



Bureau Members

President:

Dan Jørgensen MEP

Vice-Presidents:

Kriton Arsenis MEP

Jacqueline Foster MEP

Nadja Hirsch MEP

Elisabeth Jeggle MEP

Jörg Leichtfried MEP

Kartika Liotard MEP

David Martin MEP

Cristiana Muscardini MEP

Sirpa Pietikäinen MEP

Raül Romeva i Rueda MEP

Daciana Sârbu MEP

Michèle Striffler MEP

Janusz Wojciechowski MEP

Andrea Zanoni MEP

Honorary President:

Carl Schlyter MEP

Honorary Secretary:

Marit Paulsen MEP

Secretariat:

Eurogroup for Animals

6, rue des Patriotes
B- 1000 Brussels

T: +32-2 740 08 20

F: +32- 2 740 08 29

www.animalwelfareintergroup.eu

info@eurogroupforanimals.org

Established in 1983

Report of the 279th Session

Thursday 19th January 2012, 10.45 - 11.45 hrs
Room LOW S4.5 – European Parliament, Strasbourg

I. Introductory remarks

Publication of Guidelines to assess fitness for transport

On 12 January 2012 *Guidelines to assess fitness for transport of adult bovine animals*, have been published by a group of stakeholders. The Guidelines are designed to provide easy to understand help and advice to professionals involved in the transport of adult bovines and aim to improve animal welfare throughout the transport process. This will hopefully contribute to improving the welfare of animals during their transport. The Guidelines are available in English, German, Spanish and French. Italian and Portuguese versions will be ready before the end of the month. A copy of the Eurogroup press release is available on the display desk close to the entrance.

II. Election of the new Intergroup President

Dan Jørgensen MEP (S&D, DK) was elected by acclamation as new President of the Animal Welfare Intergroup. His mandate will last until the end of this parliamentary term.

Thanks to his merits for the promotion of the Intergroup during the last 7 years, the Intergroup conferred the title of “Honorary President” to Carl Schlyter (Greens/EFA) who has led the group since May 2010. Carl Schlyter welcomed his successor by saying: “It feels good that Dan is taking over the Presidency as he is very active in defending the animal welfare cause and has a result driven mind. One of the issues Dan will focus on is to push for a revision of the Animal Transport Regulation in order to introduce among other aspects a maximum time limit for animals destined for slaughter. Dan Jørgensen has been a leading figure in this fight and was the main initiator of the [8hours petition](#) which has received the support of over 1 million citizens.”

He added: “The Intergroup is a very useful forum as it brings together people from all political groups in the European Parliament to discuss important issues. A lot of initiatives for animals have originated from the work of the Intergroup such as trade bans on seal products and cat and dog fur as well as better conditions for farm animals.

On taking up his role as President Dan Jørgensen stated: “I am very happy and proud of the trust that my colleagues show in me. I consider the election as recognition of the work that I have done for animal welfare since I was elected to the European Parliament for the first time in 2004.”

He added: “I will use this opportunity to put more focus on the lack of animal welfare in the EU. Unfortunately the reality today is that animals are not being treated like living beings but rather like a means of production for milk, meat or eggs. We need a fundamental change of attitude towards animals and the Intergroup can help deliver this.”

Welcoming the announcement the Secretariat of the Intergroup commented: “The election of Dan sees the Intergroup being passed to a safe and competent pair of hands for the remainder of the Parliamentary term. We look forward to working with Dan to build a Europe that really cares for animals.”

III. Election of Andrea Zanoni MEP (ALDE, IT) as Vice-President

The meeting saw also the election of **Andrea Zanoni (ALDE, IT)** as new Vice-president of the Animal Welfare Intergroup.

“I will do the utmost to improve the protection of animals during transport, to achieve a more humane approach of dealing with strays within the EU Member States and for a better enforcement of the EU legislation on the conservation of birds.” he said.

Andrea Zanoni, has been elected as Vice-president only four months after having taken up his seat as MEP.

“As Vice President, I want to have a greater impact on the work of the Animal Welfare Intergroup to ensure that animals get the rights which are still too often denied to them,” he said.

“I just wanted to be part of this Intergroup as I am convinced that animal welfare and conservation issues need to be addressed in a forum without political colour” – he continued.

“Much still needs to be done to enforce related EU and Member States legislation on animal welfare. I think here in particular about the lack of enforcement of the Birds Directive in Italy, the catastrophic situation of stray dogs in Romania or the perreras in Spain. “The European Union and its Member States must turn the page on this”. Italy is a champion of un-lawlessness regarding the Birds Directive and this is due to a wide spread indifference in several regional authorities.”

He committed himself in continuing his fight against the derogation allowing bird hunting in the Region of Veneto, Italy. The European Commission is about to open another infringement procedure against Italy on this issue. Recently he has written letters to the Commission [on the stray dog killing law in Romania](#) and has raised the case of a Green Hill breeding centre for Beagles destined for animal experimentation. He asked to close this centre in case the European and Italian rules would continue to not be respected ([VIDEO](#)). Not at least he has asked written questions to the Commission [on the transport of cattle destined for slaughter](#), [on hunting wolves in the Apennines](#) and has actively promoted [the 8hours campaign](#) on the transport of live animals.

“I will work to ensure that the intent of Article 13 of the Treaty of Lisbon, which defines animals as “sentient beings”, can finally become reality within the European Union,” said Zanoni.

AGRI-initiative report on animal transport

Janusz Wojciechowski (ECR, PL) announced having been appointed as rapporteur for an AGRI initiative report on animal transport. He read out the following timetable for his report:

28 February 2012	Exchange of views in the AGRI Committee
29 February	Internal deadline for the report
20 March	Examination of the draft report
30 March	deadline for tabling amendments
30-31 May	Vote in the Agriculture committee
2-5 July	Vote in plenary

He also announced he would welcome suggestions from the Intergroup Members regarding aspects and issues that should be included in his draft report.

AGRI-initiative report on the new Animal Welfare Strategy (2012-2015)

Marit Paulsen (ALDE, SE) gave some short comments about the new Animal Welfare Strategy welcoming the fact that several issues of the related last Parliament report have been taken up. She regretted however that it had been done in an extremely washed way. Thus the Parliament report would have to highlight the need

to strengthen the Strategy and to make it more comprehensive. She called several times on all Intergroup Members to actively support her in the coming months in the debates on the shaping of the Parliament report.

IV. Presentation of the ENVI-draft report: Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020

Gerben Gerbrandy (ALDE, NL), the ENVI rapporteur for the initiative report on “*our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020*” presented his draft report which had been released some days before.

The extinction of species and the progressing loss of habitats in Europe and in other parts of the world is a silent crisis behind the scenes, which is very threatening as it is irreversible. In the long term this can also threaten the future of mankind.

An international initiative called [the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity \(TEEB\)](#) has come up with figures showing that the current loss of biodiversity represents a 3% loss for the worldwide GDP. If this trend continues, it will grow to 7% in 2050. For the European Union the current yearly loss for the GDP represents about 450 billion Euros. This is roughly the same amount which is allocated to the one-time emergency fund to save the Euro. Another issue that would threaten the EU economy with more than 3% of a yearly GDP would stir up immediate reaction.

2010 has been the international year of biodiversity which gave a lot of attention to the issue, also in the European Parliament. The year after, biodiversity policy slipped down in the list of priorities. It was anymore an important issue of debate even for the AGRI-Environment Council in December 2011 despite the fact that there is an obvious strong link between agriculture and protection of biodiversity. The EU Environment Ministers should fight for the consideration of biodiversity instead they decided not to debate the issue with their colleagues in charge of agriculture. Even the usual ambassadors for biodiversity protection like the Netherlands or Finland have lost political interest in this issue.

The European Commission has proposed a new strategy on biodiversity which is commented in the ENVI draft report.

The report focuses on a few elements and is rather concise because of internal rules. Many amendments are however on the shelf to possibly double the size of the report at a later stage .

Here are the most important elements:

First of all it addresses [the Natura 2000 network](#), the EU legislation for the conservation and ecosystems. Unfortunately, most EU Member States have drastically cut their budget allocations for nature conservation. In Italy the cut will be up to 90%. The consistent enforcement of Natura 2000 will be key.

Secondly, in the context of the multiannual financial framework which is being reviewed it will be necessary to [mainstream nature conservation in different European policies areas](#) like agriculture, fisheries, development policy, cohesion and trade policy.

The European Union should [not have any development programmes in third world countries that have a negative effect on biodiversity](#) because people are very much depending on what nature is providing them. The [future Common Agricultural Policy](#) will also be crucial for nature conservation as 77 % of land in Europe is in the hand of farmers. He said to be a great fan of an initiative called [rewilding Europe](#) which focuses on areas in Europe where people are abandoning rural areas. A lot of EU funds and other money are spent trying to keep farmers in those areas making them nothing more than European civil servants. They are totally dependent on what is paid to them for mowing grass and for keeping the landscape in shape. Doing that has no agricultural benefits and can have even negative effects on nature in these areas. One of the alternatives proposed in the report is creating well protected wildlife zones in those areas so that they could become the Yellowstone Park or Serengeti of Europe. He was sure that in the long term this would also make sense from an economic point of view.

Another important issue is **attracting industry to the field of biodiversity** conservation. The draft report proposes “no-net-loss initiative” which means that new projects are not supposed to have a net loss influence on biodiversity. If this should be the case it has to be compensated somewhere else. Schemes are already available to deal with it. It could be very important tool to make businesses much more aware about the consequences of certain activities on biodiversity. In the longer term it is also in their interest as many companies are dependent on ecosystem services like fresh water, fertile soil and so on.

A further point is to **find different forms of financing** nature and biodiversity policy. As many EU Member States are cutting the relevant budgets radically it is impossible to continue to have just public funds to save biodiversity in Europe and outside. The **green development programme** could be an answer. It makes further steps in green accounting having the value of nature and biodiversity being reflected in national accounts of the Member States. We are much further in the development of this than most people think. It is already possible to start implementing this. It would be a very crucial element for biodiversity conservation.

The European Union should **get rid of environmentally harmful subsidies**. It is unacceptable in times of austerity to spend hundreds of billions of Euros on subsidies that have a negative effect on the environment and on nature. The European citizens pay twice, first for the subsidies and then for the amounts for restoring the damages done by these subsidies.

Even in the European Parliament it is very difficult to move forward with this issue. An oral question for plenary was tabled twice which was rejected by the Conference of Presidents to be put on the plenary agenda.

Most countries are far behind in the **implementation of the existing legislation** and it is an issue that has to be focused on.

The final point regards the **international dimension**. The European Union has a huge footprint in the rest of the world and therefore it will be necessary to make the **EU's trade relations much more sustainable** and consider the loss of biodiversity a much stronger element in trade relations with third countries.

Gerben Jan Gerbrandy stressed that he would need a lot of support within the different political groups in order to get it higher on the political agenda. The main fight will be not so much within this House but with the Council. The more united the House will be the stronger it will be in the negotiations with the Council.

Questions and debate

Carl Schlyter (Greens/EFA, SE) said that Robert Constanza, the best known American ecological economist has calculated that the value of ecosystem service to the global economy is between 2 to 3 times the global GDP. This means that if there are 2% growth at the expense of 2% biodiversity it results a net economic loss. He wished Mr Gerbrandy good luck for turning the Netherlands into a wilderness but in a country like Sweden it should be more feasible. He also pointed out that agricultural land can contribute to a certain kind of biodiversity.

Catherine Bearder (ALDE, UK) said that the issue of funding was essential to be sorted out. A lot of legislation is already in place to protect the EU environment but the problem is that it is not being enforced. She agreed that Europe's footprint is enormous in the world. In the Committee on International Trade she has been working on raising the point of nature conservation. For the draft report she suggested including also the recognition of value of the urban landscapes. Town gardens are a refuge of many so called “farmland birds” and for all sorts of insects and plant species. She also suggested that every relevant document the Parliament passes should have an assessment on the potential environmental impact.

Gerben Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE, NL) agreed that urban landscapes play an important role in nature conservation. In his explanatory statement he wrote on the importance of not focusing only on designated areas but to preserve nature wherever it is located. This will have huge benefit especially in densely populated areas.

Staci McLennan, Eurogroup for Animals raised the issue of policy integration and the connection to health which is lagging in the Commission strategy. She wished that the report should put also an emphasis on the

issue of human and animal health given the link between wildlife and emerging infectious diseases of zoonotic origin. Over 70% of those diseases originate from wildlife. This can impact humans, livestock and wildlife.

She also suggested raising the issue of the invasive species strategy. In this context Eurogroup for Animals would call for an emphasis on prevention. The EU is estimated to spend huge amounts of money to remedy to damages caused by invasive species. Prevention of the import of exotic species is obviously the most cost-effective tool when it comes to vertebrate animal species. They were intentionally introduced to Europe either for fur farming, for zoos, for the pet market or for hunting.

Anna Rosbach (ECR, DK) agreed that nature in urban areas and on the borders of agricultural land is an important refuge for biodiversity. Generally she would be not very fund of having more EU legislation but in this regard it would be of help to harmonise rules.

V. Closing remarks

The next Intergroup meeting will take place on 7 February 2012 and will be exceptionally held in Brussels. Commissioner Dalli will present the new EU Animal welfare Strategy. Further details of the meeting will be sent to all in time.

Members of the European Parliament (18)

AGNEW, John, Stuart	EFD	UK
ASHWORTH, Richard	ECR	UK
BEARDER, Catherine	ALDE	UK
GERBRANDY, Gerben Jan	ALDE	NL
GRIFFIN, Nick	NA	UK
HIRSCH, Nadja (Vice-president)	ALDE	DE
JEGGLE, Elisabeth (Vice-president)	EPP	DE
JØRGENSEN, Dan (President)	S&D	DK
LEICHTFRIED, Jörg (Vice-president)	S&D	AT
MUSCARDINI, Cristiana (Vice-president)	EPP	IT
PAULSEN, Marit (Honorary Secretary)	ALDE	SE
PIETIKÄINEN Sirpa (Vice-president)	EPP	FI
POC, Pavel	S&D	CZ
SCHLYTER, Carl (Honorary President)	Greens/EFA	SE
STRIFFLER, Michele (Vice-president)	EPP	FR
VATTIMO, Gianni	ALDE	IT
WOJCIECHOWSKI, Janusz (Vice-president)	ECR	PL
ZANONI, Andrea (Vice-president)	ALDE	IT

Assistants and Trainees to Members of the European Parliament (8)

ANSELMINI, Antonio	Assistant to Mrs Muscardini (EPP, IT)
FALOCI, Chiara	Assistant to Mr Zanoni (EPP, IT)
FIALA, Judith	Assistant to Mr Leichtfried (S&D, AT)
FRANK, Tobias	Assistant to Ms Hirsch (ALDE, DE)
JULIUSSON, Christian	Assistant to Ms Paulsen (ALDE, SE)
O'HEA Deirdre	Assistant to Mrs McGuinness (EPP, IR)
SERGO, Leida	Assistant to Ms Paulsen (ALDE, SE)
VALTANEN, Aino	Assistant to Mrs Pietikäinen (EPP, IR)

Guest Speakers and Observers (4)

MAJERCZYK, Magdalena	AGRI-Adviser ECR Group
MICZKI, Tamara	EP staff
SCHOCH, Liliane	Schuman Associates
VIDAL, Tiphaine	EBCD

Secretariat (2)

ERLER, Andreas	Eurogroup for Animals, Political Officer,
McLENNAN, Staci	Eurogroup for Animals, Policy Officer Wildlife