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## Everyone is Responsible

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On 29<sup>th</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011 a new European Union Animal Protection and Welfare strategy was presented in Brussels, the main directives of which will be the driving force behind the changes that will be introduced in this area in the following years.

The Danish presidency of this biennium has promoted an International Congress, about which we have already published some information,<sup>[1]</sup> and which has constituted a highly interesting event for specialists and for the general public, as the emphasis of the new European strategy is on the idea that “everyone is responsible”.

The final link in the chain of responsibility (of determiners for an improvement in the treatment of animals) is the individual, regardless of their place or role in society. Therefore it is of particular interest that Congress made specific reference to how to increase and reinforce consumer power, and how to provide consumers with reliable information on how animals, and especially production animals, have been raised and developed; it is from this that the name of the event came about: “Empowering consumers and creating market opportunities for animal welfare”.

The importance of this strategy is found in two central proposals that have resulted from experience accumulated throughout the years in which the EU has been drawing up a complex legislative system based on prioritising animal welfare from a basis of science. The proposals are, on the one hand, the desire for scientific and technological advances on the topic of animal welfare to be reconciled with (global) market realities in the next four years, and on the other hand, for the relative legislation to provide more transparency in markets to allow, among other things, greater flexibility and adaptation of legislative framework to the legislative realities of Member States.

The new strategy must therefore try to stimulate two complementary actions that can be summarised as follows: firstly, revising the general principles of the European legislative framework in animal welfare, perfectly consolidated, but in need of simplification in terms of animal welfare reinforcement with the reconciliation of regulations for producers and consumers that will result in a reinforcement and improvement of their application and control. Secondly, that the Commission recognises that there are reforms that must be reinforced or better used in order to be truly effective. This means an exercise in transparency so that information on producers and actors involved in public health, the food chain and consumption, is simply and directly available to the consumer, enabling them to make responsible choices.

International cooperation of all actors involved is essential to the success of these advances, because, ultimately, it is the animals that are important to us, and, from every perspective, it is for them that such advances should be made; the efforts that are necessary so that European legislation does not remain a monument to erudition and

prolific detail, but so that instead it reaches the individual conscience and the corporate responsibility of businesses. Each one of us must look at ourselves and act in a responsible way towards animal welfare. We are not mere spectators.

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[1] International conference on the new '[European Union Animal Welfare Strategy 2012-2015](#)' from 19th February to [1st March in Brussels](#);

WARTENBERG, M., [La nueva estrategia de bienestar animal de la UE 2012-2015 - Un cambio de paradigma en la política europea de bienestar animal](#)