

Brussels, 22 September 2026

President Ursula von der Leyen
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200, 1049 Brussels

Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200, 1049 Brussels

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear Commissioner Várhelyi,

Re: The Commission's final response to the European Citizens' Initiative *Fur Free Europe*

We are reaching out to you, as Members of the European Parliament from different political groups and Member States, at what we understand to be the final stage of the College's deliberations on its response to the European Citizens' Initiative *Fur Free Europe*. We do so because this decision matters, both to us and to the 1.5 million citizens, who signed it. Your response is expected to be an effective testimony of how the Union handles animal welfare, public health and the integrity of the single market and we want to add our voice in support of an EU-wide ban on fur farming.

It is our understanding that the College is weighing two very different paths: an EU-wide phase-out of fur farming and placing farmed fur on the market, as the initiative requested; or an alternative built around minimum welfare standards. We are writing to urge you to ensure that the Commission's final Communication commits unambiguously to legislation prohibiting the keeping and killing of animals for fur production, and the placing on the EU market of farmed fur and products containing it, accompanied by a fair transition period for the few remaining operators.

A mandate that deserves a straight answer

Fur Free Europe gathered more than 1.5 million signatures faster than almost any other European Citizens' Initiative in the Union's history. The citizens who signed it asked for an end to fur farming, not for it to be made marginally more comfortable on paper. A response built around welfare standards, rather than the bans that were actually asked for, would not be experienced as a serious answer to what these citizens asked. As elected representatives, we would find that a hard outcome to explain to the constituents who raised this issue with us directly.

Member States have already shown where this is heading

Our sense from across the European Parliament is that we would not expect a majority to support an outcome that replaces a ban with minimum welfare standards. That impression is reinforced by what has been happening within the Member States. The overwhelming majority have already banned fur farming outright or effectively phased it out, and in two separate discussions in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, a strong majority spoke in favour of an EU-wide ban. A Commission response that falls short of what both co-legislators appear to want risks looking out of step with where this debate has clearly moved.

Evidence does not support a welfare standards approach

The Commission asked EFSA to assess whether fur animals can be kept under conditions that guarantee acceptable welfare, precisely to settle this question. EFSA's answer was unambiguous: the welfare harms built into current fur farming systems cannot be designed away, and no workable alternative exists. Given that finding, a Communication that nonetheless keeps the door open to fur farming via welfare standards sits uneasily with the Commission's own fact-finding, and, as we understand it, could leave it exposed to challenge on the adequacy of its reasoning – particularly as EU law already requires that animals only be farmed where this is possible without harm to their welfare.

The economic case to protect this sector is equally thin: EU fur farms produced roughly 6.3 million pelts in 2024, worth around €183 million and supporting only about 2,048 jobs, figures that have fallen by 73–92% over the past decade and now represent a net cost to the EU economy. Propping up a shrinking, harmful industry with new standards, rather than winding it down, serves neither the evidence nor the single market.

Our request

We respectfully urge you to ensure that the Commission's final response to *Fur Free Europe* commits to EU legislation prohibiting the keeping and killing of animals for the sole or main purpose of fur production, and the placing on the EU market of farmed fur and products containing it. We believe this is the only outcome consistent with the scientific evidence, sound legal process, and the democratic mandate expressed by 1.5 million citizens – and we believe it is an outcome the European Parliament will welcome and defend.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you or your cabinets ahead of the Communication's adoption, and stand ready to support you.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Hojsík, RE

Verena Mertens, EPP

Danuše Nerudová, EPP

Mika Aaltola, EPP

Sigrid Friis, RE

Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, RE

Sirpa Pietikainen, EPP

Krzysztof Smiszek, EPP

Kris Van Dijck, ECR

Irena Joveva, RE

Tilly Metz, Greens

Brigitte van den Berg, RE

Joanna Scheuring-Wielgus, SD

Michał Wiezik, RE

Maria Noichl, SD

Bruno Tobback, SD

Lucia Yar, RE

Elio Di Rupo, SD

Niels Fuglsang, SD

Manuela Ripa, EPP

Raquel Hermida-van der Walle, RE

Jeannette Baljeu, RE

Anja Hazekamp, Left

Tomáš Zdechovský, EPP

Johan Van Overtveld, ECR