

Brussels, 17 September 2026

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

Re : Call for an EU-wide ban on fur farming

Dear President von der Leyen,

We are writing to you as Members of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament to express our strong support for an ambitious Commission response to the European Citizens' Initiative *Fur Free Europe*, and to urge the College to propose an EU-wide ban on fur farming and on the placing on the EU market of farmed fur and products containing it.

More than 1.5 million European citizens have signed this Initiative, making clear that they expect the European Union to act. As the Commission prepares its final response, we believe that this democratic mandate, the scientific evidence and the EU's commitment to One Health all point in the same direction: **fur farming should be phased out in the European Union, rather than regulated through minimum welfare standards.**

The EU has rightly placed the One Health approach at the heart of its health policy, recognising the interconnectedness of human, animal and environmental health. Fur farming presents a particularly clear test of whether this commitment translates into preventive action.

A recent commentary published in *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe*¹, authored by leading experts in zoonotic diseases and pandemic prevention, highlights that fur farms can create conditions conducive to the introduction, amplification, adaptation and potential spillover of pathogens. Large numbers of captive-bred wild animals are kept in close confinement, creating opportunities for viruses to circulate and evolve.

The experience of recent years demonstrates that this is not a theoretical concern. SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks occurred on mink farms in several European countries, including the Netherlands and Denmark, with documented transmission of mink-associated variants back to humans. Denmark ultimately culled around 17 million farmed mink and compensated farmers with more than €3 billion.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza has also affected European fur farms. Outbreaks were recorded on mink farms in Spain and Finland, with mink being of particular concern because they can be susceptible to influenza viruses originating from both birds and humans, creating conditions in which viral reassortment may occur.

These experiences should lead us to ask not only how we can better monitor fur farms, but whether we should continue a production system that creates avoidable zoonotic risks in the first place. As the *Lancet* commentary argues, genuine One Health policy means acting

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666776226002607>

upstream and reducing the conditions that contribute to disease emergence, rather than repeatedly investing public resources in surveillance and response after outbreaks occur.

The European Food Safety Authority's scientific assessment provides another compelling reason to act. EFSA concluded that, under the current caged fur-farming systems, the most serious adverse welfare consequences for mink, foxes, raccoon dogs and chinchillas cannot be prevented or substantially mitigated in the majority of cases.

This finding is important for the Commission's choice between a ban and minimum welfare standards. If the fundamental welfare problems cannot be meaningfully resolved within the production systems used for fur farming, introducing additional standards risks creating the appearance of progress without addressing the underlying problem.

Moreover, welfare standards would do nothing to eliminate the epidemiological risks inherent in concentrating large numbers of susceptible animals in intensive systems. Animal welfare and public health therefore reinforce the same conclusion: **the EU should move away from fur farming rather than seek to make this production model marginally more acceptable.**

Fur farming is a declining and economically marginal sector. By 2024, EU fur production had fallen to approximately 6.3 million pelts, worth around €183 million in sales, representing a 92% decline compared with the previous decade. At the same time, 24 of the 27 EU Member States had already introduced production bans or restrictions on fur farming.

An EU-wide approach would therefore provide a coherent framework for the Single Market, while ensuring a fair and predictable transition for the remaining operators.

We therefore urge you and the College of Commissioners to ensure that the Commission's final response to *Fur Free Europe* commits to legislation:

- **prohibiting the keeping and killing of animals for the sole or main purpose of fur production in the EU;** and
- **prohibiting the placing on the EU market of farmed fur and products containing it;** with an appropriate and fair transition period for affected operators.

Such an approach would give a meaningful response to the 1.5 million citizens who have called for action. It would be consistent with the latest scientific evidence on animal welfare, reflect the direction already taken by the overwhelming majority of Member States, and demonstrate that the EU takes its One Health and upstream pandemic-prevention commitments seriously. The decision on *Fur Free Europe* is an opportunity for the European Union to demonstrate that prevention, science and citizens' concerns can guide policymaking. We strongly encourage the Commission to seize this opportunity and propose an EU-wide ban on fur farming.

We remain available to discuss this matter with you and your Cabinet ahead of the adoption of the Commission's response.

Yours sincerely,
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