FVE, FECAVA and WSAVAposition statement: Support for a phase-out of fur farming

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The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), the Federation of Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA)and the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA)call forthe phasing out of fur farming globally. As veterinarians committed to animal health and welfare, public health and the protection of the environment, FVE, FECAVA and WSAVAbelieve that fur farming is no longer sustainable. Fur farming raises serious concerns regarding animalwelfare andcan have strong implications on public and environmental health. Therefore, when viewed through the One Health-One Welfarelens, it is disproportionate and unjustifiable.

FVE, FECAVA and WSAVA call policy makers for:

- **A legally enacted phase-out of fur farming globally in the next decade**
- **A phase-out of the placement of farmed animal fur and products containing such fur on the market**
- **A ban on importing farmed animal fur and products containing such fur from third countries who have not phased out.**

One Welfare: animal welfare and societalconcerns

Animals bred for fur, primarily mink (*Neogale vison*), foxes (*Vulpes lagopus* and *Vulpes vulpes*), raccoon dogs (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*), and chinchillas (*Chinchilla lanigera*), are wild or semi-wild species whose complex behavioural and physiological needs cannot be met satisfactorily under farming conditionswithin the confines of conventional fur farms.

Most animals commercially raised for fur production are typically housed in barren wire mesh cages without environmental enrichment[1].The European Food Safety Authority's recent Scientific Opinion confirmed that thisharbours an increased risk for skin lesions and injuriesand severely restricts severely restrict natural behaviors, including resting, hunting, swimming, foraging, and social interaction.It was shown that thisleads to frustration, stress, and abnormal behaviors such as self-mutilation, cannibalism, and stereotypies[1,2].These conditions have prevailedfor decades and fail to meet the basic welfare standards as defined by the Five Freedoms[3] and Five Domains model[4].

When it comes to killing for harvest or depopulation, mink are usually restrained manually or in traps and killed with carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide, whilst foxes and other canid species are grasped with metal tongs around the neck and electrocuted and chinchillas are lethally injected[1]. Theseempirically developed methods often fail to ensure a humane death and are likely to cause distress, pain, and undue suffering[5].

Furthermore, Europeansociety has become increasingly critical of fur farming, with surveys consistently showing that the majority of EU citizens call for a strict ban on fur farming[6], reflecting a common view of fur, seen as an inhumane and unnecessary luxury product[7]. As a result, bans are progressing in 17 EU Member States and debates are ongoing to restrict fur farming in many of the remaining ones. By 2023, 1,000 active fur farms remained in the EU, mostly for mink and some farmed foxes and raccoon dogs[8].

One Health: humanhealth, animal health and environmental health

The intensive farming of animals for fur poses serious health threats, including diseases affecting the animals themselves, zoonotic and ecological hazards, that extend well beyond animal health[9]. The One Health approach,recognising the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, highlights the need to address the systemic risks inherent in fur farming.

Zoonotic disease risks:

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the zoonotic risks associated with fur farming. SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks occurred in hundreds of mink farms worldwide, with confirmed human transmission in several countries[10]. More recently, spill-over Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza outbreaks (HPAI H5N1) have been reported on fur farms in Spain and Finland[11], further underscoring the biosecurity vulnerabilities of these high-density confinement, open-air husbandry systems for the spread of infectious diseases.**Despite biosecurity measures, fur farms remain a persistent potential reservoir of zoonotic risk, requiring disproportionate disease surveillance, culling, and resource investments.**

Ecological impacts and biodiversity loss:

Populations of American mink, having been introduced or escaped from European fur farms,are now established in the wild, and arethereforeclassified as invasive alien species in 28 European countries[12]. These now feral animalsreproduce, thrive and prey on native fauna,invade human settlements, with the American mink havingcontributed to the decline of the native and Critically Endangered European mink (*Mustela lutreola*) in the last decade in Spain[13], destabilising ecosystems, out-competing local wildlife and threatening native biodiversity. Such invasive carnivores were also shown to act as reservoirs for parasites and otherdiseases[2].American mink farming is set to be banned across the European Union from 2027 after the species was added to the EU-wide list of invasive species[14].

A Sustainable and Responsible Path Forward

The FVE stands alongside its member veterinary associations across Europe, including Finland[15,], Germany[16], Italy[17], Ireland[18], Norway[19], Sweden[20] and Switzerland[21], and the broader public in calling for an EU-wide phase-out of fur farming. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) “Fur Free Europe” was backed by over 1.5 million valid signatures from citizens in 18 Member States[22], reflecting the growing public concern about animal health and welfare, environmental, public health, and societalimplications of fur farming. This concern is echoed institutionally by the European Commission’s Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfareback in 2001[2] and recently by EFSA's Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare Opinion[1]. This concern is

echoedinternationally by members of the veterinary profession, and other animal health and welfare organisations includingWSAVA.

We commend Member States and European institutions that have taken leadership on this issue. We urge the remaining Member States and the European Commission, to follow through on its commitment,as well as global decision makers, to reassess the viabilityof fur farming in line with current scientific evidence and public opinion. The time has come to enshrine a science-based, consistent and forward-looking approach away from fur farming.

FVE, FECAVA AND WSAVA URGE POLICYMAKERS TO TAKE DECISIVE STEPS TOWARD A COORDINATED AND COMPASSIONATE TRANSITION AWAY FROM FUR FARMING - ONE THAT INCLUDES SUPPORT FOR RURAL LIVELIHOODS, INVESTMENT IN SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REASONABLE TRANSITION PERIODS OVER THE COMING DECADE.

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Annex

Table 1. Overview of the fur farming legislation across European countries as of mid-2025. It categorises each country's scope as a full ban, partial ban, phase-out, or no ban, and offers contextual commentary on the scope and implementation of relevant legislation. It highlights trends in national policies, including transition periods, animal species covered, and the operational status of fur farms.

Country	Scope	Comment

Austria	Full Ban	Austria enacted a ban on fur farming for all species in 2004, which became effective in 2005. The Federal Act on the Protection of Animals explicitly prohibits keeping animals for the purpose of obtaining furs. There are no operating fur farms in Austria.
Belgium	Full Ban	Belgium has regional bans on fur farming in Wallonia, Brussels, and Flanders, with the bans enacted between 2015 and 2018 and becoming fully effective by 2023. These bans cover all species, and no fur farms are currently operational.
Bulgaria	No ban	Bulgaria introduced a ban on the breeding and import of American mink in June 2022, but this was suspended in August 2022 due to an appeal. The discussion on a national ban is being handled by the Bulgarian Supreme Administrative Court, while the Parliamentary debate on fur farming continues. In the meantime, the last mink farm in the country (near Stara Zagora and already empty of animals) decided to close ahead of the Supreme Administrative Court's decision in May 2025.
Croatia	Full Ban	Croatia implemented a fur farming ban for all species, effective from 2017 after a 10-year phase-out period. This ban is confirmed in the Animal Protection Act of 2017. No fur farms are currently operational.
Cyprus	No Ban	There is no fur farming in Cyprus.
Czech Republic	Full Ban	The Czech Republic banned fur farming for all species in 2017, with the ban becoming effective in 2019. This ban is enshrined in the Animal Protection Act. No fur farms are currently operational.
Denmark	Partial Ban	Denmark has a partial ban on fur farming, including a prohibition on fox farming, a ban on building new raccoon dog farms (there are no active raccoon dog farms currently) and a suspension on mink farming until 2023. The suspension on mink farming has been lifted, allowing mink and chinchilla farms to re-open.
Estonia	Full Ban	Estonia passed a ban on fur farming for all species in 2021, which will take full effect in 2026. Currently, no fur farms are operational under the ban's provisions.
Finland	No ban	Finland has not enacted a fur farming ban, and the country continues to operate mink, fox and raccoon dog farms.
France	Partial Ban	France implemented a partial ban in 2021, prohibiting the breeding of non-domestic species for fur production. It does not cover chinchillas and rabbits. No fur farms are currently operational under this ban.
Germany	Phase out	Germany effectively phased out fur farming for all species by implementing stricter keeping standards and animal welfare requirements. This led to the closure of all fur farms by 2022. The regulations are part of the Tiererzeugnisse-Handelsverbotsgesetz (Animal Products Trade Prohibition Act).
Greece	No ban	Greece has not implemented a ban on fur farming, and fur farms continue to operate without any ongoing parliamentary debate.
Hungary	Partial Ban	Hungary has a partial ban on fur farming, covering species such as mink, fox, polecat, and coypu, enacted in 2020. Chinchilla farming is still permitted and there are currently operating chinchilla fur farms.

Ireland	Full Ban	Ireland banned fur farming for all species in 2019, with the ban becoming effective in 2022. The ban includes provisions for compensating affected farmers. There are no operating fur farms.
Italy	Full Ban	Italy enacted a fur farming ban in 2021, effective from January 1, 2022 is part of the comprehensive state Budget Law, covering all species used with the purpose of obtaining fur. The transition period for existing farms aims for them to be dismantled by June 30, 2022, with provision of compensation and contributions for the conversion of these farms. As a consequence, there are no operating fur farms.
Kosovo	No ban	Kosovo has not adopted a ban on fur farming but has established standards for animal welfare.
Latvia	Full Ban	Latvia passed a ban on fur farming for all species in 2022, which will be effective by 2028. However, some fur farms are still operational until the effective date.
Lithuania	Full Ban	Lithuania implemented a ban on fur farming for all species in 2023, set to take full effect in 2027. The legislation prohibits keeping and breeding animals for fur production.
Luxembourg	Full Ban	Luxembourg banned fur farming in 2018, with no operating fur farms under the current legislation
Malta	Full Ban	Malta enacted a fur farming ban in 2022, effective immediately. The ban covers all species, and no fur farms are operational.
Netherlands	Full Ban	The Netherlands banned mink farming in 2013, with the ban becoming effective in 2021. Fox and chinchilla farming was phased out in the 1990s. Keeping animals for fur production was planned to be banned in 2024. But since COVID and the infected mink it all became prohibited sooner than planned. Since 2021 there are no operational farms for fur animals.
Norway	Phasing out	Norway enacted a fur farming ban for all species in 2019, with immediate effect for new farms and a phase-out period for existing farms until 2025. No fur farms will be operational after the phase-out.
Poland	Partial Ban	Poland is one of the top producers of fur. Poland amended their legislation end of November 2024 for the introduction of a ban on the breeding and rearing of fur animals for commercial purposes, in particular for the purpose of obtaining their fur or other body parts. The ban will however only take effect in 15 years.
Portugal	No ban	Portugal does not have a ban on fur farming, but there are no operating fur farms.
Romania	Partial Ban	Romania banned mink and chinchilla farming in October 2024, with a phase-out period until 2027.
Slovakia	Full Ban	Slovakia passed a fur farming ban in 2019, effective from 2025. The ban covers all species, with one fur farm still operating until the effective date.
Slovenia	Full Ban	Slovenia banned fur farming in 2003, with the ban becoming effective in 2013. The legislation prohibits breeding of all animal species solely for fur production.
Spain	No ban	Spain has prohibited the establishment of new mink fur farms since 2016. There are currently some fur farms operating in Spain.
Switzerland	Phased out	Farming of fur bearing animals is legally required to emulate zoo conditions, thus there are no fur farms in Switzerland

Sweden	Partial Ban	In 1995 Sweden required that fox captivity must allow them to be active, dig and socialize with other foxes, effectively making fox farming economically unviable and the practice ended. Fox (2001 by the Ordinance, chapter two) and chinchilla (in 2014 by the Board of Agriculture, chapter three) farming have been phased out due to strict welfare regulations. Sweden has not implemented a complete ban on fur farming. However, in September 2023, the Swedish government announced that Swedish mink farmers would get economical compensation if they quit farming by 30 June 2025. In parallel, the government announced an investigation into a complete ban on fur farming in Sweden, something that is to be concluded in the beginning of 2026.
United Kingdom	Full Ban	Full ban on fur farms in 2000, effective from January 2003. However, importing and selling fur (from abroad) remains legal.