



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY
Crisis Preparedness in Food, Animals and Plants
The Director

Brussels
SANTE.G.3/MK/iv(2026) 8004934

Subject: Commission's commitment to animal welfare

Dear Petitioners,

Vice-President Fitto as well as Commissioners Várhelyi and Hansen, asked me to thank you for your recent emails presenting a petition ⁽¹⁾ calling on the Commission to keep its promises and to introduce legislation on the ban on cage farming and the killing of male chicks, thus fulfilling its commitment following the European Citizens' Initiative "End the Cage Age".

I would like to reassure you that animal welfare is a key priority for this Commission, and we are committed to a comprehensive approach that ensures that the EU maintains high standards in this area.

In relation to the Commission's work programme, the one for the year 2026, to which you are referring to, outlines the flagship priorities for the year. This does not preclude the ongoing work on all priorities outlined in the Political Guidelines and Mission Letters. To remind, animal welfare is highlighted both in Commissioner Várhelyi's designated position and mission letter.

Building on the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the recently published EU Livestock Strategy ⁽²⁾ provides that, by the end of 2026, the Commission intends to propose a targeted revision of animal welfare rules for laying hens and broilers, focusing on the phasing-out of cages, practical on-farm welfare indicators, ending the systematic killing of male chicks and equivalent import requirements. Since the proposal is scheduled to be adopted in 2026, the 2027 Commission work program is not relevant for this initiative. As mentioned, the 2026 work programme is not an exhaustive list.

By second quarter of 2027, the Commission intends to propose a targeted revision of animal welfare rules for pigs, including the transition from crates to pen systems, practical on-farm welfare indicators, and introducing WTO-compliant equivalent import requirements.

⁽¹⁾ Your e-mail refers to a "petition", which in the framework of EU Law is used for petitions addressed to the European Parliament pursuant to Article 227 TFEU. Your letter is dealt with by the Commission according to the rules for correspondence with citizens.

⁽²⁾ [EU Livestock Strategy - Agriculture and rural development](#)

I would like to thank you for your commitment to animal welfare.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]

Bernard Van Goethem

