

Export subsidies for live animals must be phased out by 2013

In light of the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) ministerial meeting currently taking place in Geneva, Eurogroup for Animals urges all countries to stop the use of export subsidies to promote the trade in live animals over long distances and between countries.

The WTO Ministerial Declaration adopted in Hong Kong in December 2005 states that all WTO members: "agree to ensure the parallel elimination of all forms of export subsidies and disciplines on all export measures with equivalent effect to be completed by the end of 2013." However there appears to be little movement and each country or trading bloc continues to use export subsidies and they all appear to be waiting for others to act first. This is totally unacceptable and action is needed today.

"We recognise that getting all 153 WTO Members to agree on a far reaching agreement as part of the Doha round is almost impossible as the interests and positions on trade of developing, developed and emerging countries are too different. However the European Union can act today to improve the welfare of animals immediately by restricting the trade in live animals and phasing out export subsidies," said Sonja Van Tichelen, Director of Eurogroup for Animals.

"The current revision of the EUs Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) can be used to phase out these unnecessary subsidies and improve animal welfare despite little progress being made on the WTO's chapter on agriculture," she added. The EU has the opportunity to seize the leadership on this issue and put pressure on the WTO and its members to act. In the absence of the successful completion of the Doha Round, Eurogroup for Animals call on the EU to take its responsibilities seriously and prove that trade and sustainable agriculture can exist side by side.

Notes

1. Eurogroup for Animals represents animal welfare organisations of nearly all EU Member States. Since its launch in 1980, the organisation has succeeded in encouraging the EU to adopt higher legal standards for animal protection. Eurogroup represents public opinion through its membership organisations across the Union, and has both the scientific and technical expertise to provide authoritative advice on issues relating to animal welfare. For more information about Eurogroup, visit www.eurogroupforanimals.org

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