



Ms Stella Kyriakides
EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety
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Brussels, 1 February 2023

Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,

Pursuant to the European Citizens Initiative ‘Fur Free Europe’ we, the undersigned Members of the Animal Welfare InterGroup’s Working Group, in support of the ECI ‘Fur Free Europe’, jointly call on the European Commission to acknowledge and support its calls for an EU-wide ban on fur farming and the import of farmed fur products into the European market.

Fur farming: a cruel and risky practice

There is no doubt that the practice of farming animals for fur contravenes the most fundamental principles of animal welfare. It has never been possible to organise a farming methodology that respects the ethological needs of wild animals bred for their fur.

This industry is disastrous for veterinary and public health. The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has made it clear, as strong scientific evidence points to farmed fur animals as potential reservoirs of pathogens and zoonosis. These risks have been recognised by the European Parliament’s Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, which also highlighted how detrimental fur farming is to biodiversity.

To date, twenty Member States have already implemented some form of legislative measures against fur farming, based on ethical, animal welfare, environmental or public health grounds. These disparate national restrictions and the multiple issues associated with fur farming have intensified the political debate at EU level. This led the Netherlands and Austria, supported by Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Slovakia to present a declaration on fur farming at the Agricultural and Fisheries Council meeting of 28th June 2021. Backed by further six Member States, which represented about two-thirds of the EU population, the declaration called on the Commission to investigate the possibility of an EU-wide ban on fur farming.

Fur farming is still carried out in several Member States, where they are generally detrimental for the quality of life of local communities. Farmed fur products from third countries continue to be sold on the European market, promoting this cruel practice worldwide, which conflict with the views and values of a majority of European citizens that care for animals.

ECI Fur Free Europe: European citizens want to make fur history

While many husbandry systems can be improved through stricter animal welfare regulations, this is not possible with fur farming. Wild animal species that require large territories simply cannot have a decent life in small wire mesh cages, nor can they be killed primarily for their fur. Fur farming has long been considered as one of the most controversial businesses of our time, and the production of fur for non-essential luxury garments is indefensible.

In fact, those issues have already been acknowledged by the fashion industry and specifically by the main global fashion houses, which are aware of the limits and realities of the fur farming supply chain. Despite the certification protocols of the fur industry, these fashion houses have made the fur-free choice an added value of their sustainability policies.

European citizens do not want animals in cages. They want a Europe where animals have a life worth living, as reflected in the success of the ECI 'End the Cage Age' and reinforced in the ECI 'Fur Free Europe'. If the Commission recognises the importance of phasing out cages for farm animals raised for food purposes, it would be logical to also prohibit the use of cages for the production of fur. This is what the 1,4 million European citizens have requested when signing the ECI 'Fur Free Europe'. Exceptionally, the required threshold of one million signatures has been reached in less than seven months. As the first ECI to validate a Member State threshold and get 50,000 signatures on the very first day, this fierce call further confirms that there are many compelling reasons to ban fur farming, and no valid reasons to continue it.

Calling on the European Commission to take the lead and listen to its citizens

Animal welfare holds great value for European citizens, and the European Commission's ambitious Farm to Fork Strategy definitely aims to put the welfare of animals on the EU agenda. With the upcoming revision of the current animal welfare legislation, the European Commission has an unique opportunity to increase animal protection through regulatory measures.

Reflecting the values of the European citizens and the latest scientific evidence, we, the undersigned Members of the Animal Welfare Intergroup's Working Group 'Fur Free Europe', strongly support the European Citizens Initiative 'Fur Free Europe', calling upon the Commission to introduce in its forthcoming legislative proposals a ban on:

- the keeping and killing of animals for the sole or main purpose of fur production;
- the placement of farmed animal fur, and products containing such fur, on the European market.

Yours sincerely,

Anja Hazekamp MEP

Honorary President of the Animal Welfare Intergroup
Chair of the Working Group 'Fur Free Europe'