

Press Release

For immediate release

Wednesday, 30 June 2021

**UK Government must follow suit after EU Commission announces historic
commitment to ban cages for farmed animals**

Today (30 June), the EU Commission today committed to phase out cages in animal farming across the EU by 2027, making history for farm animals.

The Commission plans to prohibit cages for over 300 million hens, mother pigs, calves, rabbits, ducks, geese and other farmed animals every year, looking at a phase-out by 2027. EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides and Commission Vice-President Věra Jourová made the announcement at a press conference covering the Commission's response to the End the Cage Age European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). The ECI, which is the first successful Initiative for farmed animals, was signed by an overwhelming 1.4 million EU citizens.

The Commission announced it intends to *"put forward a legislative proposal by the end of 2023 to phase out and finally prohibit the use of cages for all the animal species and categories referred to in the initiative"*. It will also address the issue of imported products from non-EU countries, committing to look at *"introducing rules or standards for imported products that are equivalent to the EU's"*. By the end of next year, the Commission will evaluate the details of the legislative proposal that will be put forward in 2023, which would need the approval of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.

"The long-awaited day has finally come," said Olga Kikou, Head of EU at Compassion in World Farming. *"Today, the European Commission made a historic decision to leave a legacy for farmed animals. Citizens demanded change and the Commission received the message loud and clear, making an unequivocal and visionary commitment to phase out cages."*

“The tide is finally turning. We will stay focused on the European institutions until they deliver on this ambition and will be vigilant in preventing vested interests from watering it down.

“Factory farming is the biggest cause of cruelty to sentient creatures on the planet. Ending the use of cages is a massive step towards ending factory farming.”

James West, Senior Policy Manager at Compassion in World Farming, added: *“Today’s announcement, made by the EU Commission, is a massive step forwards and hugely important moment for the hundreds of millions of animals farmed in cages, across the continent, annually.*

“Many years of campaigning to End the Cage Age have culminated in this historic commitment. However, we must not become complacent. It is now crucial that the UK Government follows suit and delivers an-end to the use of cages – Britain must not get left trailing behind the EU in improving farm animal welfare”.

The End the Cage Age ECI launched on 11 September 2018 and closed exactly a year later, having gained over 1.6 million signatures. Following the required signature validation period, the ECI easily exceeded the required threshold of 1 million signatures, with a total of 1.397.113 validated signatures across Europe. It also outstripped the minimum number of signatures threshold in 18 EU member states, out of the seven required. This makes the End the Cage Age ECI the:

- 6th ECI to succeed among 75 registered initiatives in the last ten years,
- 3rd with the highest signature count,
- 1st successful ECI on farmed animal welfare.

Making history for farmed animals has been a collaborative effort, where Compassion in World Farming has been leading a coalition of 170 NGOs from across Europe and rallied citizens from every corner of the continent.

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For more information please email media.team@ciwf.org or call 01483 521 615

Notes to Editors

1. For more information in the End the Cage Age ECI, visit:
<https://www.endthecageage.eu/>
2. For the EU Commission's full End the Cage Age Communication, visit:
https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/media/1085_en
3. Compassion in World Farming was founded in 1967 by a British dairy farmer who became horrified at the development of intensive factory farming. Today Compassion is the leading farm animal welfare organisation dedicated to ending factory farming and achieving humane and sustainable food. With headquarters in the UK, we have offices across Europe, in the US, China and South Africa. To find out more about Compassion in World Farming visit: www.ciwf.org