

Retort to Brussels

Election programme of the Party for the Animals for the European Parliament Elections 2014

Content

Introduction

1. Healthy agriculture, sustainable food
2. More nature
3. Within the carrying capacity of the earth
4. Restrictions to the use of animals
5. The crisis as a chance
6. A fair Europe

Introduction

The Party for the Animals is in favour of European cooperation but is against the present undemocratic form of the European Union. Many people feel uncomfortable about the influence of the EU on their country. The Party for the Animals understands that feeling of discomfort. Democratic international cooperation can result in improvements for people, animals, nature and the environment. But it doesn't seem to work that way now.

At present, Europe is confining animals en masse in mega-barns, plundering the seas, disrupting ecosystems worldwide and causing plant and animal extinction. Agricultural and fishery subsidies have represented the highest costs of the EU for years. The intensive poultry industry uses those subsidies for its promotional campaigns and bullfighting is preserved by them. The seas are increasingly overfished and problems are caused for developing countries because European products are dumped on their markets, all at the expense of the taxpayer. Meanwhile, Europe is weighed down by the consequences of the introduction of the euro and its ill-considered expansion into countries that were not ready. And all that while Member States are increasingly losing their powers to Brussels without involving their citizens.

The main reason for the disruption of the European thought process is that the means has become the end. Economic integration was once the means to establish peace between countries, but now the decision-making is monopolised by economic interests. Europe trusts blindly in economic growth and the debate has been hijacked by focussing on short-term budgets. The EU diminishes its citizens to consumers and taxpayers, and animals to consumables. The second reason for the poor functioning of the EU is that the bureaucrats are pushing through their dream of a United States of Europe, without listening to what its citizens want. In both cases its citizens are side-lined.

But does that make everything that ever came out of Europe bad? Of course not. Collaboration can be very effective. The EU has also taken steps in the field of animal welfare, such as the ban on battery-farmed hens. But considering the huge industrialisation and expansion of the agricultural sector, very much encouraged by Europe with its unilateral focus on increased production, these are only minor steps to heal the wounds, it's a "band-aid solution". The traditional battery cages may be banned, but Europe doesn't mind that chickens are kept en masse in 'enriched' cages: wallpapered battery cages. And the endless torment of animals in overloaded livestock trucks is a direct result of free trade going over the top.

Furthermore, the decisions made in the interest of animal welfare, nature and the environment were mainly made in the 1990s, when there were only 15 EU Member States. Now the EU with its twenty-eight Member States has become such an enormous Moloch that Brussels' ambitions for proper, strict rules in the field of animal welfare, nature and the environment have completely disappeared. After initially being the driving force behind appropriate climate arrangements worldwide, the poor climate objectives that Europe has now set for itself are a sad reflection of those.

In short, the bigger the EU is becoming, the more European rules have become part of the lowest common denominator. We live in a Europe of the minimum. And the worst is that Member States now use Europe as an excuse for not having to do anything themselves. It's like they say in politics: 'no national add-ons to European policy.' The EU cripples policies at national level by doing so and the ambitions of Member States are ended. In some cases, the EU even prohibits Member States from taking progressive measures.

The tide must turn. A new course for Europe, plus a different type of European cooperation that is what the Party for the Animals wants to work towards in the European Parliament. A cooperation that is focussed on the realisation of ideals such as sustainability, compassion, freedom and responsibility. The Party for the Animals would like a Europe that gives both humans and animals the chance of living a good life. Such a Europe consists of independent countries that democratically decide to tackle cross-border issues together. Who share key values and who agree to uphold and help each other adhere to them. In such a cooperation, countries can learn from and support each other to create a better society in harmony with their living environment.

This is only possible if we stop considering economic growth as the Holy Grail and work on decreasing our ecological footprint instead. We have to talk about what type of society we want, which values we want to prioritise, what life we want to live and how we can enable ourselves and others - humans and animals - to live this life now and in the long term. The European society that the Party for the Animals stands for gives priority to sustainability and compassion instead of short-term economic gain. It respects the freedom and privacy of its citizens and gives them a greater role in decision-making than the banks, multinationals and Brussels based civil servants do.

Will a yet still small party like the Party for the Animals actually be able to make a difference in Europe? It surely will! The Party for the Animals has already demonstrated that it has a disproportional influence on debates with its two seats in the Dutch Lower House, and that it is able to encourage change. It will be the same in Europe. The Party for the Animals will also address issues in Europe that no one else addresses. Like the hare in the marathon we will stimulate, inspire and challenge others to start running faster than they imagined. Only an exceptional party like the Party for the Animals can shake matters up by its unconventional actions, bold proposals and contrary reactions. We are very critical of Brussels, but in a constructive way. Green criticism on Europe is a new phenomenon that is not born out of nationalism or self-interest, but out of a general interest in sustainability and compassion. A green driving force will make the European Union move as well. There is a world to be won.

Stick to your ideals. Vote for the Party for the Animals!

1 Healthy agriculture, sustainable food

Agriculture is not an industry and animals are not machines. If we close the natural cycles and farmers start to cooperate with nature again, and if consumers pay a fair price for healthy food we can work towards a healthy agriculture. Where animals can express their natural behaviour, outside, and are treated with respect. Where vegetables, grains and fruit are produced without pesticides, fertilizer and GM technology. Where we create a healthy market that is not affected by subsidies, but where food has real value and where there are short food supply chains between farmers and consumers. Those are the ingredients of the agricultural policy that the Party for the Animals envisages for the European Union.

Agriculture has always been the policy area that Brussels pays most attention to and spends most money on. The Common Agricultural Policy has created many victims. Over the years billions of animals have suffered and been killed in the European livestock industry. Nature and the environment have been seriously affected by the large scale use of pesticides, fertilizers and eutrophication. Family farms forced onto a disastrous road to be ever more productive. Think of the markets in developing countries that have been destroyed by the dumping of European surpluses. And all this at the expense of the taxpayer: despite the free market that Europe says that it wishes to create, tens of billions of euros are spent on agricultural subsidies every year, particularly benefiting large companies. The largest part of the European budget is gobbled up by (industrial) agriculture.

The wealth of Europe is largely based on the exploitation of people, animals and the environment in other parts of the world. The EU makes large and irresponsible demands on global resources and agricultural lands by its resource use and the importation of food, livestock and biomass. By doing so, it denies people in developing countries their justifiable share. European subsidies to farmers and fishermen deny entrepreneurs in developing countries a fair chance.

If it were up to the Party for the Animals, European agricultural policy would be thoroughly reformed. In the interest of a sustainable future, we aim for a radical change of policy into an ecological, animal-friendly agriculture that produces healthy food and which is not dependent on imports at the expense of people and animals elsewhere. To be able to feed everybody, now and in the future, a reduction of livestock and a transition to a more vegetable-balanced food pattern is inevitable. We want to use the present agricultural subsidies to help farmers to switch over to sustainable production systems with a fair price for a fair product. It will no longer be necessary to give subsidies because a healthy market is created this way.

Food

No food wastage

Worldwide there is more than enough food cultivated to feed the growing world population, but too much is being wasted. If we want to fairly share the food, we have to eat less animal and more vegetable products in the interest of animals, nature, the environment and our own health.

- The main food wastage is the feeding of animals with food that can also be eaten by humans. Grains and vegetable oils will no longer be used as a raw material for the livestock industry.
- Many European regulations on best-before-dates and external characteristics of food are too strict and encourage food wastage. The Party for the Animals wants to have these food regulations changed. Citizens will be well informed of the shelf-life of food and how to keep it, as a result less food will end up in the bin.

- The Party for the Animals wants Europe to end the illusion that the production of meat and dairy products has minimal costs. We want the cut-price special offers on meat to disappear, and a fair price to be paid for milk and eggs.
- In accordance with the 'polluter pays principle' the EU will reconsider its VAT Directive: in future it will be possible to set a low rate for sustainable food and a high rate for products that involve environmental burden and animal distress.
- Eating healthy starts at school. European school milk schemes will cease, and the schemes for healthy meals and fruit will be extended, for which organic and sustainable food is purchased. Attention will be paid during classes to healthy and sustainable food.
- EU advertising campaigns for meat and dairy products will stop at once. The subsidy of millions of euros that are currently still spent on the promotion of agricultural products will be reduced and will in future only be used for organic and vegetable products.
- The Party for the Animals wants the EU to strongly support the development of vegetable, meat, fish and dairy substitutes.
- The food in the restaurants of European institutions will be organic and produced locally. We urge for the introduction of at least one meat or fish free day. Endangered species such as eel will no longer be on the menu.
- The effort for a more sustainable food pattern requires a clear standard: vegetable food is the basis, animal proteins are the exception. In order to set a good example the official dinners of the European institutions will in principle only serve vegetarian food. Everyone is free to eat meat or fish, but has to order it personally.
- Food will be labelled clearly to allow consumers to make the right choices. The labels will provide honest and clear information about animal welfare, social circumstances, health aspects and the ecological footprint. Misleading pictures such as laughing pigs on pork steaks from the livestock industry will become a thing of the past.
- Europe will stimulate the development of urban farming to show children and adults where food actually comes from, to recover the connection between people and food and to improve awareness of the costs and quality of food.
- We would like more room for traditional products. The EU will amend food regulations that unnecessarily hinder the marketing of these products.
- Private quality marks are not a sufficient guarantee of sustainable food supply chains. The EU will set strict sustainability criteria for palm oil, soy and biomass.

A healthy market for healthy food

The value of sustainable, honest food should be reflected in the price we pay. The real price for food is concealed by subsidies costing millions of euros, giving consumers the impression that food is cheap. Furthermore, the actual costs of intensive agriculture, which are kept out of sight of the citizens, are shifted onto the environment and society. A change to a sustainable food system is needed, giving farmers a fair price for their quality products.

- The Common Agricultural Policy needs to be thoroughly reformed. Something needs to be done about the millions of euros of free subsidies that are presently given to farmers. The budget will be used to encourage farmers to change to ecological agriculture and will be abolished thereafter.
- Research budgets for agriculture will be awarded to agro-ecological practices, the closure of cycles and the development of resistant crop varieties. European money will no longer be awarded to research that is aimed at further intensification of non-sustainable factory farming.

- European subsidies will be exclusively awarded on the basis of social services and performances that contribute to a sustainable, social and animal-friendly Europe. As long as the agricultural policy remains unreformed, only appropriate agricultural practices and sustainable water management will be rewarded.
- The European subsidies that fall under the second pillar of the agricultural policy will exclusively be awarded to ecological agriculture.
- Member States will be given the possibility to take measures to ensure that farmers, growers and dairy/cattle farmers can obtain a fair price for their products. This will restrict the buying power of supermarkets.
- Food speculation will be limited.
- The production of surpluses of meat, eggs and dairy products is impermissible. Buy-outs that are currently happening in times of surpluses and that are paid for with tax revenue will be prevented.
- Organic vegetable production will be supported so that farmers can eventually earn a good living without relying on a subsidy.

Toxic-free vegetables

Vegetables, grains, legumes and fruit are the foundation of good food. But here the change to sustainable production methods is also necessary. The cultivation of vegetables should no longer be dependent on fossil raw materials (fertilizer). The high use of pesticides severely harms biodiversity, is a threat to our drinking water and to public health. Monocultures make it increasingly harder for insects and birds to find sufficient food.

- The Party for the Animals wants to drastically reduce the use of fertilizers and agrotoxics and to have them replaced by ecological alternatives.
- Field margins, which enhance biodiversity and accommodate natural enemies for pests, should be obligatory.
- Hazardous chemical pesticides that pose a risk for people and animals will be taken off the market immediately. This will in any case happen to neonicotinoids, which also cause bee mortality, glyphosate, the soil fumigator metam-sodium and a large number of fungi controllers that form a threat to public health.
- For as long as agriculture is not toxic-free, there will be strict protection for people living around arable and horticultural companies against exposure to chemical pesticides. Non-spray zones will be created between fields that are sprayed with pesticides and houses, schools and recreational areas. Spraying will not be permitted in the vicinity of public roads and paths where people walk or cycle.
- The chemical pesticides that are currently on the market will be re-tested against much stricter criteria, whereby the precautionary principle will be applied. No animal testing will be conducted for this. Only pesticides that are demonstrably safe for humans, animals and the environment are permitted to remain on the market.
- The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) will be thoroughly reformed. This organisation, and the commission that writes the recommendations about the admission of pesticides and genetically modified crops, must be completely independent. We want to end the close relationship that exists between the EFSA and the chemical industry.
- Pesticides and GM crops will be independently tested, the studies provided by the producers themselves will no longer be enough. As far as we are concerned, the recommendations of the EFSA and the studies that these are based on will have to comply with the highest standards of transparency and accessibility. The studies which the decision to admit the pesticides are based on will be made public retroactively so that independent scientists are able to criticise the admission.
- Plant and animal species and varieties should not be the property of companies and our food supply should not be placed in the hands of monopolists. Patents on forms of life (such as genetic material, DNA markers)

will be prohibited. Europe is resisting the efforts of companies like Monsanto and BASF to patent the genes of plants and animals and to dominate the food market.

- The right of farmers and cultivators to grow the seeds of their own plants, the so-called Plant Breeder's Rights, is of great importance to maintain diversity in food crops and free access to these crops. The Party for the Animals wants these rights to be strengthened, both in Europe and in developing countries, so that farmers and cultivators can make free use of the existing agro-biodiversity without any patents making it impossible to do so.
- Accounting rules may not hinder the free trade of seeds. The interest of small farmers and horticulturists and food security should be favoured. Rare and old crop varieties will be given protection. The Party for the Animals is resisting these new rules which are endangering the biodiversity of crops.
- The development of organic resistant varieties of crops can count on the support of the EU.

GM-technology free Europa

The Party for the Animals rejects genetic manipulation and promotes a GM-technology free Europe. This tinkering with animals and plants affects the intrinsic value of life. Herbicide resistant crops such as GM soy and maize have only boosted the use of toxic pesticides. Furthermore, genetic manipulation is a threat to customary and organic cultivation because the crops can become mixed. A free choice to be GM-technology free is made impossible by this.

- The Party for the Animals is resisting the cultivation and importation of genetically modified crops anywhere in Europe.
- EU Member States should not be forced to permit the cultivation of GM crops on their territory. Until the full prohibition of import and cultivation is achieved, we want Member States and regions to be given the authority to prohibit the cultivation of GM crops. Furthermore, when assessing these crops and new breeding techniques, the impact on food security, freedom of choice, and the position of small farmers will also be accurately assessed in the future.
- Labelling for meat, dairy products and eggs from animals that are fed with GM crops will become mandatory.
- Europe will not support the efforts to keep cisgenesis (a form of genetic manipulation), a so-called innocent variant of classic breeding, out of the risk assessments and licence issuance for genetic engineering.
- New breeding techniques will be thoroughly assessed on their impact on humans, animals, the environment, nature and food security.
- Additionally, regions and countries that declare themselves GM-technology free will be given support and assistance.

Pigs, poultry, cattle

Abolish the livestock industry

Annually, in the EU more than 7 billion animals are kept and slaughtered for the production of meat, dairy products and eggs. This is intolerable. The Party for the Animals believes that a stop should be put to intensive livestock farming.

- A roadmap will be introduced to enable a quick switch to animal-friendly and sustainable livestock farming.
- Countries that fail to observe the European regulations already made in the field of animal welfare will be severely dealt with through high penalties and other sanctions. This applies for instance to Hungary where geese are still plucked alive for their down.

- A limit will emerge for the production of milk by setting a maximum production limit per acre of grassland. Other sectors in livestock farming will also change to soil-based agriculture.
- Factory farms and animal welfare do not go together. A European prohibition on the establishment and development of large-scale livestock farms will be introduced.
- Small-scale livestock farm systems where the natural resistance of animals is central will be the standard. The regulatory limit of the maximum number of animals will be lowered periodically until the livestock farm as a whole is back to operations within humane standards and the limitations of the earth.
- Strict fire safety regulations will be introduced for existing and new barns and holding rooms: the animals must be able to leave the barn in case of fire.

Room to root about

Chickens need sufficient space for dust bathing, pigs have to be able to root about and goats should be in grasslands. The systems must be adapted to suit the needs of the animals and not the other way around. While the European Union does set minimum welfare conditions for the way animals are kept, they are insufficient and used by countries as an excuse for not imposing stricter regulations themselves.

- All animals lawfully have a right to free-range facilities with sufficient shelter.
- Barns should have sufficient space, straw and distraction material.
- Cows will be housed in family herds. Calves will no longer be taken away straight after birth, but allowed to grow up with their mothers in grasslands and drink the milk that is meant for them.
- The Party for the Animals wants to prohibit the keeping of calves in cages on a low-iron diet to produce white veal.
- The farrowing boxes in which the pigs are housed between bars for weeks on end will be prohibited. Sows will be given the chance to nest and look after their piglets.
- Before new barn systems are permitted they must be tested and comply with the regulations. New systems will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the animals can develop their natural behaviour. Existing barns will be tested retroactively
- Painful interventions such as tail docking, beak trimming and dehorning livestock will be stopped.
- Europe will immediately prohibit the production of foie gras (goose or duck liver) and impose a trade and import prohibition on it.
- The breeding and keeping of meat rabbits, water buffalos, ostriches, and dromedaries have been unjustifiably tolerated and will be banned.

No 'bloated' animals

Industrialised animal agriculture is engaged in extreme breeding resulting in serious welfare issues. A humane existence means that animals are given the chance to breed in a natural way.

- A prohibition will be introduced on high breeding rates, i.e. with chickens and pigs, and for extreme high production, i.e. for milking cows. 'Bloated chickens' that keep falling over and double-muscled cows that are unable to give birth will belong to the past.
- The poultry industry will again start to use chicken breeds that can be kept for eggs as well as for the production of meat. Hundreds of millions of one-day-chicks will no longer be grinded or gasified as a result.
- We want unnatural and often painful reproduction methods, such as embryo flush, embryo transplantation and hormonal fertility treatment to be prohibited. Permission will not be granted for the development of new reproduction methods which harm the integrity and welfare of animals.

- The cloning of animals for production purposes will remain prohibited. The import and trade of (descendants of) cloned and genetically manipulated animals from outside the EU will be immediately prohibited and will be strictly checked.
- Europe will actively contribute to a world-wide tracking system to stop the trade of cloned animals, their descendants, and animal products derived from clones.
- The (outdated) European identification rules, which oblige the use of eartags, will vanish. Objectors will be given an exemption as long as these rules apply.

Alleviate suffering

The number of animals that are bred and killed in Europe will drastically decrease. If animals are transported or slaughtered, they must suffer and experience as little stress as possible. The Party for the Animals wants to stop cruel live animal transports and serious animal suffering on slaughter.

- Animals may not be transported for a duration of more than two hours.
- Transports of live animals to countries outside the European Union, such as Turkey, will no longer be permitted. The import and transit of animals through the EU, i.e. from countries like the United States to Asia, will be stopped.
- The number of movements per animal will reduce. The European Union will stimulate Member States to implement a toll on animal transports.
- European transport regulations will be checked and strictly maintained.
- Animals will no longer be slaughtered by methods that cause serious distress, such as waterbath stunning for chickens and carbon dioxide anaesthesia for pigs.
- Ritual slaughter will only be permitted if done by adequate prior anaesthesia.
- A prohibition will be introduced on the European import and trade of the meat of animals that have been slaughtered without an anaesthetic. As long as animals are still slaughtered without anaesthetics labelling will be mandatory.
- Meat, dairy products and eggs will be clearly labelled specifying where the relevant animal was born, reared and in the case of meat, slaughtered. Misleading information on the origin of animal products will belong to the past.

Health of people and animals first

Animals are to be kept in a responsible way. By regionalisation, banning long-distance transports and making companies smaller we will furthermore reduce the risk of outbreaks of animal diseases.

- The European non-vaccination policy will be abolished and preventive animal-friendly measures will be taken to fight outbreaks of animal diseases.
- On the outbreak of non-fatal animal diseases it will be standard to let the disease run its natural course and to let the animal recover. Animals may no longer be killed for economic reasons only.
- Strict rules will apply to the use of antibiotics on livestock farms. The preventive use of antibiotics will be abolished. Remedies that are necessary for humans will no longer be used for animals.

Fish

No fish farms

Restrict catches

European fishery is responsible for the structural overfishing of European waters.

No less than 88% of fish species are overfished and 30% may not recover to their original numbers. European fishermen also plunder – aided by EU subsidies – fishing banks outside Europe, for example offshore Africa.

- The Party for the Animals wants to abolish the fishery subsidies.
- The precautionary principle will be applied to the EU Common Fisheries Policy. Fishing quotas may no longer be set at a higher level than considered responsible by independent marine biologists. If there is no scientific information available, fishing will not be allowed or considerable safety margins will be incorporated with a very low fishing quota.
- In places where ecosystems and fishing banks are degraded, a moratorium on fishing will be called for to give nature a chance to recover.
- A fishing ban on the most vulnerable fish species, such as eel, cod and tuna will be implemented in the short term.
- The EU will rapidly scale down the overcapacity of the European fishing fleet. The fishing capacity of the fleet may be no larger than the ecosystems of European waters can support.
- Fish that are caught in nets or by longlines experience a terrible death struggle. The Party for the Animals wants a prohibition on all methods of fishing and killing that involve long-term suffering and an end to slaughter without any anaesthetic. We want to stop destructive fishing techniques. Monster trawlers, deep-sea fishing and beam trawls that destroy the seabed with their towed nets will be relegated to the past.
- The existing arrangements to prevent harmful fishing practices will be strictly observed. The prohibition on dumping caught fish to catch commercially attractive fish (high grading) will be enforced by using cameras or supervision on board, at the expense of the sector.
- Fishing vessels of ship-owners that don't observe the rules will be chained.
- We want the EU to strongly reduce by-catch by imposing a prohibition on non-selective fishing methods. If a by-catch did occur and the concerned animals have not survived, they have to be landed and deducted from the catch quota, which will be lowered as a result.
- The Party for Animals wants to stop the use of trammel because porpoises among other fish get caught in these standing nets, causing them to suffocate.

Fish farms are a new way of factory farming and are no solution to the problem of overfishing: many farmed fish are fed with wild caught fish. They are unsustainable and far from animal-friendly.

- The Party for the Animals wants no more permits issued to new fish farms for as long as the welfare of fish can't be guaranteed and they are dependent on wild caught fish.
- A test on animal welfare and sustainability will be implemented retroactively for existing fish farms. If it is not demonstrated that the farming and keeping of fish is happening in a sustainable and animal-friendly way, prohibition will be enforced.
- It will be obligatory to use a more humane method of killing.
- Cooking lobsters, crabs and prawns alive will no longer be tolerated.

International

Sustainable farming for a fair world

The way in which Europeans consume and produce has a direct effect on the lives of people and animals in other countries. In their quest for cheap food and biofuels Western countries are capturing more and more land. The

Party for the Animals wants an agricultural policy that does not harm the developing countries. We advocate regionalisation of agriculture.

- European agricultural and fishery subsidies will disappear, creating opportunities for farmers in developing countries.
- Fishery agreements between the EU and developing countries are robbery agreements and will no longer be used.
- All existing export subsidies and budgets for export promotion will disappear. There will be no more dumping on the markets of developing countries.
- Stricter agreements will be made to stop the capture of land. Investments in land and soil must meet the criteria of the UN Human Rights Rapporteur on the Right to Food.
- Europe will stop the import of products that affect the living environment elsewhere or involve violations of human rights and animal welfare.
- The same environmental and animal welfare demands should apply to products from outside the European Union as to products from within Europe. Producers from developing countries will be given assistance to meet the European demands and to process their own raw materials into high-quality products.
- The EU will endeavour to secure regional cattle feed production thereby ending the mass importation of soy and maize. As a result, agricultural land in developing countries will become available to provide food for humans and put an end to the destructive impact of this cultivation on the climate and biodiversity.
- The World Trade Organisation recognises animal welfare as a criterion for countries to refuse the import of animal-unfriendly products (non-trade concern).

Sustainability ensures food security

People in developing countries are directly dependent on the quality of their environment for their food: fertile soil, clean water, biodiversity and the presence of other necessary resources. The European Union may not endanger this.

- To fight the effects of climate change and desertification the EU will promote the recovery of ecosystems and the protection of existing nature.
- The EU will stop the encouragement and export of systems for industrial agriculture, such as mega-barns, fertilizer, agro-toxics and GM crops.
- Instead, investments will be made in regional infrastructure and agro-ecological agriculture. As a result, food production and food security in developing countries will have a chance to strongly increase in a sustainable way, respecting nature and animal welfare. At international level, i.e. in the UN Commission for World Food Security, the EU will be a powerful advocate for this course of action.
- Scientific knowledge, new technology and start-up materials, such as seeds, are essential for sustainable agricultural development. The EU will actively endeavour that patents and other obstacles will not prevent people in developing countries from achieving this.

2. More nature

Nature with its diversity of plants, animals and ecosystems is the most valuable thing on the planet and thus deserves to be carefully protected. Furthermore, the diversity of marine and land species are the foundation of our existence. Without healthy oceans and forests there is no clean air to breath. Without biodiversity there is no healthy soil to grow our food on. It is our task to ensure a liveable planet, now and in the future.

Global biodiversity is in crisis: every day plant and animal species become extinct and ecosystems become more and more out of balance. The EU must take its share of the blame in the loss of natural resources elsewhere on the planet. Large-scale imports of soy, timber and palm oil are at the direct expense of tropical rainforests and primary forests, while overfishing by the European fishing fleet is significantly harming marine ecosystems worldwide.

Nature and biodiversity in Europe is itself under threat. Almost 25% of its wild species face extinction. Furthermore, most of the ecosystems are so severely affected that they are no longer able to provide their valuable services. This impairment is also a danger to food security and saddles the EU with huge social and economic losses.

The Party for the Animals wants more nature and wants the EU to stop contributing to its destruction. We want the EU to lead the way in tackling the biodiversity crisis and not wait until other world players are willing to take action.

More nature in Europe

Protect and repair nature

Despite all the fine words about the essence of biodiversity, nature is in practice hardly protected at all. European Directives are not observed or observed too late and Member States like the Netherlands are trying with all their might to renege on these agreements. Nor are the promises made at UN level with the 2010 Biodiversity Target to halt biodiversity loss being met. We just can't afford to sacrifice more natural capital for short-term gain.

- The EU will draw up a Biodiversity Delta Plan. Subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity will be immediately abolished and biodiversity loss will have stopped by 2015.
- A robust European Nature Network will be established so that species can move freely between different areas and nature will become more resilient. At least 25% of the land and fresh water surface will be protected and connecting the Natura 2000-zones will be given priority.
- Everyone has the right to a green and healthy living environment. The EU will stimulate the greening of urban areas with a view to health, climate and biodiversity. A standard for urban greening will be implemented that at least reflects the standard of the United Nations (48 m² green per villager or urbanite).
- We want to remove the obstacles in European rivers obstructing the migration of fish and causing fish fatalities. New pumping stations and installations will be fish-friendly.
- Existing European Nature Agreements - i.e. Natura 2000, the Water Framework Directive and the Ammonia Ceiling - are badly needed to limit the damage that is caused to nature by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. Nature agreements will therefore not be relaxed, but will be tightened up and strictly observed.
- The Party for the Animals wants at least 25% of the European seas to be protected by designating them as marine reserves. No activities that are harmful to the marine ecosystems will be permitted in this network of marine natural areas. Thus no fishing boats. Important breeding grounds, such as the Mediterranean where the endangered tuna mates, will be closed against the hunting of these animals.
- Shipwrecks are hotspots for marine biodiversity and will be protected as much as possible.

- Fishing techniques that severely harm marine ecosystems, i.e. deep-sea and beam trawl fishing will be abolished.

Room for animals, not for hunters

Wildlife animals have less and less living environment. Since they live in the vicinity of humans more frequently, they are considered a nuisance. People will use any means to control them, resulting in the death of many animals. The Party for the Animals wants wildlife animals to be left in peace as much as possible.

- The intrinsic value and protection of the animals will be the starting point for this policy.
- Animals will not be killed but will be left in peace as much as possible. Populations will be given the chance to restore their natural balance if disrupted.
- The Party for the Animals wants to ban hunting for pleasure. We want to prohibit the trading of products that have been obtained through hunting for pleasure.
- The EU will, if necessary, assist with resolving conflicts between humans and animals in an animal-friendly way. For example the bears in Romania, which venture into cities because their habitat is shrinking.
- We will resist horrific killing methods, such as the gassing of geese, which is currently tolerated by Europe. The existing rules will be strengthened and strictly maintained.
- The protection of animals is more important than traditions. No longer will it be permitted to turn a blind eye to the collecting of lapwings' eggs and illegal bird hunting in Malta, Italy and France will be tackled.
- We will combat hunting tourism. In the future European travel organisations will not be allowed to offer hunting trips such as hunting safaris in Africa.

International

Preserve biodiversity

Global biodiversity will diminish further if the Common Agricultural Policy remains unchanged. The reduction of meat consumption is the key and the most efficient measure to stop this. Additionally, the Party for the Animals wants the policy tested against the effects on nature and biodiversity elsewhere. We also want the EU to actively start supporting the recovery and protection of global natural areas.

- The EU will aim for less meat consumption and will stimulate measures contributing to that end.
- The import of products that are produced at the expense of tropical rain forests, primary forests and other crucial ecosystems will be banned. Cheap raw materials such as palm oil and soy will only be allowed entry to Europe if proven to be produced in a sustainable way, without land clearance or the destruction of habitats.
- The EU will support developing countries in their fight against illegal logging and control of sustainable forest management. We want strict enforcement of the import ban on illegal timber.
- The EU will endeavour to create a worldwide network of natural areas, on land as well as at sea. To this end, developing countries will be supported with the protection of their nature and biodiversity.
- The Party for the Animals wants the EU to test the policy against the effects on nature and biodiversity elsewhere. The policy will be abolished if it is a threat to ecosystems. For example, the mandatory requirement for blending biofuels will be ended because the high demand for oil seed crops leads to the loss of crucial nature. This also applies to the co-firing of biomass in power plants: EU policy may not lead to complete forests being felled in order to burn them for so-called green energy.
- We want Europe to close its borders to products that involve the destruction of nature, such as tar sand oil and uranium.

World-wide protection of animals

The trade in endangered species has developed into a ruthless form of crime. The compliance with international treaties to stop the illegal trade of endangered species is just saddening. Despite the moratorium on commercial whaling, countries like Norway and Japan still kill hundreds of whales a year. The Party for the Animals thinks that Europe must make greater efforts to combat these crimes

- We will fight for an import and trade ban on all wild caught animals.
- The European Union ought to comply with the international agreements it has made on the protection of endangered species (CITES). Member States are compelled to take measures to halt the large-scale smuggling of wildlife. Member States will get assistance for inspection of smuggling routes on their borders. Europe will contribute to the protection of wild animals in their countries of origin and support local authorities with the combating of illegal wild captive animals.
- We want the EU to take a leading role in improving the CITES agreements. That means that Europe will aim at banning the commercial hunting of polar bears, oppose the relaxation of trade restrictions on ivory and is against exemptions for trade and transport of game trophies.
- Europe actively opposes seal hunting in countries like Canada and Namibia.
- The EU will strongly endeavour to strictly enforce the moratorium on whaling. Sanctions will be imposed on countries that disregard that moratorium. These countries will be reported to the International Court. The EU will initiate such proceedings or join countries that have taken steps against this, such as Australia.
- Whale meat is not welcome in European ports, nor for transit to other countries such as Japan.
- We want to expand the protection of whales in the framework of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to smaller whale-like animals so that dolphins will no longer be hunted. The EU will endeavour to end the slaughter of dolphins in Japan and the Faroe Islands.
- Europe will endeavour to enforce a total prohibition on the catch of (bluefin) tuna. They will do so by participating in the International Commission for the Protection of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) and by refusing to conclude agreements with countries outside the EU for the catch of tuna by Spanish and French fishermen.
- The EU will make every effort to ensure the effective protection of sharks, rays and other vulnerable species. The ban on shark finning will remain strictly in force with (camera) supervision on board at the expense of the fishery sector.

3. Within the carrying capacity of the earth

Our planet provides us with clean air, water, plants and raw materials. If we treat it responsibly, a sustainable future will be ensured for future generations of humans and animals. Only by conducting a powerful environmental policy and changing our consumption behaviour will we be able to remain within the carrying capacity of the earth.

To maintain a liveable earth we have to halt climate change and environmental pollution as soon as possible. For this reason it is necessary to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to protect natural resources and to use our valuable minerals more efficiently. If at this moment each world citizen were to consume the same as the average European, we would need the resources of three planets.

Western overconsumption not only exceeds the carrying capacity of the earth, but also undermines the position of humans and animals in poorer areas of the world. They will be affected first and the worst due to the depletion of natural resources, land capture, drought and flooding. Furthermore, European companies regularly violate human rights and are guilty of serious environmental pollution, particularly in developing countries. Often the victims are left empty-handed, without having an opportunity to obtain justice.

The Party for the Animals wants a powerful European climate and environmental policy that actively tackles these issues. The EU Member States can jointly set ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to make energy clean and renewable, and to improve the quality of air and water. Europe will take its responsibility for a liveable earth seriously and will distribute the natural resources fairly, so that future generations and the people in the developing world get a chance to have a decent life.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

As one of the richest continents and one of the main culprits of climate change, Europe carries a great responsibility to take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The measures that Europe has taken have been ineffective. The trading of rights to emit greenhouse gases ended in disaster. In most cases it is more cost effective for companies to continue to pollute than to take environmental protection measures. The Party for the Animals wants the EU to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to start working towards an active low-carbon economy.

- The EU will take a leading role in producing global binding agreements on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and on measures to stop global warming.
- We want European greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced by 40% below the 1990 level in 2020, and 65% in 2030. Europe is to be CO2 neutral by 2050.
- Europe will drop the idea that companies have 'rights' and can trade these and harm the climate. The EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) will be abolished and replaced by binding reduction commitments.
- As long as the ETS still exists, it will be drastically amended: each year the ceiling will be lowered by 3.5%. A threshold will be implemented for the auction: if the offer stays below the threshold or there is no demand, the rights will be taken off the market. So-called 'backloading' will be halted. The proceeds from the auction will be used as a fund for financing climate actions. European companies may no longer buy emission rights outside the EU.
- Storage of CO2 and redemption of the reduction targets in other countries are not a sustainable solution and will not be included in achieving the European reduction targets (Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation).

- In order to fight climate change, it is essential that we not only look at the energy sector, but also at our food: particularly by substituting meat and dairy products with vegetable alternatives substantial climate change benefits can be achieved and the costs of climate change can be halved.¹

Save energy and improve sustainability

Europe is addicted to fossil fuels and nuclear energy. A sustainable, decentral power supply underlies a healthy future. It is not only necessary for the environment and nature, but it also makes us less dependent on oil and gas producing countries. Energy conservation is the first and most cost effective step towards a sustainable energy policy. Local and small-scale generation of energy offers great opportunities for the creation of green jobs.

- In 2030 Europe will be saving 50% of energy in respect of 2014.
- The percentage of sustainable energy will be increased to 25% by 2020, and 60% by 2030. All energy will be generated sustainably by 2040.
- Energy efficient building will be the standard. From 2020 onwards, all buildings will be built in an energy neutral way. From 2025 onwards, the built environment will be a net energy producer.
- The EU will implement strict standards for the energy consumption of equipment, vehicles and data centres. Highly wasteful equipment, such as terrace heaters, will be taken off the market.
- A European energy label for both electrical equipment and vehicles will be introduced. This label will not just take account of the consumption, but also of the entire lifecycle of a product.
- Subsidies towards or discounts on energy taxes for large consumers will be discontinued. Member States will continue to have the freedom to impose an additional burden on non-sustainable energy.
- All investments in energy research by the European Union will in future focus on sustainable energy production and energy conservation.
- Biofuels, biomass co-firing and anaerobic digestion of manure are not sustainable forms of energy, but are trends of a derailed agricultural policy. Subsidies will no longer be granted for these. The mandatory blending requirement will be immediately abolished. The import of timber and palm oil for the production of energy will stop.
- Highly polluting fossil fuels such as tar sand oil and shale gas will no longer be allowed into Europe. Additionally, companies such as Shell and BP will be obliged to report on the climate and environmental impacts of their fuels.
- We will promote the production of clean energy by setting a ceiling for greenhouse gas emissions by new and existing power plants. The ceiling will be lowered periodically. Nuclear power plants will be closed. We will resist the underground storage of nuclear waste.
- Europe will reduce the extraction of coal and lignite. The drilling for shale and coal gas will cease.
- Sustainable energy will be given priority in the energy network. Europe will provide for 'smart grids' that will be fed by green, small-scale and decentrally generated energy. The privacy of users and suppliers may not be constrained as a result.
- The energy market will be drastically reformed; for example, the adverse effects of excessive liberalisation must be mitigated.

Efficient use of raw materials

Raw materials are limited. We have to use them efficiently and strive for reuse and recovery.

- Europe will decrease its ecological footprint and endeavour to create a circular economy, focussed on the reusability of products and raw materials.
- Strict requirements for the design of products will be enforced at European level, so that the products will have a long life cycle, can be repaired and the materials easily reused.

- Large companies will be required to keep records of the raw materials they use and provide concrete evidence of their greenhouse gas emissions.
- Lease arrangements where companies remain the owner of the product and the customer only purchases a service, will be encouraged. This will enable the producer to recycle more raw materials and promote the idea of bringing recycled materials into use.
- The Party for the Animals wants an action plan to tackle the issue of plastic waste in the seas and oceans. Measures to be taken for this include: elimination of microplastics in cosmetics; incorporation of litter targets in the Water Framework Directive, and regulations for manufacturers of clothing and washing machines to restrict the release of synthetic fibres into water.
- Europe will endeavour to reduce plastic bags and unnecessary packaging materials. It will encourage deposits and refunds on cans, bottles, etc., as with biodegradable packaging.
- We want to stop the dumping and incineration of waste and improve waste collection. Regulations will be put in place to ensure new products mainly consist of recycled materials.

Clean air and clean water

Air and water quality are still under pressure. Intensive agriculture, traffic and heavy industry are the chief culprits. Most Europeans are exposed to a higher concentration of particulates than deemed healthy by the World Health Organisation. Surface water is polluted by agricultural chemicals, fertilizers - and increasingly - trace elements of medicines. The Party for the Animals believes that everyone has a right to clean air and clean water and thus advocates enforcement of strict standards.

- The precautionary principle will be applied when determining the standards for air and water quality.
- Europe will apply the guidelines of the World Health Organisation for particulates, ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide as strict limits. A stringent European soot emission standard will also be implemented.
- Air quality standards in public buildings, particularly schools, will be inspected and maintained.
- Europe will take measures at source to reduce the pollution of surface water due to traces of medicines.

Smarter transport

Traffic is responsible for approximately 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in Europe. The Party for the Animals advocates the reduction of road transport and stimulation of environmentally friendly transport.

- A European master plan will be developed to strongly improve public transport, particularly via high-speed trains between main cities. Air traffic within Europe will be pushed back. Officials and representatives of the EU will travel by train within Europe if they are on duty and if the travel distance is less than 500 kilometres.
- Vehicles will become cleaner and more efficient; Europe will be a front runner in environmental standards for vehicles and vessels.
- The EU will make every effort to make air traffic cleaner. The VAT exemption and exemption from excise duties applicable to air traffic will be abolished, flight inefficiencies will be restricted to a minimum and flights to and from Europe will be subject to CO₂ taxation.
- The EU will improve efficient and environmentally friendly freight transport. For that purpose it will especially invest in transport over water.

International

Fair distribution of natural resources

To avoid conflicts it is essential to manage the earth sustainably, and requires a just distribution of food and natural resources. The extraction of materials imported by the EU harms humans, animals and the environment. Free trade necessitates strict rules for companies. As far as the Party for the Animals is concerned, the European Union will endeavour to restrict the use of materials, water, energy and land. We advocate for an international system of natural resources quotas.

- Severe sustainability requirements will be set for the import and extraction of our raw materials. There will be a directive for conflict metals, which we can use to refuse raw materials from conflict areas.
- There will also be stricter regulations for mining companies. These will protect the rights of local populations and warrant the environmental and nature requirements for the extraction of raw materials.
- Large companies will be obliged to give information about the sources of the materials that they use and their circumstances in the production chain. They will annually publish their profit and loss accounts in respect of humans, animals, nature, environment and climate.
- We want to move away from the voluntary nature of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Next to a CSR Supervisor there will be clear agreements on the reporting on efforts and results of the CSR policy of companies.
- The EU will stop the export of waste products and toxicants to developing countries for cheap processing.

International environmental policy

Current international treaties in the field of biodiversity and climate are not or rarely observed. The time without obligations is past. The joint responsibility that countries carry for keeping the earth liveable must be translated into firm, enforceable agreements. The EU will lead the way and set a good example, and not hinder Member States in achieving their ambitions.

- The European Union will act to fight conflicts, violations of human rights and environmental destruction worldwide.
- At UN level, the EU will do everything to achieve a far-reaching agenda for sustainable developments - with ambitious sustainability demands that apply worldwide and are based on human rights, planetary limits and respect for animals and nature.
- The European Union can conduct international negotiations as a block, but only with a mandate democratically determined. The European Union will be in the forefront with ambitious arrangements in international environmental agreements.
- In order to achieve results at international conferences, the European Union will form coalitions with other countries to set ambitious international environmental targets. These coalition countries will in any case implement the aimed objectives themselves, regardless of the outcome of the conference.
- The Party for the Animals wants to incorporate intermediate targets in future climate, environmental and nature treaties, which countries will have to account for.
- International treaties and agreements about environment, climate, biodiversity, human rights and corporate responsibility will be converted into binding regulations as soon as possible, both at EU level and that of the Member States.
- The Party for the Animals advocates that European Member States will invest in climate action in developing countries, on top of the official development cooperation budgets.
- The EU will promote the incorporation of an International Environmental Court to settle environmental conflicts.

- Europe will establish a well-functioning complaints mechanism and offer assistance to victims of environmental or human rights offences to obtain justice. The EU will warrant a well-functioning duty of care and liability for companies and directors. Victims from outside the Union will also be given the opportunity to obtain justice within the EU.
- The EU will set out the principle that each country has a duty to protect humans against exploitation and theft by companies, not only in their own country, but also from outside.

4. Restrictions to the use of animals

Animals are living creatures, not toys or accessories or a means of entertainment. Animals deserve good protection. This starts with the recognition of their intrinsic value and respect for their own nature and needs. It applies to all animals and it defines the limits of the purposes for which animals may be used.

Since 1992 the European Union has recognised animals as sentient beings with feelings and consciousness. But at the same time that same Europe places cultural and religious traditions - such as bullfighting - above the interests of animals. The interests of the market weigh more strongly than those of animals. Production increase is officially still the only purpose of the agricultural policy. And in everyday life, animals in Europe chiefly have the status of a commodity.

Next to the billions of animals that die in the livestock industry every year, it is still permitted in Europe to breed animals and to kill them for a superfluous and cruel fashion product like fur. Tens of billions of minks, foxes, chinchillas and rabbits are victim to this every year. Bulls are tortured for 'entertainment' in Spain and France. In Europe, as in our own country, dolphins and other sea mammals pine away in dolphinariums. Over twelve million animals are used for testing in Europe every year. Animal suffering in the EU is large-scale and serious.

The Party for the Animals rejects the view that animals can be used for just any purpose. Entertainment, sport and fashion are not good reasons to wound animals or affect the welfare of animals. We want the legitimacy of the aim better assessed before animals are possibly used - after all, their life and welfare is at stake - and that Europe will be more reluctant towards the use of animals. The Party for the Animals will promote better protection, as we do in the Netherlands, against neglect, abuse and misuse. Europe should support that protection to a greater degree, both inside and outside its borders. At international level, for example the United Nations; we want the EU to demonstrate that it strongly advocates animal welfare.

Significantly less animal testing

Many of the present experiments in which animals are used as guinea pigs, are superfluous or make no sense. Furthermore, animal-free techniques deliver much better knowledge on humans health. The Party for the Animals thus wants to stimulate alternatives to animal experiments and to promote stricter testing so that animal experiments cannot be performed for just any purpose. That way we will be able to reduce the number of animal experiments and completely ban animal experiments in the long run.

- The Party for the Animals wants a firm raising of the threshold on performing animal experiments. We want applications for animal experiments to be subject to much stricter requirements, i.e. a prior extensive literature review. Applications for experiments that are not deemed to be of significant importance, such as health claims on foods, will not be granted.
- Genetic manipulation of animals will be prohibited.
- Europe will make substantial investments in non-animal research and test methods.
- We want a firm acceleration of the validation of non-animal research and test methods, so that they can be applied throughout Europe.
- Data exchange will become obligatory to avoid the duplication of animal experiments.
- Europe will endeavour to ensure the strict observance of the trade ban on cosmetics that were tested on animals.
- The Party for the Animals will promote banning the use of primates in animal experiments.

- An end will be put to the breeding of animals and killing of surplus animals.
- Europe will no longer permit animal experiments for the development of patents and will amend the patent directive to avoid duplication of animal experiments.

Ban fur

After the extensive global campaigns of animal protection organisations, the EU has restricted the trade in certain furs: meanwhile, a ban has been imposed on the import of dog, cat and seal furs. This is a good first step, but not enough. After all, in Europe itself too many animals are still bred and killed for their fur. The Party for Animals wants to stop fur production altogether.

- A civilised Europe is fur free. We want the breeding, keeping and killing of animals for their fur to be part of the past. European fur farms will be closed as soon as possible.
- Europe will close its borders to all fur from outside the EU.
- As long as a ban on the sale of fur is not imposed, it will be obligatory to use clear labelling for fur products giving information on the origin of the fur and the number of animals killed to make that specific product.

Culture is no excuse for animal suffering

The life and welfare of animals is important. We want the suffering of animals in the EU due to traditions, rituals and entertainment to stop. Traditions and religious obligations end where animal suffering begins.

- European agreements will be amended in such a way that the interests of animals are no longer subordinate to culture or religion.
- Bullfighting will be banned. No subsidies will be granted to this cruel industry as long as this ban is not in force.
- We want a European prohibition imposed on the use of animals in circuses. Europe will support refuges for the relocation of these animals.
- Europe will support projects for medical assistance to working horses and mules, provide information to their owners on animal-friendly treatment, and support refuges for retired working horses and mules.

Zoos become refuges

The exhibition of animals in zoos is an outdated concept. Moreover, animals can only show their natural behaviour to a limited extent. This often leads to apathetic and abnormal behaviour. Zoos kill healthy animals that they can no longer use or are too expensive to keep. The Party for the Animals finds this unacceptable and wants to change the function of zoos. Visitor entertainment will become secondary to the interests of the animals.

- Zoos will focus as a refuge for animals that cannot support themselves in their original living environment or cannot be returned.
- The number of zoos in Europe will be drastically reduced. Zoos that fail to comply with the European Zoos Directive will be the first to close. Animals from zoos that are being closed will be given adequate refuge.
- The housing of the animals will resemble their natural living conditions as much as possible. The breeding of animals in zoos will stop.
- Dolphinariums will be closed. To provide refuge to sea mammals in need will be the only purpose of keeping them in captivity

No sports at the expense of animals

The Party for the Animals believes that sports or hobbies may not be indulged in at the expense of the health and welfare of animals. We oppose the so-called sport of angling.

- Europe will prohibit games where hares are chased and torn apart by greyhounds (coursing).

- A stop will be put to gambling involving animals, such as dog and horse racing.
- Pigeons racing will no longer be allowed.
- The use of harmful training methods and means will be prohibited, as in equestrian sports.
- We want to prohibit the docking of horse tails and stop horse markets.

Welfare of pets first

At present, there are hardly any requirements with respect to the keeping of animals. Animals which are completely unsuitable as pets, such as wallabies and raccoons, can be kept and traded with relative impunity. The Party for the Animals wants to stop this. We strive for the appropriate protection of pets in Europe.

- There will be a short European Positive List, specifying the animals that are suitable as pets. Animals not specified on that list may no longer be kept or traded.
- We want to halt the barbaric treatment of stray dogs and cats in Europe. There will be a plan of action for tackling the stray animal problem in an effective and animal-friendly way. The EU will support projects to neuter, provide refuge, return stray animals and prevent the dumping of 'surplus' animals.
- The Party for the Animals wants to clamp down hard on puppy mills and the illicit trading of pets. We are in favour of a European obligation to microchip dogs and cats. This will help fight the illicit breeding of animals and ensure that the owner and the lost pet can be quickly reunited.
- The Party for the Animals wants to set minimum requirements for the housing and care of pets. The solitary housing of social animals will be prohibited as well as the sale of pens, cages and bowls that are too small.
- Europe will fight the breeding of pets with extreme external characteristics and other hereditary conditions. Inbreeding will no longer be permitted.
- The Party for the Animals wants to strongly limit the number of sales channels of animals to prevent impulse purchases. Sales through the internet, garden centres, markets and fairs will be prohibited.
- Europe will ban the docking of ears and tails.

International

Advocate animal welfare

There is enormous animal suffering worldwide. Outside Europe more than sixty billion animals are kept and slaughtered every year - the great majority of which live under miserable conditions. The number of animals used in animal research and the fur industry amounts to tens of billions. Numerous animals are victims of hunting, poaching or cruel entertainment - the latter often in the tourist sector. The EU can do something about this at international forums and through international contacts by acting as an advocate for animal welfare.

- The EU will actively attempt to have a Universal Declaration of Animal Welfare adopted by the United Nations.
- The Party for the Animals wants the EU and its Member States to use diplomatic channels to fight serious forms of animal suffering - for example the use of bile bears in China or the transport of live sheep through Australia to the Middle East.
- Animal welfare will be fully integrated into European assistance, development and sustainability programmes.
- Within the cooperation of developing countries (OECD) the EU will put animal welfare on the agenda, among other things by the incorporation of animal welfare in the next update of the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

5. The crisis as a chance

Economics should be about what we can afford. Not only financially, but also ecologically and socially. We may not exceed the limits of the earth. Everyone has a right to his or her fair share - in particular vulnerable groups: deprived people, people in developing countries and the animals that populate the earth alongside us. The economic crisis, the euro crisis, the banking crisis and uncontrollable consumerism are urgent reasons to change direction towards a fair and green economy.

Back to *business as usual* is no longer an option. Continuous economic growth is an illusion in a world of finite reserves and ecosystems with a limited carrying capacity. Yet Europe is blinded by economic growth. This is even enshrined in the European constitution: production increase may be the only target of the European policy. A consequence of this obsession for more is that citizens have been moved into the background. Humans are pushed into the role of consumers and animals are perceived only as a product or commodity. We live in a bubble, disengaged from the real economy that is based on the value of natural and human capital.

The need for more led to the ill-considered introduction of the euro. Warnings were given previously about the danger of the introduction of the shared currency to countries that did not maintain a single economy. But politicians turned a deaf ear: they were obsessed by the economic growth that the euro would lead to. Now that the problems are building up, a far-reaching political unification is being forced through without democratic legitimacy. The Party for the Animals believes that political cooperation cannot be forced.

Not more prosperity, but more welfare should be the compass to European cooperation. The current economic crisis and the related climate and biodiversity crisis are a chance to shift the focus to matters that really matter: a healthy living environment, more emphasis on social relations, and more appreciation of spare time. But also taking more account of the impact that our way of consuming and producing has on the lives of humans elsewhere in the world. By focusing on a sustainable economy we will create green and fair jobs that will contribute to a better society.

Measuring prosperity in a different way

The EU merely focuses on the gross domestic product (GDP) of Member States. For example, the Stability and Growth Pact, incorporating the fiscal regulations agreed, is based on this. But a high GDP doesn't mean that an economy is healthy or that its citizens are happier. Voluntary work and family care are not included, whereas, for example, activities that harm the environment are recorded as positive contributions. The Party for the Animals wants better instruments to determine the economic course.

- To set the European policy the EU will start to use indicators that will give direction towards a sustainable and socially inclusive economy.

Balancing the budgets

If we talk about reducing the budget deficit to three per cent we talk about the monetary budget. The ecological debt that we accrue as a society remains beyond our horizon. However, the reality is that the human world population is accruing a growing deficit of thirty per cent in natural capital each year. The Party for the Animals wants a balanced budget for both government finances and the green state balance. Not one without the other, but at the same time. Care for the environment and nature is not a luxury which we just can't afford at the moment, it is essential for sustainable, economic development, without a focus on growth.

- The EU will no longer exclusively focus on reducing the budgetary deficits of the Member States, but will make every effort to reduce the European ecological deficit.

- Investments in an environmentally friendly power supply, in enlarging and protecting biodiversity, in advancing the greening and making our production chains more sustainable, will strengthen the real economy in the long term. It is important that these investments won't be prevented by the 3% rule of the current Stability and Growth Pact.

Tax on raw materials, making work easier

The Party for the Animals promotes a strong greening of the tax system. Instead of imposing tax on labour, we want to impose tax on environmentally harmful substances and activities, and on the use of scarce raw materials. That way, the tax system will produce the desired stimuli for the improvement of sustainability and will stimulate employment. As far as we are concerned, the EU should not impose taxes but it should be the catalyst of green tax agreements between Member States. This will create a level playing field for sustainable entrepreneurs and encourage green innovations.

- To start with, we can save billions in Europe each year by abolishing environmentally harmful subsidies. Tax reductions for producers and (large) consumers of fossil energy will end.
- The EU will review its VAT directives to enable Member States to set a low rate for sustainable products and a high rate for products that are harmful to humans, animals and the environment.
- The Party for the Animals advocates imposing taxes on scarce raw materials and products that involve major negative environmental effects, such as timber, coal and phosphate.
- To fight (youth) unemployment the European Member States will lower the taxes associated with employment. This will create employment and ensure that healthcare and education will be more affordable.
- Member States will make agreements among themselves to reach comparable minimum wages. Europe will no longer focus on mass production and will leave its aggressive export strategy behind. Instead, the EU will shift its focus to sustainable production for its own market.

The euro is no Saint

The introduction of the euro forced Member States with different economic rhythms into a monetary marriage. It was known in advance that it would not work. Despite the continuing problems, the euro remains in its present form. In order to save the currency union, a far-reaching political union of Europe is pushed through and enormous funds are established on which national parliaments have no influence.

- The Party for the Animals advocates alternative scenarios for solving the euro crisis and wants the EU to examine the possibility of maintaining parallel currencies, and a possible division of the currency union into a northern and southern region. We oppose the enlargement of the Eurozone.
- Member States that are threatened with collapse under their debts will be helped in their efforts to recover in a way that can be carried by the population and is not destructive to animals, nature or the environment. Responsible debt structuring is the starting-point in this.
- The Party for the Animals wants exit strategies for Member States that want to withdraw from the currency union. The European Union will support Member States that consider such a step.
- The European Union will stop the Emergency Fund (ESM) which lets a Member State like the Netherlands guarantee tens of billions of euros without giving that Member State control of the spending of that money. The budgetary law of the national parliaments may not be affected.
- For as long as there are community emergency funds, the supervision of them will be organised democratically. Courts of Auditors at national and European level will play an important role in this.

Restrict banks

The irresponsible behaviour of many banks, characterised by their pursuit of profit and inflated bonuses, combined with failing supervision have plunged the world into a deep crisis. Bank regulation is needed, but the Party for the Animals doesn't consider the current bank union a good solution. At most it will solve the problem with small banks but its democratic control is far from sufficient. Banks that are 'too big to fail' should be divided up.

- We want banks to be divided into utility banks (payment transactions, savings, local credit provisions) and business banks. In case of a financial crisis, it will be easier to retain their public functions of business without having to rescue them with tax money.
- Member States will retain the power to lay down stricter rules for their banks than agreed at international level.
- Banks will be obliged to make their investments and speculations transparent to their customers.
- From its platform function the EU will pursue the creation of bank taxes and taxes on financial transactions.
- Banks may not take any risks that are independent from their customers' interests. Dealing on its own account will be prohibited. We want to move away from complex financial products.

International

Responsible trade

Trade is subordinate to morality as far as the Party for the Animals is concerned. Human rights and sustainability may not give way to economic short-term interests. Developing countries often bear the costs, but not the benefits of global free trade. We want to strongly improve the position of developing countries in world trade and make the world economy more regionally-oriented. The Party for the Animals opposes free trade agreements because they undermine democracy and can have major negative consequences for the environment, animal welfare, public health and for freedom of choice and privacy of consumers.

- The EU will promote amending the terms and conditions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) so that social values become a decisive factor for world trade.
- The same environmental and welfare requirements should apply to products that enter the EU as to those produced within. Support will be given to producers in developing countries to meet European environmental and welfare requirements.
- There should be no free trade at the expense of the environment, animal welfare, food security, human rights and privacy. The EU will not enter into new free trade agreements and will cancel the ongoing negotiations with the United States, Canada, and Japan amongst others. Existing free trade agreements will be reviewed. We reject investment treaties which enable companies to file claims against regulations that have been democratically set.
- EU Member States will obtain more scope to reject products that have been produced at the expense of humans, animals and the environment.
- Developing countries should have the possibility to (temporarily) close their markets to imports from the West so that they can strengthen their own economy.
The EU will support developing countries to process their products for export, so that they can create the added value instead of just exporting the raw materials. Existing barriers to trade, such as import rates, which complicate the export of (processed) products by developing countries to the EU will be abolished.
- The EU will endeavour to ensure developing countries obtain more influence on the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. We want these institutions to become transparent and democratic.

- European regulations will be introduced to prevent tax evasion and avoidance by businesses. The EU will help developing countries receive the taxes that they are entitled to and will oblige businesses to provide transparent information on the taxes they have paid.

6. A fair Europe

The earth offers enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed. We want a Europe that will be at the service of humans and animals. Here and elsewhere, now and later. Compassion and sustainability should serve as a guide. Support to the poorest and to victims of hunger and violence are a matter of civilisation. Human rights are there to be fulfilled. To this end, European cooperation is needed where it is useful and Member States should retain control where it is needed. The Party for the Animals wants a European Union that is democratic and controllable, and in which the voice of the citizen is heard. A Europe like that will tackle issues that require a joint solution, but will leave it up to the Member States themselves to take decisions in policy areas where a European policy would do more harm than good.

The current European Union is nowhere near that yet. Without involving its citizens, an ever increasing European public administration was established. The EU lacks democratic support, was enlarged with countries that were not ready and created a single currency as if the EU were a single nation state together with an ambiguous economic and political policy. The crisis that was the result of this, has resulted in more powers being relinquished to Brussels.

European decision-making is the result of negotiations held behind closed doors, of non-transparent bureaucracy, and hidden lobbying by the business sector. The unbalanced pursuit of complete free trade between Member States, with as few regulations as possible, will be at the expense of animals, nature and the environment. Billions of euros are spent on subsidies that run counter to the general interest of its citizens.

Brussels' powers are not needed for many policy areas, and cooperation between Member States can be improved by giving the European Union a platform function on which sound ideas and experiences are elaborated and shared. That means that Europe has to go back to the drawing board. The question here is not: pro Europe or anti Europe? Nor: more Europe or less Europe? What we need is a different type of European cooperation. The Party for the Animals first wants to aim for a more effective functioning of the current EU before further integration can be discussed. We want better cooperation within Europe without the further expansion of EU powers, and no more new Member States.

Endless economic growth on a finite planet is impossible and can therefore no longer be the starting-point of European policy. We want the existing European Treaties to be reviewed in the interest of the change of course needed for compassion and sustainability. In that Europe the voice of the citizen will be heard, animal rights will be self-evident and it will not be the survival of the strongest at the expense of the weakest.

Meaningful cooperation

No political or fiscal union

Europe is not a federal state and it is not desirable or necessary to strive for that. A clearer definition of Brussels authority is of great importance.

- The EU will not get new powers. If there are plans to do so, this should be put to a referendum within the Union.
- Member States will keep full control of their own budgets. The competence of national parliaments to make decisions on behalf of the population about the collection and spending of tax revenue may not be affected.

- We reject proposals to set up a European Public Ministry, a European army, or European pension schemes. Such arrangements are better handled at a national level.
- National parliaments will obtain more scope to halt the involvement of Brussels. We want to strengthen the current procedure to determine if the EU may interfere with the functioning of Member States.
- Enlargement of the European Union is not sensible as long as the Union does not function democratically. The Party for the Animals disagrees with the admission of new Member States under the current circumstances.
- The Party for the Animals doesn't want Brussels to pressurise Member States into privatising public resources such as drinking water, or to liberalise public services such as public transport.
- Europe should not force Member States into exploiting their natural resources at the expense of the environment.

A stronger and smaller parliament

The voice of the citizen is at present insufficiently heard in European decision-making. The current European electoral system offers little room to people from the various different strata of society to express themselves. The composition of the European Parliament does not adequately reflect society. Additionally, the European Parliament has little say. For example, it is not competent to hold European governments accountable or make them stand down on behalf of the citizens if they have failed.

- The European Commission will become smaller. Not every Member State needs to have its own Commissioner.
- There is no desire for permanent political representatives of the Union. We don't want a 'president' or 'minister of foreign affairs' for Europe. Such positions will hinder democratic control and prejudice the sovereignty of countries.
- The European electoral system will undergo fundamental change. There will be international electoral lists so that the citizens of one Member State can vote for a candidate from another Member State. This will ensure a better representation of the various political streams in the European Parliament and it can be made smaller.
- The European Parliament will obtain considerable powers for a more democratic and transparent decision-making process. This will mean among other things that the people's representatives will have the right of initiative, can exercise control in all EU policy areas and that they can correct the European Commission and make it step down if needed.
- The costly and polluting moving between Brussels and Strasbourg will cease. The European Parliament will in future only have its meetings in Brussels.
- Salaries and expense allowances of members of the European Parliament from the different countries will be brought to the level that parliamentarians on average receive in the EU Member States.

Transparency and democracy

The links between Brussels and the business sector are too close. Lobbyists have too much influence, while citizens are largely kept on the side-lines. Moreover, the decision-making often takes place behind closed doors, which makes democratic control impossible. The Party for the Animals wants Europe to start operating transparently and democratically.

- Meetings of the line ministers of the various Member States (Councils) will become public as well as the prior administrative coordination (COREPER), which is yet still secret.

- There will be an extensive and obligatory Lobby Register. Not only for visits of lobbyists to members of the European Parliament, but also for visits to the European Commission and to the officials. A Gift Register will also be created.
- In future, the European Commission will clarify for legislative proposals in what way any representatives has had an influence on the formation of the policy.
- To prevent conflicting interests there will be stricter regulations for members of the European Parliament. They should be transparent about which interests they represent and which lobbyists they meet. Nor should members of the European Parliament have (paid) side-line jobs that may result in conflicts of interests, and definitely not if that side-line job involves lobbying.
- We want to have real open government. Citizens and organisations should be able to easily obtain an insight into proposals and decisions. All European institutions will be covered by a more stringent Government Information Act.
- There will be stricter rules for staff appointments and employees of consultancy bodies and implementing organisations in Brussels, such as the EFSA. We want to stop the revolving door system where people from the business sector work for Brussels for a few years to shape policy for the benefit of their business and then return to their former employer.
- The national parliaments and the European Parliament will have more opportunities to check with the European Commission when they enter into agreements with countries outside the EU. Evaluations from previous agreements, such as the fishery agreements with African countries, will be made public. The same applies to the negotiating mandates for free trade agreements.
- We want to improve the citizens' initiative (ECI) so that citizens can in fact, not just in theory, put items on the EU agenda that they find important - in all areas.

The costs of Europe can be halved

The budget of the European Union amounts to more than nine hundred and sixty billion euros for 2014-2020, money that has to be supplied by the taxpayers of the Member States. The Party for the Animals finds many European subsidies and funds unnecessary and wants Brussels to firmly tighten its belt.

- The European multi-annual budget works like a creditcard: the EU always spends more than budgeted, resulting in Member States having to pay more than what was agreed. The Party for the Animals finds this unacceptable and wants to abolish the flexible multi-annual framework.
- Agricultural and fishery subsidies account for most of the expenditure of the EU and will be abolished as soon as possible.
- Structural Funds are not necessary. It is not up to the EU to conduct regional policies, the Member States are well capable of doing that themselves. By abolishing the Structural Policy we will save one third of the EU Budget.
- Thousands of European officials earn more than the Dutch Prime Minister. The Party for the Animals wants the high salaries of EU officials and European Commissioners to drop significantly.
- There will be a more robust approach to fraud involving EU money.

Fundamental rights, culture and privacy

Privacy and freedom

The Party for the Animals endorses the privacy of citizens. It's an illusion to think that society can be made safer by taking away people's privacy. We have great concerns about the lack of protection against the curiosity of (American) intelligence services and want Europe to stop cooperating in unjustified privacy violations.

- The gathering and recording of information on European citizens and businesses by American intelligence services is unacceptable. The EU will take measures to halt these privacy violations as soon as possible and to avoid new surveillance practices.
- The EU will protect personal information at the highest level. Police, judicial authorities and intelligence services may only ask for information about citizens from companies when there is a concrete suspicion of wrongdoing that is verified by a court. Citizens will have a better insight into the information that is held on them and better opportunities to have their information removed from data systems. Businesses will report on the number of times that they were obliged to give information to judicial authorities.
- A notification obligation in relation to data leaks will be enforced. The businesses will also be obliged to notify the concerned citizens themselves of the leaking of their information. Hackers that expose security flaws will be protected.
- Any European policy in the field of data interception, gathering and recording of the information of citizens will be sharply reviewed in the interest of privacy. This would end the retention obligation for telephone and internet records, passing on passenger data to the US, inspection into European bank transactions by the US and compulsory fingerprinting in travel documents.
- New policy and legislative proposals will be tested on their consequences for privacy. If they affect privacy protection they will be amended or abolished.
- Citizens have a right to free internet without filters, blockages or suspension of specific data flows by providers. We want to legally warrant net neutrality.
- Cyber security will not be achieved by violating fundamental rights. Investigation institutions will not be permitted to snoop around in the computers of EU citizens if there is no significant reason, to be verified by the court, for this.
- European institutions will work, where possible, with open source software and open standards.

Free press, culture and sciences

Free press, the arts and independent science are indispensable and enrich human life: they inspire us to think, enlarge our knowledge, deepen our insights, activate our emotions, stimulate creativity, touch us, and distress us. They are essential for a democratic society. The Party for the Animals does not want free expression to be hindered by the EU, but it should support it from the platform function it fulfils.

- The EU will fight concentrations of power and conflicts of interest between the media and politics. It will endeavour to support the free press in all Member States and ensure the legal protection of journalistic sources.
- The Party for the Animals wants to have the copyrights and copyright contract rights amended to strengthen the creators' position and extend the freedom of information.
- EU regulations may not prevent Member States from promoting free media and culture. The VAT Directive will be amended so that Member States can choose to maintain low VAT rates for digital books, magazines and newspapers.

- The EU will promote the distribution and accessibility of literature by investing in translations and digitalisation.
- The EU will offer Member States support to protect their cultural heritage.
- Scientific publications must be freely accessible as far as possible.
- The exchange of scientists and students deserves to be stimulated, amongst other things by the extension of the Erasmus Grants System.

Equal opportunities for everyone

The European Union stands for equal rights of all citizens in its Member States. Discrimination is unacceptable on whatever grounds. We are worried about the free access of migrant workers. It will make the position of workers from new Member States vulnerable and create a pattern of problems that is hard to break. To avoid exploitation and displacement, we advocate regulation of labour migration.

- European Member States will be encouraged to acknowledge the civil status of their mutual citizens. The fact that you are married to someone of the same sex may not cause any discrimination for you or your partner in any Member State.
- The EU will stimulate the elimination of differences between women and men on the employment market. It will set a good example by ensuring better representation of women and minorities in senior European positions.
- The free accession of migrant workers from countries like Poland has led to the exploitation of workers, displacement in the employment market, and problems with housing shortages. These problems additionally undermine solidarity among other European citizens. To avoid further problems we advocate regulation of the accession of migrant workers from new Member States like Romania and Bulgaria.
- Europe will promote the equal rights of people with disabilities. Access to public facilities, public institutions and transport should be self-evident, as for people who are dependent on an assistance dog due to their disability.

International

Investments in developments

The Party for the Animals wants Europe to discontinue with policies that cause harm to other parts of the world. Instead we want to have investments made in the potential of developing countries. Sustainability, animal welfare, education, health, children's rights and the equal treatment of men and women are key to this process.

- The EU will stop the import of products that affect living environments elsewhere in the world and that involve land capture and other violations of human rights.
- The Party for the Animals wants the EU Member States to strive for spending one per cent of their Gross Domestic Product on development aid. This aid may not be bound to the purchase of certain goods or services.
- Development aid will focus on strengthening the position of vulnerable groups in developing countries, in particular women and children.
- Priority will be given to clean drinking water and hygiene, adequate (preventive) healthcare, access to essential medicines and contraceptives, education, sustainable agriculture and clean energy. The support of emancipation movements will give democratisation processes a chance.
- The Party for the Animals wants to warrant sexual and reproductive health and rights, this will also contribute to slowing down population growth. The breaking of taboos on homosexuality, abortion and

violence against women, reduction of maternal mortality and the promotion and provision of contraceptives are spearheads in development policies.

- The aid will focus on the interests of humans, animals, and the environment in that part of the world, and not on the interests of the industry sector in this part of the world.
- EU Member States will be able to work better together in the field of development cooperation than is the case now and will combine and direct their knowledge and experiences. This way, developing countries will have to perform fewer administrative operations and development cooperation will become more effective.
- At UN level, the EU will do everything to achieve a far-reaching post-2015 agenda for sustainable developments - with ambitious sustainability demands that apply worldwide and are based on human rights, planetary limitations and respect for animals and nature.

Defence of human rights

Human rights are more important than trade. European companies violate environmental and human rights on a regular basis. Often the victims are left empty-handed, without having an opportunity to obtain justice. Moreover, one billion citizens in fragile states are threatened by violence and structural injustice. These humans partly depend on our support for their safety and human rights. Victims of war and violence, oppression and persecution, hunger, climate change and natural disasters deserve to be helped.

- Human rights – including the right to food and water – and sustainable development will be the test of European policy. Proposals for new European policy will standardly be provided with an appendix, explaining the impact of the policy on the environment, biodiversity, human rights, animal welfare and developing countries.
- The European Union will warrant a well-functioning complaints mechanism and offer assistance to victims of environmental or human rights offences to get justice. The EU will warrant a well-functioning duty of care and liability of companies and directors. Victims from outside the EU who have suffered environmental harm or violation of human rights will also be given the opportunity to obtain justice within the EU.
- The EU will not search for trade outlets in countries where human rights are not safeguarded.
- The EU will openly protest without reservation against violations of human rights anywhere in the world – even if it does business with those countries. The curtailing of trade is definitely one of the instruments that can be used to put pressure on the countries concerned.
- The EU will offer to help Member States on the borders of the EU to fight the trafficking and smuggling of human beings.
- Humanitarian aid to refugees, both in the EU and in their own region, is self-evident. The Member States will mutually make commitments thereto.
- The EU will ensure that Member States provide a fair asylum procedure and humane hosting of refugees. Fundamental rights, such as access to medical care, will also apply to people without a residential permit.

Limits on weapons

'War Never Again' was an important motive for establishing the European Union. The Party for the Animals wants Europe to also apply that rationale to its weapon policy.

- The EU will endeavour to achieve compliance with treaties against landmines and cluster munitions and for worldwide regulation of the weapons trade.
- Europe will be at the forefront in the development of an international legal framework for regulation of the use of armed unmanned planes (drones).

- The arms export policy will be tightened so that no more weapons will be supplied from the EU to repressive and authoritarian states which violate human rights.
- A blacklist will be created for countries and businesses to which no intermediary products or components of chemical, nuclear and bacteriological weapons may be supplied.
- The EU will work on a universal prohibition on the use of every form of uranium in (conventional) weapons and will promote a comprehensive prohibition on nuclear weapons.
- The nuclear weapons still present on EU soil will shortly be removed.

¹ Bron PBL <http://www.rivm.nl/bibliotheek/rapporten/500110004.pdf>