Introduction

The first Action Plan on the protection and welfare of animals ran out at the end of 2010. Bringing all initiatives on animal welfare together in one programme has provided greater clarity, increased understanding and acceptance of the animal welfare policy. Progress was made on most of the 28 actions foreseen in the Action Plan.

However the Action plan was more a listing of deliverables and not a real strategy with clear aims, complementary tools and consistency across all other EU policies.

Attention to the way we treat animals has increased over the years and is now enshrined in Article 13 of the Lisbon Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It recognises animals as “sentient beings” and urges policy makers to “pay full regard to the requirements of animal welfare”. This Treaty obligation makes a clear call to the EU to develop its animal welfare policy in more detail.

The Treaty article reflects the concern for animal welfare in society illustrated by the results of two Eurobarometer surveys carried out in 2005 and 2007 which revealed that the vast majority of respondents (77% in 2007) believe there is a need for further improvements to be made in their country.

Eurogroup for Animals welcomes the fact that the Commission wishes to formulate the second Action plan and a strategy on the basis of an evaluation. The EUPAW evaluation report provides for some very useful guidelines for future action. This document outlines our views on policies and tools for the future strategy.

Guiding principles

The following concepts provide valuable guidance for advancing animal welfare;

1. Defining and measuring animal welfare: science and ethics

To date there is no harmonised instrument to measure animal welfare and defining animal welfare is complex. Animal based indicators are being developed but are not yet at a stage where they can be fully integrated in legislation.

Whereas science delivers the evidence on animal welfare it is essential to take into account the moral values and ethics of EU citizens as these guide final judgements. Where scientific data is not available or is not sufficiently reliable, the precautionary principle should be applied.

2. Societal benefits

Animal welfare is delivering clear benefits to society and win-win situations are created in all policy areas through improvement of animal welfare. Animal welfare rules should not be considered as a cost as the evaluation has highlighted that there is limited evidence of the economic impact on the competitiveness of production. The real cost, often externalised, of not applying high animal welfare standards should be taken into account at every stage of policy development and in particular during the impact assessment.
3. Shared benefit, shared responsibility

All parts of society benefit from animals and therefore all actors are responsible for the delivery of animal welfare. Each stakeholder’s distinctive roles should be addressed and tools developed and directed to the right party.

Overall objective of the Second Animal Welfare Strategy

Maintain and improve the protection of all animals through introduction and enforcement of legal standards, promotion of responsible ownership, sustainable production and consumption patterns and financial support for a variety of tools to support the animal welfare strategy. It also means that policies in other related areas should be coherent with the objective of the strategy by considering animal welfare.

Specific aims

1. Improving animal welfare through maintaining and developing policies and legal standards in the area of livestock farming, wildlife protection, animals used in research and testing and companion animals.
2. Improving coherence with other EU policies through proper animal welfare impact assessments.
3. Ensuring EU rules are understood and respected and enforcement is improved.
4. Support and promotion of animal protection policies and concerns.
5. Research and applied research to contribute to policy decisions.
6. Adequate financial instruments to be put in place to deliver the objectives of the animal protection strategy.

Policy tools

A mix of tools is needed to reach these aims. They include:

- Specific legal standards with the right level of details needed to improve the welfare of several categories of animals for which no detailed rules exist.
- Guidelines for performing animal welfare impact assessments.
- A financial framework to support the activities foreseen in the second strategy, and to promote animal welfare in related policy areas such as the Common Agricultural Policy.
- A framework for communication and education on animal welfare.
- Harmonised guidelines for the application of EU legislation and for reporting by Member States.
- Adequate level of Food and Veterinary Office staff to perform more inspections of Member States controls.
- An evaluation of national systems of fines and penalties and their adequacy to tackle infringements.
- An EU animal welfare reference centre to inform and advise on the scientific, technical, legal, marketing and communication aspects of animal welfare, and to centralise animal welfare data.
- The setting up of a working group as a platform to discuss animal welfare and trade related concerns.
- An inventory of animal welfare topics on which data should be obtained through research.
1. Improve animal welfare through maintaining and developing policies and legal standards

Eurogroup believes that it will remain important to introduce and improve EU legislation, to ensure legislation is in line with new scientific evidence, best practice and new technologies, and to clarify some aspects of existing laws when needed.

EU standards are necessary to contribute to a well functioning internal market with a level playing field for all producers.

Eurogroup believes that EU rules are still needed for several groups of species covering the various areas of animal welfare: farm animals, animals used in research and for testing, wild animals and companion animals. An extensive list of the current regulatory needs is included in the annex. We ask the Commission to include in the second strategy the following priorities:

- **Live animal transport:** Introducing satellite navigation systems with real time transmission of data to a central database as an essential tool for improving the enforcement of the transport regulation. A reduction in duration and frequency of live animal transport and for better conditions for transported animals, in terms of stocking density and environmental parameters.

- **Dairy cows and farmed fish:** Minimum standards for the welfare of dairy cows and for farmed fish are urgently needed, taking into account the recommendations of recent EFSA scientific opinions.

- **Animal cloning for food:** Introducing a full ban on cloning of animals for food, the import of cloned animals, as well as semen and embryos from clones and offsprings, the import of food products from cloned animals and their offspring.

- **Laboratory animals:** an EU-wide strategy for the development and use of alternative methods is needed, especially in the context of the revision and establishment of new EU legislation (for example on biocides and biotoxins) and in the context of new technologies (such as nanotechnology) to guarantee that the impact on animal testing is fully considered.

- **Companion animals:** Introducing harmonised rules covering companion animals, primarily aimed at regulating the breeding and marketing of cats and dogs, in line with the Council conclusions of 29 November 2010. At the same time the Commission should study the possibility to set up compatible systems of identification and registration of dogs and cats, to improve traceability and prevent illegal trade and the spread of zoonoses.

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2. Improved coherence between other EU policies and animal welfare by proper animal welfare impact assessments

Eurogroup disagrees with the conclusion in the Evaluation that no major inconsistencies with other policies have arisen. In the past animal welfare policies have not been fully taken into account by the European Commission, resulting in negative impacts of EU policies related to other areas on the welfare of the animals. Examples of policies which have been considered as a priority over animal welfare include:

**Trade policy**
In this area, a lack of alignment between internal and external policies is now leading to a situation where imported food products produced in systems which are illegal in the EU are sold alongside products produced in the EU under EU standards. This is not only detrimental for animal welfare but confuses the consumers and results in unfair competition to EU producers.

**Public health and chemical testing**
REACH, the safety testing program of the EU will be resulting in safer products but will also mean the additional use of several million animals to test the chemicals. Without the work of animal welfare organisations to introduce the need to use alternatives and the requirement for data sharing this amount would have been more than twofold.

**Agriculture policy**
Public money is spent to subsidise EU agriculture in a way that doesn’t necessarily correspond to EU citizens expectations. Despite the fact that animal welfare was included as an objective of the reform of the EU agriculture policy in 2003, so far the impact of public subsidies on the welfare of farm animals has not been thoroughly evaluated. There is even increasing evidence that agriculture policy has largely caused to the industrialisation of agricultural production, with many negative impacts on animal welfare. In recent years some measures were introduced to reverse this tendency, but the core of the agriculture policy has remained the same, without putting into question the effects on animal welfare and other public goods.

Despite the legal requirement to pay full regard to animal welfare as per article 13 of the Treaty, the European Commission has failed so far to properly include animal welfare considerations in the impact assessments of related policies. **The new animal welfare strategy should introduce a mechanism to systematically evaluate the impact on animal welfare of proposed EU initiatives covering related policy areas.**
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3. Ensuring EU rules are understood and respected and enforcement is improved

Concern is rising regarding the application of legal requirements by users and enforcement of EU animal welfare legislation by national authorities in EU Member States. The application of enforcement controls is paramount to ensuring EU legislation is implemented as intended by policy-makers, and to offer assurances to EU citizens and consumers that animals reared and kept in the European Union are cared for in line with legal requirements. Correct enforcement will also ensure a level playing field for producers in different EU Member States, as all parties are effectively applying the same rules and thus have similar costs of production related to animal welfare requirements.

Ensuring the implementation and enforcement of EU legislation is primarily the duty of all EU Member States. It is indeed the Member States’ task to make sure that the legislation they agreed on does not become dead letter and to put in place efficient control and sanctioning systems to that aim. Member States must also regularly report on the inspections they carry out as part of their control systems. The European Commission itself has an important role to play. As guardian of the Treaties, the Commission is responsible for ensuring that EU legal requirements are fully respected.

If the European Union is to deliver on its promises to ensure animal protection across the continent, it will need to seriously increase activities and measures to improve the level of compliance. The following supporting actions should be included in the second strategy:

- Analysis of the problems with enforcement and setting up different mechanism to address them; workshops, harmonised guidelines.
- Reporting by Member states needs to be harmonized, systematically and carefully reviewed and made public on the website of DG Sanco for more visibility and transparency. The Commission would need to discuss with the Member States how the most frequent infringements can be avoided.
- The number of controls by the FVO needs to be increased. A risk assessment methodology must be introduced to ensure that countries where major infringements are regularly reported are inspected at an increased frequency, and adequate follow-up legal procedures implemented.
- The Commission should explore the levels of penalties relating to infringement cases to ensure that in all countries the fines are dissuasive and proportionate and if necessary make those infringements a criminal offence, as is the case for environmental law.

Enforcement needs to be improved in relation to EU legislation on the protection of farm animals, but also in relation to legislation in other areas such as wild animals kept in zoos and EU regulations on wildlife trade.
4. Support and promotion of animal protection policies and concerns

At international level:
Through bilateral agreements and knowledge sharing

The inclusion of animal welfare into trade agreements between countries has so far been somewhat neglected, even in so-called veterinary agreements. Animal welfare points have been included only in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) chapters of the EU-Chile Agreement in 2002, the EU-Canada Agreement in 2006 and the EU-Korea Agreement in 2010 but with regards to standards only relating to slaughter rules.

The EU-Chile Agreement resulted in an increased involvement of the Chilean authorities, training for veterinarians and abattoir workers, organisation of conferences, development of public awareness also in other Latin American countries such as Argentina and Uruguay.

It is important for the European Commission to consistently propose the inclusion of animal welfare in its negotiations for future Free Trade Agreements in particular regarding equivalence of standards for the import of products linked with trade facilitating support such as capacity building.

In the context of improving the work with stakeholders as outlined in the final report on the evaluation of the EU policy on animal welfare, Eurogroup is urging DG Sanco to implement the plan to set up a specific stakeholders platform on trade and animal welfare.

OIE

The World Organisation for Animal Health is currently developing animal welfare guidelines through a permanent working group which oversees its work on animal welfare issues. Once agreed these guidelines becomes part of the OIE Terrestrial or Aquatic Code. However there is no enforcement mechanism in the OIE to ensure its standards are implemented and enforced. There is also concern that standards agreed by a large group of States will be baseline standards and much lower than the EU ones.

The second animal welfare strategy should provide mechanisms for the EU to work with the OIE to ensure that:

• the OIE guidelines are agreed based on the latest animal welfare science and with proper consultation and input of animal welfare NGOs and other stakeholders.
• Work is carried out through all the OIE member countries to ensure that the agreed standards are implemented in legislation and enforced.
• The OIE regional strategy for animal welfare to be drafted and implemented as a matter of urgency.

Animal Welfare Reference Centre

Eurogroup believes that an animal welfare reference centre would fill the need for a centralized information centre which can provide information and advice on the scientific, technical, legal, marketing and communication aspects of animal welfare. It would be the support tool for EU institutions and Member States, assisting in the development and implementation of animal welfare policy. To this end activities should include:

• A Central database of existing legislation, research and market initiatives, as there is at this moment no central place where this information can be found, making the research for best practice or state-of-the-art very time-consuming.
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- Provide training and education tools for authorities and operators: Several EU laws require the setting up of training courses (pigs Directive, transport Regulation, slaughter Regulation etc). Whilst Member States may lack the resources to design these courses, centralising the design of such courses is very cost efficient. The courses could then be used by all Member States thus achieving a harmonised level of implementation.

- Provide best practice advice regarding enforcement of legislation. All Member States could benefit by receiving guidance on enforcement such as the drafting of checklists for inspection of transport or on-farm legislation.

- Advice on consumer perception of animal welfare and consumer communication needs and market based approaches. The Centre should monitor important trends in citizens and consumer preferences and concerns and collect surveys and research in this area. The Centre should also be fully informed about developments in other areas of consumer related issues.

- Support the development of future animal welfare related policy including information for the preparation of impact assessments and stakeholders consultation.

Information to citizens and consumers

Different tools should be put in place in view of informing citizens and consumers on EU animal welfare policies, which could be operated by independent partners working in collaboration with the European Commission. This role can be played notably by animal welfare NGOs (see point 6. below), as well as by the animal welfare reference centre.

Existing tools in other EU policy areas should also be used to improve information to citizens about existing animal welfare policies. Member States can for example promote agricultural quality schemes, including those which apply high animal welfare standards such as Freedom Food in the UK.

Consumer choice would in particular be facilitated by making the existing poultry meat labelling scheme compulsory. Currently chicken meat from four alternative production systems may be labelled with optional reserved terms defined in Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 laying down detailed rules as regards the marketing standards for poultry meat. These rules should be revised to make them obligatory and to include a fifth term allowing consumers to identify chicken meat from animals raised in standard indoor intensive systems with their inherent welfare problems.

Integration of animal welfare in CSR and Green Public Procurement

In 2006, the Council adopted a target for Green Public Procurement (GPP) under the renewed Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS), stating that by 2010, the average level of GPP should be the same as in the best performing EU countries at the time. Since then, the Commission has fixed a baseline and requests that by 2010, 50% of all tendering procedures should be green.

In 2008, the European Commission presented a package of proposals on sustainable consumption and production which aim to improve the environmental performance of products and stimulate the demand for more sustainable goods and production technologies. Although some animal welfare concerns are addressed in the context of GPP, more needs to be done.

Eurogroup believes that the second strategy on animal welfare is the right opportunity to call on the Commission and Member States authorities to incorporate animal welfare requirements in their GPP policies. These could include:

- Priority to be given to local produce in order to avoid long distance transport.
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- Purchase a fixed percentage of animal products coming from higher welfare systems of production.
- Purchase a fixed percentage of animal test free detergents and toiletries with a commitment to steadily increase the share.
- Purchase only animal products produced according to EU rules. This applies also for imported animal products from third countries.
- Comprehensive information on animal welfare should be provided in the Commission's training toolkit for purchasers.

In a similar way, the incorporation of animal welfare concerns in companies’ Corporate Social Responsibility frameworks should be promoted by the European Commission and the Member States through the second strategy on animal welfare.

Indeed, since animal welfare strongly relates to the three dimensions (social, environmental and economical) of sustainable development, it is essential that businesses, whose activities impact on animals, ensure that their CSR programmes include good animal welfare standards that are applied in reality and communicated transparently to consumers. If companies want to be recognised as being truly sustainable or ethically sound they must work actively in this direction.

This development would be in line with the new ISO 26000 recommendations, not just for businesses but for every organisation to “respect the welfare of animals, when affecting their lives and existence, including providing decent conditions for keeping, breeding, producing and transporting and using animals”\(^2\).

This is still a relatively new concept and many companies, for a variety of reasons, are yet to explore the environmental, economic and social welfare benefits of these opportunities.

The strategy should:

- Highlight the huge win-win opportunities embedded in positioning animal welfare as a central factor of CSR.
- Help accelerate this development by providing adequate information and incentives to companies.

\(^2\) Voluntary International Standard, ISO 26000:2010, Guidance for social responsibility, lines 599-600 page 12
The second animal welfare strategy should introduce a list of priority research themes for which scientific data is needed in order to improve future animal welfare policies. This list should be drafted on the basis of recommendations for future research needs included in EFSA reports and should in priority cover the topics for which the European Commission is intending to present new rules or policies.

This list should be translated into suitable research topics corresponding to the research areas of the 7th Framework Programme for Research so that they would be included in the forthcoming calls for project proposals.

In addition to scientific research, more research and data gathering need to be foreseen to measure economic impact and the business case for improving animal welfare.

In order to really measure progress and evaluate the success of the EU’s policies the Commission should agree a set of indicators of animal welfare.

To deliver the objectives of the strategy on animal welfare, a financial framework should be laid down for the entire duration of the activities foreseen in the strategy.

This framework should include funding for the research topics of the 7th Framework Programme for Research corresponding to the list mentioned above.

The financial framework should also include support for ad hoc projects including training and information to citizens, as well as the functioning of organisations which represent animal welfare interests at Community level. These organisations indeed contribute to the monitoring and development of animal welfare policies of the Member States and their implementation and thus play a role in the proper functioning of the internal market and the protection of consumers’ right. They are also active in informing and educating citizens and consumers with regard EU animal welfare policies.
Annex: List of topics for which maintaining and developing policies and legal standards are needed to improve animal welfare

Livestock farming

Transport

The Commission was required to publish, by 5 January 2011, a report on the impact of the Regulation on the welfare of animals being transported and on the trade flows of live animals within the enlarged Community, taking into account scientific evidence on welfare needs of animals, as well as the socio-economic implications.

- Eurogroup believes that satellite navigation systems with real time transmission of data to a central database is an essential tool for improving the enforcement of the transport regulation.
- We also call for a reduction in duration and frequency of live animal transport and for better conditions for transported animals, in terms of stocking density and environmental parameters.

Calves

According to the action plan a report was supposed to be presented in 2008. According to the legislation (Council Directive 97/2/EC amending Directive 91/629/EEC laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves), the Commission had to submit to the Council a report by 1 January 2006 “on the intensive farming systems which comply with the requirements of the well-being of calves from the pathological, zootechnological, physiological and behavioural point of view, as well as the socio-economic implications of different systems, together with proposals relevant to the report’s conclusions.”

An EFSA report was adopted in May 2006, on which the Commission can base its report. It highlights the adverse effect of current systems of calf production in relation with the animals’ diet, housing conditions (floor type, environmental parameters such as temperature, humidity, air quality), early weaning and group composition.

- Eurogroup calls on the Commission to include the preparation of the report and of legislative proposals to amend current legislation in the second strategy.

Pigs

According to the action plan, a report should have been submitted in 2009. The Directive provides for a report to be submitted by the European Commission to the Council before 1 January 2005 on different aspects of pig production, with legislative proposals if necessary. EFSA has published four reports on pig housing systems in 2007:

- Eurogroup urges the Commission to include in the strategy the revision of the minimum standards as a matter of urgency. These standards include: greater protection for pigs with issues relating to farrowing crates, stocking densities, floor types and mutilations.
- In addition the European partnership on pig castration will need to actively work towards better understanding, acceptance and use of available alternatives to surgical castration of pigs.

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piglets at all levels of the food chain in line with the stakeholders commitments laid down in the declaration on pig castration⁵.

Dairy cattle
A Council of Europe Recommendation attached to the European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes was adopted in 1988 and was never implemented in EU law. It contains special provisions for cows and heifers.

In 2009 EFSA published five reports concerning the impact of current farming systems on the welfare of dairy cows, which highlight the fact that the European dairy production is based mainly on specialized intensive farming which is in itself a major factor determining the health problems of dairy cattle and other aspects of their welfare, partly through housing and equipment and partly through management and handling practices.

- Eurogroup believes that the Commission should urgently present proposals to establish minimum standards for the welfare of dairy cows, taking into account EFSA conclusions,

Beef cattle
Similarly minimum EU standards for the welfare of beef cattle have never been adopted by the EU, despite the above mentioned Council of Europe Recommendation. The Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (SCAHAW) adopted, as early as 2001, a report on the welfare of cattle kept for beef production⁶, which included a full set of recommendations.

- Eurogroup calls on the Commission to adopt standards for the protection of beef cattle, taking fully into consideration these recommendations.

Farmed fish
In 2005 the Standing Committee of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals (T-AP) of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendations concerning farmed fish. With these recommendations the Council of Europe and the European Commission, which is a member of the T-AP, acknowledge that fish feel pain, are able to suffer and that it is important to set standards for husbandry systems to protect the welfare of fish.

In 2008, EFSA has adopted scientific opinions on the welfare aspects of husbandry systems for farmed carp, seabass and seabream, trout, tuna, Atlantic salmon and European eel. The EU has only adopted a few requirements for the farming of fish under the regulation on organic farming⁷.

- It is thus essential that the adoption of standards for the protection of farmed fish is included in the second strategy on animal welfare.

Cloning of animals for food
According to the report published by the Commission in October 2010, measures need to be put in place to prevent that cloned animals and products from cloned animals enter the EU market unnoticed. Consumers are very concerned about the technique, for ethical and animal welfare reasons.

- Many stakeholders including Eurogroup, and the European Parliament have repeatedly called on the European Commission to introduce a full ban on: cloning of animals for food,

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/food/fs/sc/scah/out54_en.pdf
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the import of cloned animals, as well as semen and embryos from clones, the import of food products from cloned animals and their offspring. The introduction of such a ban should be included in the second EU strategy on animal welfare.

Meat chickens

Council Directive 2007/43/EC provides for the presentation by the European Commission of a report on the genetics of broilers by 31 December 2010, with legislative proposals. EFSA published in July 2010 a scientific opinion on this subject. The report recognises that health and welfare problems have been exacerbated by intense selection for fast growth rate.

The Directive also provides for the preparation of a report to be presented by 30 June 2012 on the application of the directive, its effects on welfare, its socio-economic and administrative implications, and the development of animal welfare indicators.

• Eurogroup for Animals calls on the European Commission to include these actions in the second strategy.

Slaughter

In 2009, the Council adopted a new Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing, which also include requirements for the European Commission to present reports on specific topics on which further research was needed at the time of discussion of the new slaughter rules. These include a report on systems restraining bovine animals by inversion or any unnatural position (by 8 December 2012). A second report must be presented by 8 December 2013, on the various stunning methods for poultry, more specifically waterbath stunning, taking into consideration animal welfare, and socioeconomic and environmental impacts. Finally, the Commission must also present, by 8 December 2014, a report on the protection of fish at the time of killing, together with legislative proposals to amend the regulation, if appropriate.

In 2009 the European Food Safety Authority has published opinions on species-specific welfare aspects of the main systems of stunning and killing fish. These cover farmed carp, seabass and seabream, trout, tuna, Atlantic salmon and European eel and turbot.

• Eurogroup believes new rules on meat chicken and fish stunning and killing need to be adopted as a matter of urgency and hopes this will be a priority action in the second strategy on animal welfare.

Wildlife protection

Trade in wild animals

The on-going revision of the rules set up under Commission Regulation (EC) No 865/2006 laying down detailed rules concerning the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 on the protection of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein presents an opportunity to provide guidance and tools with the view to better protect wild animals of endangered species. More detailed provisions would potentially allow better application of the rules with an increased contribution to biodiversity conservation through reduced illegal trade in protected species. There is also potential to improve the welfare of the live animals being traded through better consideration to the transport and housing conditions at the place of destination. Improved reporting of mortality data could lead to trade suspensions of species on the basis of their lack of aptitude to adapt in captivity, preventing their suffering.

• Priority items that should be addressed include: clarify the definition on the place of destination in terms of housing and care; tighten controls of trade in “captive bred”; improve reporting of trade data, including mortalities of live animals during all stages of trade;

8 see our briefing Animal cloning for food production for more reasoning in favour of a ban
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guidance for standardised reporting by Member States, including on seizures and confiscations.

Keeping of exotic animals as companion animals

There is increasing evidence that the import of exotic species for the pet trade threatens not only the survival of wild species but the health of humans, domestic animals and native wildlife. In addition for many species their welfare and the safety of humans and other animals cannot be assured when they are kept in captivity by private individuals. The scale of this kind of trade has been increasing in recent years, with the EU being for example the world largest importer of live reptiles.

Many exotic species have complex needs when it comes to nutrition, housing, temperature requirements, exercise and social needs. Private keepers frequently lack the skills and knowledge to provide for these needs and as a consequence animals suffer due to a wide range of health and behavioural problems.

- On the basis of the negative impacts on human health, animal health and animal welfare, and biodiversity conservations, the second animal welfare strategy should provide for the adoption of strict rules to limit the imports of wild animals for the pet trade.

EU Strategy on Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

The EU is currently preparing a strategy on IAS which presents scope for the improvement of animal welfare. Indeed, the adoption of policies aiming to prevent the introduction into the EU of animal species which could become invasive and result in eradication actions is urgently needed. Prevention measures could include the establishment of positive/negative lists of species which may/may not be imported, released and kept into the EU. In addition, the IAS strategy should include guidelines for the control of already introduced invasive animal species and it is essential that they take into account the need to respect the welfare of the animals and recommend the most humane methods of control and management.

- Eurogroup calls on the Commission to include in the second strategy on animal welfare the need to incorporate animal welfare considerations in the proposed strategy on IAS.

Animals used in research and testing

Implementation of the animal experimentation directive

Following the adoption of Directive 2010/63/EC on the protection of animals used for experimental purposes, many actions need to be carried out to implement its provisions, both by the European Commission and by the Member States.

- It is essential that the strategy on animal welfare includes a description of these legal obligations as well as proper resources to facilitate implementation.
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Resources for the new ECVAM (European Union Reference Laboratory)
In the new Directive on the protection of animals used for experimental purposes the work of the former ECVAM, the Reference laboratory in the Joined Research Centre, has been clearly defined.

- The second strategy on animal welfare needs to include additional funding to support these new roles of the EU reference laboratory.

Setting up of an EU-wide strategy for the development and use of alternative methods
This has been a demand of Eurogroup since the start of the discussions on animal experimentation. This is especially needed in the context of the revision and establishment of new EU legislation, for example related to biocides and biotoxins. In addition it will guarantee that in the context of new technologies such as nanotechnology the impact on animal testing is fully considered.

- We believe that the setting up of such a strategy is essential to reduce animal use in research in line with the application of the 3Rs principle and this should be included in the next strategy on animal welfare.

Companion animals

Breeding and marketing of cats and dogs
Cats and dogs are bred and sold everywhere in the European Union, but the regulations to which breeders, pet shops and traders are submitted differ widely, leading to distortion of competition and threatening the health and welfare of these animals. The Council has recently recognised, in its conclusions adopted in the Agriculture Council on 29 November, the need to harmonise the existing national measures.

- Eurogroup supports the introduction of EU rules on the breeding and marketing of cats and dogs.

Facilitate traceability through identification and registration
The Council conclusions also call on the Commission “to study and propose, if justified, options for facilitating compatible systems of identification and registration of dogs and cats in order to ensure better guarantees to the citizen through more efficient traceability of those animals. The options may take into account the need for fast and precise investigation, particularly in the case of illegal trade and zoonosis.”

- Eurogroup supports this demand and believes the corresponding actions should be included in the second strategy.