

Evaluation of the EU Policy on Animal Welfare (EUPAW) and Possible Options for the Future

The evaluation was commissioned by the Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) of the European Commission and aimed to provide an **independent evaluation of the EUPAW and an assessment of the possible options for the future**. The key messages from the evaluation are as follows:

1. **Targeted EU animal welfare legislation has improved the welfare of many of Europe's farm and experimental animals**, but more could be achieved with stronger and more consistent enforcement of existing rules. By extending the scope of EU welfare legislation, other groups of animals could benefit from higher welfare standards.
2. **EU legislation to protect animals has, in general, helped to reduce competitive distortions in the internal market** caused by differences in national standards, but in certain areas further action on enforcement and harmonisation is required.
3. **EU funding for research and scientific advice on animal welfare, totalling about €15 million annually, has made a positive contribution to policy**. Most funding has been for farm animals and the development of techniques to facilitate the replacement of in vivo animal testing.
4. **The extent to which EU communication actions have raised stakeholder and public awareness and responsibility towards animal welfare is unclear**. To maximise the impact of the limited resources available, a clear communications strategy and stronger monitoring and evaluation are needed.
5. **The EU's international initiatives have helped to raise awareness and create a shared international understanding of animal welfare issues and standards**, particularly with trading partners in markets for food products, but there is much more to do.
6. **The establishment of equivalent market conditions between EU businesses and those from third countries exporting to the EU is a long term project** on which the Commission has been working via bilateral and multilateral channels. Foundations are being laid but there is more to do.
7. **The financial resources and instruments at EU level have grown to meet the increasing resource needs of the EUPAW**, though there is a need for further growth in funding as the policy continues to develop in the years ahead.
8. **EU animal welfare policy appears to have succeeded in striking a balance between the varied needs and expectations of citizens, industry and other groups** on an issue for which ambitions differ across Europe. There are widespread calls for more consistent enforcement but less appetite for a new wave of standards, suggesting an agenda defined by evolution rather than revolution for the next few years.
9. **The various components of EU animal welfare policy are broadly complementary, mutually support and consistent**, and have (thus far) avoided major conflict with other EU policies, such as on competitiveness, trade and the environment.
10. **EU welfare standards have imposed additional costs on the livestock and experimental sectors**, estimated at around 2% of the overall value of livestock output and a similar proportion of the annual costs of experiments using animals. There is no evidence that this has so far threatened the economic sustainability of these sectors.
11. **Management of the EUPAW costs the Member States' public administrations an estimated total of around €105 million a year**, with about €53 million on farm inspections, about €0.5 million for regulating welfare of experimental animals and about €13 million for administrative costs.

The report makes specific recommendations regarding **priorities for future EU action**, under each of the 11 main evaluation themes listed above.