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EC engages on Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare

Report Categories:

Livestock and Products

Trade Policy Monitoring

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Report Highlights:

On March 23, 2009, the 27 Ag Ministers of the European Council (EC) unanimously approved Council Conclusions on a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare. With this initiative, the EC calls for the elaboration of such an internationally adopted declaration. The EC explicitly supports the European Commission's initiatives to pursue this goal, including using its preferential trade schemes to win the support from developing countries.

General Information:

Council Conclusions on a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare

2934th AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES Council meeting
Brussels, 23 March 2009

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"RECALLING the Protocol on Protection and Welfare of animals annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Community[1], whereby the Member States' confirmed their desire "to ensure improved protection and respect for the welfare of animals as sentient beings";

RECALLING the Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals[2] in which the

Commission provided a clear and comprehensive map of its planned animal welfare initiatives, aiming to ensure that these initiatives take due account of "their European and international dimensions and value";

RECALLING that animal welfare was first identified as a priority in the OIE Strategic Plan 2001-2005;

RECALLING that the International Committee of the OIE has since then adopted international standards for animal welfare which recognize the need for humane treatment of sentient animals, while ensuring that these standards are science based;

RECALLING that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recognizes the importance of animal welfare practices that lead to benefits for both people and their animals and supports their implementation[3];

CONSIDERING that the international community at large recognizes the OIE as the international standard-setting organization for animal welfare, and that strategic partnership is required within the

framework of FAO, OIE and other relevant institutions engaged at international level to support the implementation of good animal welfare practices especially in transition and developing countries;

TAKING NOTE of the international efforts to gain world-wide support for a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW);

RECALLING that the International Committee of the OIE has decided to support, in principle, the development of a UDAW which calls on countries to acknowledge the importance of animal welfare and, at the same time, recognizes the OIE as the established international animal welfare standard-setting body[4];

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the discussions and the results of the work carried out by the Chief Veterinary Officers;

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- DEEMS it important to achieve world-wide acceptance of animal welfare as an issue of common concern and importance;
- ENCOURAGES the Commission to continue, as announced in its Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals, "to support and initiate further international initiatives to raise awareness and create a greater consensus on animal welfare, including engaging with Developing Countries to explore trade opportunities based on welfare friendly production systems";
- INVITES the Member States and the Commission, within their respective competencies, to support, in principle, the UDAW initiative in the relevant international fora."

This Council Declaration can be found at

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/agricult/106877.pdf.

Visit our website: our website <http://useu.usmission.gov/agri/> provides a broad range of useful information on EU import rules, food laws, agriculture and trade policy. It enables easy access to USEU reports, trade and other practical information.

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Related reports from USEU Brussels with info on EU CAP Reforms:

Report Number	Title	Date Released
E49016	EU hosts Global Conference on Trade and Farm Animal Welfare	February 26, 09
E48132	EU Veterinary Week: ONE HEALTH: Healthy Animals=Healthy People	November 20, 08
E48113	EC launches new proposal for Animal Welfare at slaughter or killing	October 13, 08
E48094	Livestock Annual report	August 27, 08
E48090	Poultry Annual Report	August 27, 08
E47096	EC adopts Community Animal Health Policy 2007-13	November 5, 07
E47015	EU Community Animal Health Policy (CAHP) Strategy 2007-2013	February 27, 07
E36031	EU launches Action Plan for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010	March 3, 06

These reports can be accessed through our website <http://useu.usmission.gov/agri/> or through the FAS website <http://www.fas.usda.gov/scriptsw/attacherep/default.asp>.

[1] OJ C 340, 10.11.1997, p. 110.

[2] COM(2006) 13 final of 23.1.2006.

[3] http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/home/documents/AW_Exp-meeting.pdf.

[4] Resolution No. XIV adopted by the International Committee of the OIE on 24 May 2007.