



**INTERGROUP
ON THE WELFARE
& CONSERVATION
OF ANIMALS**

PRESS RELEASE

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Animal Welfare Intergroup discusses new Commission report on Laying Hens and the animal welfare priorities of the Slovenian Presidency

The 239th session of the EP Intergroup on the welfare and conservation of animals was held on Weds. 16 January at the European Parliament, Strasbourg.

Mr Mitja Sedlbauer, Senior Adviser in the Slovenian Veterinary Administration, outlined the animal welfare priorities for the Slovenian Presidency which include mainly work on the new Commission report on laying hens and an update of the animal experimentation Directive 86/309/EEC.

Andrea Gavinelli, Deputy Head of Unit 2 Animal Welfare and Feed at DG SANCO presented the recently published report on Laying Hens <http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/index.en.htm> in which the Commission has refused to accept calls to delay implementation of the ban on battery cages, which is scheduled to go ahead as planned in 2012.

Responding to the presentation, Mr Neil Parish, President of the Parliamentary Intergroup welcomed the Commission's stance stating:

“The Directive on Laying Hens was adopted after a long and protracted debate. The European Parliament strongly supported the long-overdue ban on the battery cage that will require all EU egg producers to switch to an alternative system by 2012. If European law is to be credible then there can be no further delay in implementing the ban on battery cages – EU citizens and consumers are opposed to them.”

Responding to industry claims that, at least for processed eggs, EU production would become uncompetitive Mr Parish added that the Intergroup would work to ensure that “both the Parliament and the Commission engage constructively with EU retailers and food producers so that they do not undermine EU production by sourcing supplies from battery cages in third countries.”

ENDS

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