Eurogroup for Animals welcomes the fact that the European Commission wishes to formulate by December 2011 the second Animal Welfare Action Plan and a strategy on the basis of an evaluation of the first Action Plan and the views of stakeholders. Our views for the objective, aims and policy tools that should form the core of the strategy are presented below.

**Overall objective**

Maintain and improve the protection of all animals through the 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. Coherence between policies in other related areas and the objectives of the animal welfare strategy should be a priority.

**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.**

   EU legal standards are needed for several groups of species for real improvement of their welfare and to ensure a level playing field for users. In priority, Eurogroup believes that the Commission should present detailed standards to improve the welfare of dairy cows and of farmed fish as a matter of urgency.

2. **Improving coherence with other EU policies through 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 has not been fully taken into account by the EU when elaborating policies in areas such as trade and agriculture, resulting in negative impacts of these policies on the welfare of the animals.

   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.

3. **Ensuring EU rules are understood and respected and that enforcement is improved.**

   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.

   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, including through analysing problems, harmonising reporting, increasing controls by the Food and Veterinary Office, and ensuring penalties are efficient, dissuasive and proportionate.
**Briefing on: The second animal welfare strategy**

4. Support and promotion of animal protection policies and concerns.

To reach this aim, actions need to be carried out at different levels: international, to consumers and citizens, and through public and private policies. Such actions should include:

- the setting up of a working group on trade and animal welfare, to improve dialogue with stakeholders and foster the integration of animal welfare concerns in trade agreements.
- providing mechanisms to ensure that the EU works with the OIE for real animal welfare improvements at international level.
- Setting up the European Network of Reference Centres as already provided for in the first Action Plan, to provide information and advice on the scientific, technical, legal, marketing and communication aspects of animal welfare.
- Create tools to inform citizens and consumers on EU animal welfare policies, to be operated by independent partners (including NGOs) in collaboration with the European Commission.
- Promoting the integration of animal welfare in public procurement policies as well as in companies’ Corporate Social Responsibility frameworks.

5. Research and applied research to contribute to policy decisions.

A list of animal welfare priority research themes to gather scientific data is needed, in line with EFSA’s recommendations in order to inform future animal welfare policies. Research and data gathering also need to be foreseen to measure economic impact and demonstrate 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.

6. Adequate financial instruments to be put in place to deliver the objectives of the animal protection strategy.

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.

**Policy tools**

Eurogroup believes 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.

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A more detailed document is available upon request