



Mr. Olivér Várhelyi  
Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare  
European Commission

21 February 2025

Dear Mr. Várhelyi,

As ministers responsible for animal welfare representing our countries in the Vught group, we are pleased to extend our congratulations on your appointment as Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare. We note with great satisfaction that the European Union now has a Commissioner dedicated to animal welfare. This is an important signal to the citizens of the EU who have put animal welfare on the political agenda on many occasions in recent years, not least through the use of European Citizens' Initiatives.

We were pleased when the previous Commission presented two proposals on animal welfare, namely regarding the welfare and traceability of dogs and cats and for the protection of animals during transport. The proposal on transport was particularly long-awaited as the current regulation is now 20 years old. We were happy to note that many of the issues raised by our countries in our common position paper from June 2022 had been taken on board. Going forward, it is important that the new regulation is based on the latest scientific evidence and improves the welfare of animals being transported, this including setting new common standards for reduced maximum journey times and better minimum space allowances.

The previous Commission also made a promise to present proposals on the keeping of farm animals, the slaughter of animals and animal welfare labelling. As mentioned on several occasions, we are disappointed that these proposals have not yet been presented. We would also like to emphasize that maintaining and promoting a level playing field in the EU is essential to us as well as generally promoting animal welfare in trade with third countries. In our common position paper from September 2021, we address the importance of ensuring an ambitious approach to animal welfare regarding the keeping of animals, including updating current legislation and introducing new legislation in areas where there is currently only very general or no legislation.

With this letter, we wish to reiterate the profound need for an updated animal welfare legislation in the EU with the aim of establishing a joint new baseline in Europe. We trust that this will be a top priority for you as new Commissioner for Animal Welfare.

We look forward to a fruitful cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Jacob Jensen  
Minister for Food, Agriculture and  
Fisheries  
Denmark



Cem Özdemir  
Federal Minister of Food and  
Agriculture  
Germany



Femke Wiersma  
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries,  
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