



Plenary sitting

B9-0302/2021

2.6.2021

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 222(8) of the Rules of Procedure

on the citizens' initiative 'End the cage age'
(2021/2633(RSP))

Francisco Guerreiro
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

European Parliament resolution on the citizens' initiative 'End the cage age' (2021/2633(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) 'End the cage age' (ECI(2018)000004),
 - having regard to the public hearing on the ECI 'End the cage age' held on 15 April 2021,
 - having regard to Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes¹,
 - having regard to Eurobarometer 442, entitled 'Attitudes of Europeans towards Animal Welfare', which concluded that 82 % of EU citizens believe that the welfare of farmed animals should be better protected than it is now,
 - having regard to Rule 222(8) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development,
 - having regard to the European Committee of the Regions opinion on Common Agricultural Policy Reform (3637/2018), in particular amendment 65,
- A. whereas Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union considers animals as sentient beings and calls on Member States to pay full regard to their welfare requirements;
- B. whereas, according to the definition of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), animal welfare means that an animal is healthy, has enough space, is well nourished, feels safe, is free to express normal patterns of behaviour and does not suffer from feelings such as fear, pain and distress;
- C. whereas the Farm to Fork Strategy recognises the urgent need to improve animal welfare and broaden its scope, highlighting the benefits it brings for animals, food quality, reduction of the need for medication, preservation of biodiversity;
- D. whereas the ECI 'End the Cage Age' received 1.4 million validated signatures, and is the first valid initiative on farmed animals;
- E. whereas the ECI is an important tool which for the first time allows citizens to initiate

¹ OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23.

proposals for regulations, directives and other policy developments;

- F. whereas every year, over 300 million farmed animals in the EU are caged for part or all of their lives, which is unnecessary and preventable suffering, as cage-free animal farming systems are available;
 - G. whereas the European Committee of the Regions has called for a gradual and planned end to cage rearing throughout the European Union;
 - H. whereas a study commissioned by the European Parliament Research Service found that cage-free housing systems can be achieved in Europe, recommending financial and policy measures in the short term and legislation in the long term;
 - I. whereas the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted that industrial farming practices and the associated destruction of natural habitats pose a risk of new pandemics emerging;
 - J. whereas appropriate financial investment support has to be ensured to achieve cage-free housing systems in the short term, as well as fairer economic returns in the supply chain in order to cover the costs of production;
 - K. whereas this financial support should be provided in particular by Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funds and measures;
 - L. whereas the European Court of Auditors' Special Report on Animal Welfare in the EU noted that Member States made only a limited use of CAP funds to address animal welfare objectives;
 - M. whereas a study by the Institute of European Environmental Policy concludes that ending the caging of animals, as part of a transformative change in animal agriculture, could make farming more sustainable and could lead to better rural jobs²;
1. Calls on the Commission to propose a revision of Council Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming proposes, including the phasing out of the use of cages in EU animal farming by 2027;
 2. Stresses the importance of supporting farmers in this shift to more sustainable farming by designing adequate incentives and making better use of financial programmes; notes that these incentives and financial programmes often already exist, in particular within the CAP, and should be used to their full extent by Member States;
 3. Recalls that some EU Member States have already adopted national legislation to ban certain forms of caged farming which goes beyond minimum EU standards, increasing the urgency for legislative action at the EU level to ensure a level playing field for farmers across the EU;
 4. Notes that cages are already prohibited for a large majority of species in EU organic farming, and that an extension of this prohibition to all farming systems could significantly stimulate the growth of the organic sector, in line with the Farm to Fork

² Institute for European Environmental Policy, *Transitioning towards cage-free farming in the EU*, October 2020.

strategy's 2030 targets;

5. Regrets that the Commission did not use the Farm to Fork Strategy to revise the CAP; highlights that none of the objectives and targets set by the Farm to Fork Strategy, including animal welfare improvement, will be reached without corresponding targets and measures in national and regional strategic plans; calls on the Commission to ensure that these strategic plans are suited to the Farm to Fork objectives when assessing them; insists that the CAP monitoring system must be set up in a way that enables the monitoring of the contribution of the CAP to the objectives and targets of the Farm to Fork Strategy;
6. Stresses that intensive animal farming practices, including cage farming, pose a heightened risk for the development of antimicrobial resistance and for the emergence of new pandemics, as has been clearly shown during the COVID-19 pandemic, due not only to the high density of animals, but also to the encroachment of production on natural ecosystems and their biodiversity; calls for the EU to stop supporting intensive modes of production, in parallel to efforts to reduce meat consumption;
7. Calls on the Commission to ensure, by means of a comprehensive review, that the EU's Trade Policy is brought into line with EU Green Deal objectives; calls for the prohibition of imports which do not comply with EU animal welfare standards, including the future ban on the use of cages; calls on the Commission and Member States to develop effective checks on imported products to ensure compliance with the EU' animal welfare standards, in addition to with its current quality and safety requirements;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.