



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Crisis Preparedness in Food, Animals and Plants
The Director

Brussels
SANTE.G.3/MK/nc(2026) 9387181

Subject: Commission's commitment to animal welfare

Dear Sir/Madam,

The President of the European Commission, Mrs Ursula von der Leyen, as well as Commissioners Mr Hansen and Mr Várhelyi, asked me to thank you for your recent messages 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, and to reply on their behalf.

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.

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 the 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 introducing equivalent import requirements.

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

While working on the legislative proposals, the Commission is closely exchanging with farmers, the food chain and civil society. These exchanges take place, among other, during the plenary meetings of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare ⁽³⁾, a pivotal European forum for dialogue on animal welfare that has been in place since 2017. At the three meetings last year, the welfare of poultry, pigs and ruminants was discussed during the panel debates, in the context of consultations for the modernisation of the EU farm animal welfare legislation. This year, at the meeting in June, an exchange of views on the welfare of farmed animals took place between members of the Platform and representatives of the COPA COGECA Working Group on Animal Health and Welfare.

⁽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](#)

⁽³⁾ [EU Platform on Animal Welfare - Food Safety - European Commission](#)

Furthermore, a public consultation on the revision of EU legislation for on-farm animal welfare for certain animals ⁽⁴⁾ closed in December 2025 with more than 190 000 responses, gathered the views of farmers, citizens, businesses, national and regional authorities, NGOs and other interested parties on the revision of the EU legislation.

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

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]

Bernard Van Goethem

⁽⁴⁾ [On-farm animal welfare for certain animals: modernisation of EU legislation](#)