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European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Improving animal welfare for turkey husbandry in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy

- Information from the Austrian delegation, supported by the Belgian, Cyprus, German, Luxembourg and Slovak delegations

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Austrian delegation, supported by the Belgian, Cyprus, German, Luxembourg and Slovak delegations on the above mentioned subject to be raised under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 19 July 2021.

Improving animal welfare for turkey husbandry in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy

Information from the Austrian delegation, supported by the Belgian, Cypriot, German, Luxembourg and Slovak delegations

1. Animal welfare constitutes an essential pillar of the Farm to Fork Strategy. As stressed in the respective Council Conclusions, animal health and welfare are a precondition for sustainable livestock production. Improving animal welfare has multiple additional benefits such as improving animal health, raising the level of food quality and lowering the dependency on antimicrobials.
2. Turkey is one of the most common farm animals in the Union and yet there are no specific mandatory husbandry requirements for turkey production at Union level. While few Member States already have national legislation on turkey husbandry, several other Member States have no such specific legal requirements. We share the conviction, as expressed in the respective Council Conclusions, that new legislation should be based on the latest scientific research and experience from Member States.
3. The Austrian government commissioned a study compiling and evaluating the state of knowledge on turkey husbandry. This study makes a number of recommendations.
4. Therefore, to increase animal welfare of turkeys and to equally guarantee fair competition within the internal market, we deem Union-wide minimum standards for the keeping of poultry necessary that are based on current scientific knowledge.
5. In this context, we want to highlight that consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of improving animal welfare, which results in an equally increasing demand for animal products based on higher standards of animal welfare. Therefore, the Union should reflect and encourage this development. Awareness raising campaigns as well as public procurement can also contribute to further promoting improved animal welfare standards.

6. We welcome mandatory husbandry requirements for turkey farming, based on up-to-date scientific knowledge and in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy.
 7. Therefore, we invite the European Commission to consider this crucial aspect when revising the Union's animal welfare legislation, as announced in the Strategy.
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