



## End the Cage Age: EU must ban caging of animals by 2027

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Over 300 million farmed animals, among them laying hens, quail, rabbits, pigs, geese, ducks and calves, suffer in cages across Europe. The [End of the Cage Age European Citizens' Initiative \(ECI\)](#) [1] calls for a ban on cruel caged farming in the EU.

With the campaign massively exceeding the required 1 million signatures in at least seven EU countries, the Commission now has to decide on whether to start a legislative process to ban caged farming.

“Hundreds of millions of animals are locked up in cages for farming purposes in Europe every year. They live under horrible conditions, without any chance to exercise their natural behaviour. After the successful European Citizens' initiative, signed by 1.4 million citizens, the European Parliament has now joined the widely supported call to free animals from cages,” said MEP **Anja Hazekamp**, President of the Intergroup on the Welfare & Conservation of Animals.

The Left has been a leading voice in the European Parliament for animal rights and welfare. We are calling on the Commission to revise Council Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes with the aim of phasing out cages in the EU:

“The Left emphasises that a legislative proposal must now be put forward without delay. The practice of caging animals in Europe must end by 2027 at the very latest. The ban should cover cages used for breeding ducks and geese, alongside the practice of force-feeding to produce foie gras, one of the cruellest things animals are subjected to in European farms today,” Hazekamp added.

While the EU has banned barren battery cages for laying hens since 2012, nearly half of commercial egg-laying hens are still kept in so-called ‘enriched’ cages. Cages are also used for other species in the EU. Every year:

- Approximately 120 million rabbits are commercially farmed with almost all of them confined to cages for their entire lives;
- Over 350 million laying hens are commercially farmed with almost half of them kept in overcrowded cages with no more space than an A4 sheet of paper;
- Around 11 million sows have to give birth and suckle their piglets in a cage;
- Millions of quail are kept in cages unable to perform their natural behaviours;
- Around 40 million ducks and geese are confined in cages during their lives and force-fed for the production of *foie gras*;
- Around 20 million dairy calves are born every year, of which more than half are kept in small individual pens.

Caging of animals causes severe health and welfare problems for animals, and violates Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union that recognises animals as sentient beings.

Higher-welfare cage-free systems are viable. The shift will limit the risk of animals spreading transmissible diseases, as keeping animals in close proximity to each other causes stress and increases the need for preventive medication like antibiotics, allowing bacteria to adapt to the antibiotics and making them ineffective or less effective.

Animals should no longer be forced into an inhumane and ruthless industrial farming system – the system should be adapted to the animals' needs and behaviour instead.

The success of the End of the Cage Age ECI underpins majority support in the EU for cage-free, organic and sustainable food systems. We welcome the European Parliament's call for urgent EU legislation to ban caged farming in the EU as a step to radically transform the way we produce and eat food.



[European Left Party News](#) [2]

**Source URL:** <http://rifondazioneroma.org/node/6361>

#### **Links**

[1] <https://www.endthecageage.eu/>

[2] <http://rifondazioneroma.org/taxonomy/term/33>