CC0 Noah Silliman / Unspalsh

en | es

News | 14.03.2017

Rabbits and animal welfare

No to factory farming!

Today the European parliament adopted a report on *minimum standards for the Protection of Farm Rabbits 2016/2077(INI)* calling for specific legislation on minimum standards. Animal welfare is of a very high priority for the Greens/EFA group. We have worked tirelessly against the factory farming of all animals. One detrimental side-effect of factory farming is the spread of disease and the subsequent overuse of antibiotics.

Rabbits are the second most farmed species in the EU, after broiler chickens, with over 320 million being slaughtered annually. The vast majority of them are kept in barren wire cages where their natural behaviour is severely restricted. They live brutally short miserable lives in factory farming systems, suffering from diseases associated with the high population densities, unable to express species specific behaviours.

There is not as yet any specific EU legislation on minimum standards for the protection of rabbits. Some Member States have legal requirements for rabbit farming. Harmonised minimum standards for rabbit welfare would help to combat animal suffering. Many scientists call for legislation and state that the cage system should be urgently replaced by one, which allows for the natural needs of rabbits to be better taken into account. Higher animal welfare standards will also help farmers offer quality products, which is what EU consumers expect.

In organic production systems rabbits are kept in group pens with access to a small area of pasture at the base of the pen, which allows the rabbits more space, increased social interaction and more opportunities for natural behaviour such as gnawing on wooden blocks, eating hay, hiding in tubes and under platforms, standing on their hind legs, lying stretched out, hopping and jumping.

This report calls for minimum standards for the protection of farmed rabbits, emphasising the need for higher standards of welfare and health. It also supports the use of the “park” system for rabbit farming.

Recommended

Opinion

© Christian Kaufmann



Healthy food starts with healthy farming. Europe must …

04.11.2026

News



[Galizan MEP condemns government response to devastatin…]

09.09.2025

Opinion

Environment Protection Authority Victoria (CC BY 4.0)



PFAS in Wine, Water & Makeup: How We Can Ban Forever C…

18.06.2025

Press release

Image by joakant from Pixabay



Greens/EFA welcome the European Ocean Pact and call fo…

05.06.2025

Contact person



Sophie Perroud

Food and pesticides campaigner

Please share

- E-Mail