

14 September 2021

Ms Stella Kyriakides  
Commissioner for Health and Food Safety  
European Commission

Dear Stella Kyriakides,

Animal welfare is receiving increasing attention from both the European citizens and the political level in the EU. This is particularly the case in our countries. We, the Ministers responsible for animal welfare in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, were therefore very pleased to see the Commission's initiative in the Farm to Fork Strategy to revise the European animal welfare legislation. In our view, this is high time, and we strongly support the need to align the legislation with the latest scientific evidence, broaden its scope, make it easier to enforce and ultimately ensure a higher level of animal welfare.

We find that your stated intention to revise the animal welfare legislation is a window of opportunity to rethink the entire framework. Attached to this letter you will therefore find a position paper on a new EU legislative frame for animal welfare focusing on the keeping of animals. Please note that we also support a revision of the regulations on animal transport and the slaughter of animals. We will address these issues at a later stage.

Our main purpose with the attached position paper is to emphasize the importance of ensuring that a new legislative frame for animal welfare is ambitious and that it includes:

- 1) An update of current legislation, also taking into account areas, where practical experience has identified enforcement problems due to too general or imprecise provisions.
- 2) New specific legislation for animals that are kept or traded in the context of economic activity, and where there is currently only very general legislation or no legislation.

We are of the firm opinion that the future EU legislation on animal welfare should cover at least the main species kept or traded in the context of economic activity, not only farm animals but also companion animals, such as dogs and cats. This is also in line with the Council conclusions on animal welfare from December 2019. However, in the position paper priority is given to updated or new species specific legislation on the welfare of pigs, laying hens, broilers, calves, dairy cows, rabbits and turkeys.

Furthermore, we agree with the Commission that it is important to also properly enforce the existing EU legislation.

We are at your disposal for any questions or comments you may have, and we look very much forward to cooperate with you and your services on the revision of the EU animal welfare legislation.

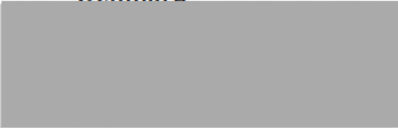
Yours sincerely,



Rasmus Prehn  
Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries  
Denmark



Julia Klöckner  
Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture  
Germany



Carola Schouten  
Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality  
The Netherlands



Ibrahim Baylan  
Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation  
Sweden



Céline Tellier  
Walloon Minister of Environment, Nature, Forest, Rural Areas and Animal Welfare



Bernard Clerfayt  
Minister of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region, responsible for Employment and Vocational Training, Digital Transition, Local Authorities and Animal Welfare



Ben Weyts  
Vice-Minister-President of the Government of Flanders  
Flemish Minister for Education, Sport, Animal Welfare and the Vlaamse Rand