



Plenary sitting

B8-1278/2015

24.11.2015

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B8-1107/2015

pursuant to Rule 128(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on a new Animal Welfare Strategy for 2016-2020
(2015/2957(RSP))

Fredrick Federley, Ivan Jakovčić
on behalf of the ALDE Group

European Parliament resolution on a new Animal Welfare Strategy for 2016-2020 (2015/2957(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which lays down that, in formulating and implementing the Union’s agriculture, fisheries, transport, internal market, research and technological development and space policies, the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals, while respecting the legislative or administrative provisions and customs of the Member States relating in particular to religious rites, cultural traditions and regional heritage,
 - having regard to Article 43 of the TFEU on the functioning of the common agricultural policy and the common fisheries policy,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 15 February 2012 on the European Union Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012-2015 (COM(2012)0006/2),
 - having regard to its position at first reading of 15 April 2014 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on animal health¹,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 15 November 2011 on an action plan against the rising threats from Antimicrobial Resistance (COM(2011)0748),
 - having regard to the question to the Commission on a new Animal Welfare Strategy for 2016-2020 (O-000141/2015 – B8-1107/2015),
 - having regard to Rules 128(5) and 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas existing Union legislation concerning animal health and welfare fails to regard animals as sentient beings, in accordance with Article 13 of the TFEU;
- B. whereas European citizens have a strong interest in animal welfare and wish to be able to make more informed choices as consumers;
- C. whereas EU legislation in the field of animal welfare contributes to a level playing field within the Union and thereby to a well-functioning internal market;
- D. whereas production and consumption of animal-based foods accounts for a major share of resource use and significantly impacts animal health and welfare, public health, the climate and the environment;
- E. whereas animal welfare should be further improved on the basis of prevailing scientific findings and with due regard for the efficiency and competitiveness of agricultural

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0381.

livestock husbandry;

- F. whereas animal welfare is closely interrelated with animal and public health;
- G. whereas a high level of animal welfare is important to ensure sustainability, although it entails investments and additional operating costs that are not distributed proportionately throughout the food chain;
- H. whereas, owing to their complexity and differing interpretations, EU and national rules on animal welfare create legal uncertainty and can put producers in certain Member States at a serious competitive disadvantage; whereas, with regard to the implementation of EU law, a lack of compliance, non-harmonised standards and the absence of legal milestones distorts competition and results in an uneven playing field;
- I. whereas the proposed animal health law does not include a clear definition of ‘animal husbandry’ and whereas there might be a number of interpretations of the concept among the Member States;
1. Urges the Commission to implement, without delay, the points outstanding from the European Union Strategy on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012-2015;
 2. Recalls that Article 13 of the TFEU is of general application and horizontal, and as such is as important as the provisions on the environment or consumer protection and takes legal precedence over all internal market policies;
 3. Notes that over 30 basic acts relating to animal welfare have been adopted over a period of more than 30 years, many of which offer varying levels of protection for animals; stresses that the majority of the existing acts fail to sufficiently recognise animals as sentient beings, as required by Article 13 of the TFEU;
 4. Calls on the Commission to propose a harmonised, updated, comprehensive and clear legislative framework to fully implement the requirements of Article 13 of the TFEU, including a definition of good animal husbandry; stresses that the Commission should undertake legal action against those Member States which do not comply with the relevant legislation;
 5. Urges the Commission to ensure that all categories of animals – farm, wild, research, pet and aquatic – are covered by any harmonisation of the legislative framework on animal welfare;
 6. Seeks reassurance that any harmonisation of the legislative framework will not lead to a decline in animal welfare standards or a lowering of ambitions to improve animal welfare, and calls on the Commission to augment existing standards on the basis of updated scientific findings;
 7. Calls on the Commission to develop, exchange and disseminate scientifically based best practices for the prevention and humane management of invasive alien species in Member States;
 8. Calls on the Commission to empower and protect citizens by providing consumer

guidance related to the buying, sale, rehoming and husbandry of animals that are kept or traded in the context of an economic activity, particularly with regard to dogs, cats, exotic animals and equines;

9. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the common agricultural policy fully recognises animal sentience and holistically addresses environmental and public health challenges associated with poor welfare practices; calls on the Commission to support the development of a new sustainable food policy that recognises the improvement of farm animal welfare in conjunction with the uptake of plant-based foods and consumption;
10. Calls on the Commission to use new EU reference centres for animal welfare to aid with the implementation of existing rules by disseminating information and sharing best practice and providing training for competent authorities, and to implement the use of validated animal welfare indicators;
11. Urges the Commission to recognise animal welfare as a driver of economic development;
12. Calls for the establishment of a horizontal, Commission-wide, permanent platform for animal welfare to better facilitate cooperation, provide a focus on animal welfare challenges and promote interaction with stakeholders, including civil society;
13. Urges the Commission to outline legal milestones within such a strategy;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.