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Established in 1983

Valdis Dombrovskis

Executive Vice-President and Commissioner for Trade

European Commission

Rue de la Loi 170/Wetstraat 170

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Belgium

Brussels, 04 February 2021

## **RE: Animal Welfare in the New Trade Strategy**

Dear Commissioner Dombrovskis,

The European Commission launched in June 2020 a major review of the EU's trade policy whose outcome is expected to be published in the next weeks. The review included a public consultation seeking input from the European Parliament among others. In this context, we would like to remind you that the European Parliament, in its resolution of 25 October 2018 on harnessing globalisation, already called on the Commission to "*expressly include animal welfare in its next trade policy strategy*". The resolution highlighted the benefits of promoting higher animal welfare standards in addressing issues such as the spread of zoonoses, climate change and antimicrobial resistance. We are confident the European Commission will not miss the opportunity to address these issues in the ongoing trade policy review.

This review provides the opportunity to profoundly rethink and implement a trade policy fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which should also take into account the EU's interests expressed in both the "Farm to Fork" and "Biodiversity" strategies, and more generally the Green Deal. Given that most EU animal welfare standards do not apply to imported products, we propose to include some considerations in the future EU Trade Policy, which should create a level playing field for EU producers. Products that do not meet EU animal welfare standards should not be allowed on the market in the first place, but by all means free trade agreements should only grant trade preferences to products respecting animal welfare standards equivalent to those applied in the EU. Furthermore, the provisions on animal welfare cooperation should be strengthened and grouped in a standalone chapter and more resources should be devoted to their concrete implementation. Finally, TSD chapters should be strengthened by improving their language, notably by adding provisions on sustainable agriculture or food systems, and their enforcement mechanisms.

Addressing animal welfare will also contribute to delivering on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Indeed, most UN SDGs will remain out of reach if animal welfare is not improved.

We would like to have the Commission's position on this and are glad to further discuss these issues with you and your services. We could present you more details about our proposals to ensure that EU trade policy addresses better animal welfare as part of sustainable development as a whole.

Looking forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

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