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#### 'I/A' ITEM NOTE

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From: Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers  
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

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Subject: Draft Council conclusions on European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 31/2018: "Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation"  
*- Adoption*

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1. On 14 November 2018 the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published the special report No 31/2018: "Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation"<sup>1</sup>.
2. At its meeting on 11-12 December 2018, the Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers (the Working Party) examined the above mentioned special report.
3. Further to that meeting, the Presidency presented draft Council conclusions on the report for Member States' comments and, subsequently, for discussion by the Working Party on 29-30 January 2019<sup>2</sup>. As a result of that discussion, the Working Party agreed on the draft Council conclusions as set out in the Annex to this note.

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<sup>1</sup> ST 14800/18

<sup>2</sup> WK 428/2019 REV 1

4. In accordance with the conclusions adopted by the Council on 8 May 2000 on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the Court of Auditors<sup>3</sup>, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited:

- to confirm the agreement reached by the Working Party; and
- to suggest to the Council to adopt at one of its forthcoming sessions, as an "A" item of its agenda, the draft Council conclusions as set out in the Annex to this note.

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<sup>3</sup> Doc. 7515/00 + COR1.

**DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**

**on Special report No 31/2018 from the European Court of Auditors entitled "Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation"**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- (1) WELCOMES the Special Report No 31/2018 from the European Court of Auditors ('Court') entitled "Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation";
- (2) WELCOMES the findings of the report that actions to achieve compliance have been successful in important areas, most notably on group housing of sows and the ban on unenriched cages of laying hens;
- (3) NOTES the finding that there are still some weaknesses in compliance with minimum standards and room to improve the coordination of cross-compliance checks with official inspections on animal welfare and the use of financial resources of the Common Agricultural Policy to promote higher animal welfare standards;
- (4) AGREES with the Court that the Member States' official control systems are a key factor in ensuring that animal welfare standards are properly enforced and EMPHASISES that the controls should be performed on a risk basis and with an appropriate frequency;

- (5) STRESSES the importance of promoting animal welfare through the Common Agricultural Policy and through the EU's bilateral and multilateral international activities;
  - (6) WELCOMES the Commission's intention to perform an evaluation of the 2012 Animal Welfare Strategy, to take action to better address risky areas, to disseminate good practices and to encourage the effective use of rural development support for animal welfare;
  - (7) NOTES that the latest EU strategy from the protection and welfare of animals covered the period from 2012 to 2015 and ENCOURAGES the Commission to consider, in the light of the outcome of that evaluation, a new strategy for the coming years to further promote animal welfare in the EU and as far as possible beyond the EU;
  - (8) ENCOURAGES Member States to support the Commission in achieving these objectives.
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