of EU operators. For that purpose the Commission will: (i) continue to include animal welfare in bilateral trade agreements or cooperation forums to increase the strategic opportunities for developing more concrete cooperation with third countries; (ii) remain active in the multilateral arena, especially at the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Provide consumers and the public with appropriate information: it is important to inform EU consumers about the EU legislation applicable to food producing animals and to ensure that they are not deceived by **misleading animal welfare claims**. Many **communication and education activities** already exist in Member States. Comprehensive mapping of the EU situation would permit the identification of the gaps where the Union could provide an added value.

The Commission therefore intends first to launch a study to map out the current animal welfare education and information activities directed at the general public and consumers. Such actions could include the possibility of **granting funds for successful trans-national information campaigns** or educational initiatives on animal welfare.

Optimise synergies with the Common Agriculture Policy: the Commission will establish a specific inter-services arrangement to assess how to optimise synergistic effects of the current mechanisms of the CAP in particular through cross-compliance, rural development, promotional measures, quality policy, organic farming, etc.

Investigate the welfare of farmed fish: farmed fish are covered by the scope of the EU legislation on the protection of animals during transport and at the time of killing, without specific rules for them. The Commission will continue to seek scientific advice on a species by species basis and evaluate fish welfare issues in aquaculture in order to take appropriate action on the basis of the outcome of that evaluation.

EU srategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015

2012/2043(INI) - 27/06/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development adopted the own-initiative report by Marit PAULSEN (ALDE, SE) on the European Union Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012–2015 in response to the Commission Communication. It welcomes the broad Animal Welfare Strategy for the EU in 2012–2015, and the Commission’s intention to address the issue of compliance with animal welfare law as a matter of priority.

Members note that EU and national rules on animal welfare, owing to their complexity and differing interpretations, **create legal uncertainty** and can put producers in certain Member States at a serious **competitive disadvantage**. With regards to the implementation of EU law, a lack of compliance, unharmonised standards and the absence of legal milestones distort competition and result in an unlevel playing field.

The report urges the Commission to be more ambitious in including and prioritising reciprocity of animal welfare standards, as a **non-trade concern in its trade policy and when negotiating multilateral and bilateral international trade agreements**, and to promote animal welfare in third countries by requiring equivalent welfare standards for imported animals and products accompanied by strict controls.

It calls on the Commission to:

- report on animal welfare standards applying in third countries prior to commencing negotiations on trade agreements, carry out this exercise without delay in countries where trade negotiations are currently underway;
- henceforth refrain from submitting free trade agreements to the European Parliament that fail to ensure that equivalent animal welfare regulations apply to imported products as to European products;
- insist that the WTO rapidly incorporates non-commercial concerns into the Strategy for World Trade, so as to avoid competition between EU Member States – required as they are to comply with the most stringent animal welfare standards in the world – and third countries being distorted.

Enforcement first: Members share the Commission's view that there are today still **shortcomings as regards compliance with animal welfare rules**, despite the progress made in several fields. They deplore the fact that some actions from the Action Plan for 2006–2010 could not be completed, and call on the Commission to align the target dates for the new actions to the legal deadlines.

The report calls for the creation of a **new system of comprehensive early intervention** to ensure compliance, stressing that Member States struggling to meet the deadline should be identified early by means of a new procedure requiring close co-operation with the Commission. It suggests that: (i) best-practice forums be set up to allow the Commission, Member States and relevant stakeholders to exchange information on the best way to meet these deadlines; (ii) Member States draw up an implementation plan incorporating milestones and targets leading up to the deadline in stages; (iii) a study be initiated to identify the possibilities by which the European authorities could help ensure full compliance with animal welfare legislation.

Furthermore, the Commission, and in particular the Food and Veterinary Office, must be given **increased resources**, in keeping with EU budget recommendations and powers, to adequately control the **animal welfare inspections** carried out by the Member States, a proportion of which should be unannounced checks, and to address breaches. The committee calls on Member States to ensure that there are **sufficient animal welfare inspectors** who are adequately trained, with harmonised performance measures in place to ensure consistent checks across all Member States, and to consider giving greater responsibility and power to producer organisations.

It calls on Member States to ensure that breaches of EU animal welfare rules are **penalised** in an effective and proportionate manner, and that each sanction is accompanied by ample information and guidance from the competent authorities as well as by appropriate corrective measures.

Labelling: Members point to the concern among European citizens, expressed through their petitions to Parliament, about **abuse of the derogations for un-stunned slaughtering in the EU.** They are particularly concerned that the current derogation for un-stunned slaughter is abused to a large extent in some Member States, to the detriment of animal welfare, of farmers and of consumers. Accordingly, they urge the Commission to accelerate its evaluation on the **labelling of meat from animals slaughtered without stunning** and to present its report before 2013, following its commitment to undertake this evaluation in 2011. The report highlights the fact that the question of consumers not being informed as to whether or not the meat they are buying is from animals slaughtered without stunning is an issue of great public interest for reasons of both transparency and animal suffering. It underlines, however, that labelling is not an alternative to proper enforcement as it can only guide consumers if the information provided is verified and correct.

Members also call on the Commission to build on its Communication by producing a study, if appropriate accompanied by legislative proposals, on **EU-wide labelling schemes for meat and dairy products**, aimed at informing consumers about the farming methods used, and their impact on the welfare of animals.

Communication and education: Members emphasise the importance of information and education being adapted and made available at regional and local level, for example through regional workshops and the use of modern technology. Information concerning new legislation and scientific advances should reach all animal handlers. They call on the Commission to promote existing animal welfare guidelines and other voluntary initiatives by developing a web-based portal through which such documents, having been validated, could be collected and disseminated.

Framework law: Members welcome the inclusion of a European Animal Welfare Framework Law in the Strategy, as suggested by the Parliament, and calls on the Commission to present its proposal in conjunction with the revision of Directive 98/58/EC foreseen for 2013. Such a Framework Law should:

- be a tool for the simplification and streamlining of existing animal welfare legislation, the main aim of the being to achieve better and more thorough levels of compliance with existing animal welfare law;
- not further increase the burden of administrative requirements on producers;
- be based on validated science and proven experience and **cover all kept and abandoned animals, including stray animals of domesticated species;**
- be closely associated with **OIE definitions and recommendations**, and strengthen the competitiveness of EU animal keepers owners and livestock producers in the international market, as it would also help to ensure fair competition in the internal market.

Lastly, Parliament considers that such a Framework Law should not prevent producers from introducing **voluntary systems** which go beyond EU rules, and believes that those systems should also be science based and could be promoted by certified and cohesive labels.

EU srategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015

2012/2043(INI) - 04/07/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 574 votes to 82, with 17 abstentions, a resolution on the European Union Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012–2015.

Members welcome the broad Animal Welfare Strategy for the EU in 2012–2015, and the Commission's intention to address the issue of compliance with animal welfare law as a matter of priority. Members note that EU and national rules on animal welfare, owing to their complexity and differing interpretations, **create legal uncertainty** and can put producers in certain Member States at a serious **competitive disadvantage**. With regards to the implementation of EU law, a lack of compliance, unharmonised standards and the absence of legal milestones distort competition and result in an unlevel playing field.

Trade concerns: Parliament urges the Commission to be more ambitious in including and prioritising reciprocity of animal welfare standards, as a **non-trade concern in its trade policy and when negotiating multilateral and bilateral international trade agreements**, and to promote animal welfare in third countries by requiring equivalent welfare standards for imported animals and products accompanied by strict controls.

It calls on the Commission to:

- report on animal welfare standards applying in third countries prior to commencing negotiations on trade agreements, carry out this exercise without delay in countries where trade negotiations are currently underway;
- henceforth refrain from submitting free trade agreements to the European Parliament that fail to ensure that equivalent animal welfare regulations apply to imported products as to European products;
- insist that the WTO rapidly incorporates non-commercial concerns into the Strategy for World Trade, so as to avoid competition between EU Member States – required as they are to comply with the most stringent animal welfare standards in the world – and third countries being distorted.

Enforcement first: Parliament shares the Commission's view that there are today still **shortcomings as regards compliance with animal welfare rules**, despite the progress made in several fields. It deplores the fact that some actions from the Action Plan for 2006–2010 could not be completed, and calls on the Commission to align the target dates for the new actions to the legal deadlines. Parliament highlights the costs incurred by producers, and the potential for loss of competitiveness, as a result of the adoption of new and changing animal welfare standards.

The resolution calls for the creation of a **new system of comprehensive early intervention** to ensure compliance, stressing that Member States struggling to meet the deadline should be identified early by means of a new procedure requiring close co-operation with the Commission. It suggests that: (i) best-practice forums be set up to allow the Commission, Member States and relevant stakeholders to exchange information on the best way to meet these deadlines; (ii) Member States draw up an implementation plan incorporating milestones and targets leading up to the deadline in stages; (iii) a study be initiated to identify the possibilities by which the European authorities could help ensure full compliance with animal welfare legislation.

Furthermore, the Commission, and in particular the Food and Veterinary Office, must be given **increased resources**, in keeping with EU budget recommendations and powers, to adequately control the **animal welfare inspections** carried out by the Member States, a proportion of which should be unannounced checks, and to address breaches. Parliament calls on Member States to ensure that there are **sufficient animal welfare inspectors** who are adequately trained, with harmonised performance measures in place to ensure consistent checks across all Member States, and to consider giving greater responsibility and power to producer organisations.

It calls on Member States to ensure that breaches of EU animal welfare rules are **penalised** in an effective and proportionate manner, and that each sanction is accompanied by ample information and guidance from the competent authorities as well as by appropriate corrective measures.

Labelling: Parliament points to the concern among European citizens, expressed through their petitions to Parliament, about **abuse of the derogations for un-stunned slaughtering in the EU.** It is particularly concerned that the current derogation for un-stunned slaughter is abused to a large extent in some Member States, to the detriment of animal welfare, of farmers and of consumers. Accordingly, Members urge the Commission to accelerate its evaluation on the **labelling of meat from animals slaughtered without stunning** and to present its report before 2013, following its commitment to undertake this evaluation in 2011. The resolution highlights the fact that the question of consumers not being informed as to whether or not the meat they are buying is from animals slaughtered without stunning is an issue of great public interest for reasons of both transparency and animal suffering. It underlines, however, that labelling is not an alternative to proper enforcement as it can only guide consumers if the information provided is verified and correct.

Members also call on the Commission to build on its Communication by producing a study, if appropriate accompanied by legislative proposals, on **EU-wide labelling schemes for meat and dairy products**, aimed at informing consumers about the farming methods used, and their impact on the welfare of animals.

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- not further increase the burden of administrative requirements on producers;
- be based on validated science and proven experience and **cover all kept and abandoned animals, including stray animals of domesticated species;**
- be closely associated with **OIE definitions and recommendations**, and strengthen the competitiveness of EU animal keepers owners and livestock producers in the international market, as it would also help to ensure fair competition in the internal market.

Members consider that the European Animal Welfare Framework Law should establish a **common base level for animal welfare throughout the European Union** as an essential condition for free and fair competition in the internal market, both for domestic products and for those imported from third countries. They consider, however, that the Member States and the regions should be able to permit individual producers or groups of producers to set up voluntary systems with more profound effects, while avoiding distortions of competition.

Lastly, Parliament considers that such a Framework Law should not prevent producers from introducing **voluntary systems** which go beyond EU rules, and believes that those systems should also be science based and could be promoted by certified and cohesive labels.