

2023-03-22

The Minister of Rural Affairs
Peter Kullgren
Regeringskansliet
103 33 Stockholm

European Commissioner for Health, Food Safety and Animal Welfare

Dear Mr Kullgren,

Sweden is traditionally one of the most progressive EU countries in terms of animal welfare. The Swedish government has an ambition to improve global animal welfare according to Tidöavtalet.

The Swedish population, as well as the European population in general, is highly supportive of more ambitious reforms to ensure that animals are always given the best possible treatment. This also applies to farmed animals, for which substantial improvements are needed.

Progress across the EU is slow, and enforcement often poor. This negatively affects billions of animals and is often due to the lack of human and financial resources to address animal welfare in a more adequate way. This is something that can and should be addressed.

Despite the more positive approach of the current European Commission in this area, the responsibility for animal welfare is still relegated to a single unit within a Directorate dealing with “Crisis Preparedness in Food, Animals & Plants”. Under the previous EU Commission, the animal welfare unit was gone altogether.

With this context, it should come as no surprise that the enforcement and updating of existing legislation, as well as the development of new laws, are chronically under-resourced.

This is why two years ago the #EUforAnimals campaign was launched by Djurens Rätt together with other European organisations, calling for more

relevance to be given to animal welfare by making this responsibility explicit in the name of the relevant Directorate-General as well as in the title of the competent EU Commissioner. In the present context, the Commissioner's responsibility would be "Health, Food Safety and Animal Welfare".

This change of title would not be merely symbolic – although symbols do matter – but would greatly improve the way the EU institutions deal with animal welfare.

Some of the obvious benefits of having an EU Commissioner for "Health, Food Safety and Animal Welfare" would be more transparency and accountability. It would lay the foundation for the establishment of a specific Directorate dealing with the ethical and scientific aspects of animal welfare as a topic that is important per se. This would also impact the way EU institutions deal with animal welfare at international level, which could enable greater encouragement of improvements outside of the EU.

The #EUforAnimals campaign is now supported by over 50 European NGOs and over 235,000 citizens. 192 MEPs of all political groups and member states – over a quarter of the European Parliament! – have already expressed their support to this proposal.

We believe that the proposal to have an EU Commissioner for "Health, Food Safety and Animal Welfare" should be supported by the Swedish Presidency too, and mentioned whenever possible in documents and conclusions that will be adopted during this semester. This in order to reflect the significance of this issue for European citizens and ensure that enough political attention is drawn to it.

As this could be seen as unattainable at this advanced stage of its current term, the Council could emphasise the importance for the next Commission to implement this change when taking office during 2024.

We are looking forward to hearing back from you, and we are available to discuss this matter further at your convenience.

Yours faithfully,



Camilla Bergvall
President of Djurens Rätt
In a joint letter with the following organisations

Djurens Rätt.

GAIA



DALLA PARTE DEGLI ANIMALI

EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS

animaleQUALITY



EM DEFESTUDES DORTIUS
EÐ TOLUGS STIRKINGIS



ESSEREANIMALI



GYVŪNŲ
GEROVĖS
INICIATYVOS



Freedom and Respect for Every Earthling



LOOMUS
LOOMADE NIMEL



HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL
EUROPE



HUMÁNNY
POKROK



Dier&Recht





- Djurens Rätt
- GAIA
- Eurogroup for Animals
- FOUR PAWS
- Animal Equality
- Green REV Institute
- OIPA
- GGI
- Sociedade Protectora dos Animais
- DVNL
- Animals Without Borders
- Hellenic Animal Welfare Federation
- F.R.E.E.
- Varkens in Nood
- SOS Animal
- Animal Society (Germany)
- Essere Animali
- Svoboda Zvířat
- CAAI
- ALI
- LAV
- Dyrenes Beskyttelse
- OBRAZ
- LEIDAA
- L214
- Lumen
- ANIMAL
- Welfarm
- RAR
- Tierschutz Austria
- Slovenian Vegan Society
- HSI
- SEY
- Animal Society (Romania)
- ENPA
- Dzīvnieku brīvības
- World Federation for Animals
- VGT
- Humányy pokrok
- Loomus
- Dier & Recht
- Animal Friends Croatia
- Compassion In World Farming
- Diervriendelijk, Nederland

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