European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

END THE CAGE AGE

8th September 2026

Dear
Commission President von der Leyen,
Executive Vice-President Ribera,
Executive Vice-President Séjourné,
Executive Vice-President Fitto,
Commissioner Várhelyi,
Commissioner Hansen.

Collectively, across civil society, EU citizens, industry and key stakeholders we call on the European Commission to – **this year** – propose legislation to prohibit the use of cages for farmed animals for:

- laying hens, rabbits, pullets, broiler breeders, layer breeders, quail, ducks and geese;
- farrowing crates and sow stalls for pigs;
- individual pens for calves.

Such legislation was due to be published in 2023, and this severe delay is unacceptable for the nearly 300 million animals confined in cages each year. It also affects farmers and food businesses, who have invested in cage-free farming and supply chains, and are now facing an unlevelled playing field due to lack of EU harmonization and the absence of import requirements.

The Commission's recent public consultation found that 9 out of 10 respondents fully agree that the current EU legislation regulating animal welfare at farm level does not ensure that farmed animals can express normal behaviour.
This agreement is in line with a wealth of animal welfare science including EFSA's position that cage systems are fundamentally incompatible with good animal welfare[1, 2, 3].

1 Welfare of laying hens | EFSA

2 Welfare of pigs on farm | EFSA

3 Welfare of calves | EFSA

The use of cages, crates and individual pens in farming systems severely restricts or prevents these important natural behaviours and the confined conditions these animals endure on many farms are cruel and unnecessary.

In fact, in addition to the scientific evidence and citizen demand for a cage-free future, more than 30 leading European food companies[4] have directly urged you, via species specific statements, to end the use of cages in animal farming across Europe. This highlights that cage-free is already a commercially viable farming system and that the food sector is willing to move.

The Commission's recent public consultation showed that there is more businesses support for a ban on cages than businesses opposing a ban and this is shown across all species.

We, therefore, urge you to take immediate steps to publish the first legislative proposals no later than December this year, in line with the Livestock Strategy of 7 July 2026, and to reiterate the Commission's commitment to ban cages for all farmed species.

Such proposals should be in line with the asks of the *End the Cage Age* ECI and the Commission's communications. This includes:

- a clear EU-wide legislative framework to phase out the use of cages in farming,
- adequate transition support, including through the Common Agricultural Policy and other relevant instruments,
- consistency between EU internal standards and requirements applied to imported products.

On behalf of all the sentient individuals confined in cages in the EU, **we call for legislative proposals – to be published before the end of this year** – that will end this suffering at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Josef Pfabigan
CEO/Chair of the Board
FOUR PAWS International

Animal Welfare. Worldwide.

4 Major food companies urge EU to ban caged animal farming

On behalf of:

- **End the Cage Age Coalition;**
- **1.4 million** EU citizens;
- **178** sector professionals including veterinary representatives, scientists, lawyers, consumer groups, high-profile supporters, industry representatives and farmers.

End the Cage Age Coalition

ALLIANCE ANTI CORRIDA
Tierärzte für verantwortbare Landwirtschaft e.V.
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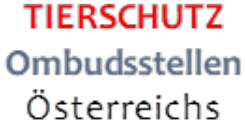
Sector Organisations



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