

KEITH TAYLOR MEP

From the Green Party Member of the European Parliament
for the South East of England

21 February 2019

Dear colleague,

Re: Recognising animal sentience and requiring that animal welfare has full regard in law

I am writing to you as a Member of the European Parliament, where, for many years, myself and other British MEPs across party lines have been actively engaged in protecting and promoting animal welfare.

Over the past half century, the European Union has worked to raise animal welfare standards, many of which are the highest in the world. However, as we prepare to leave the EU, animals are at risk of losing the vital legal protections they have under EU law. The accompanying *'Animals and Brexit'* report demonstrates just how much they have to lose and the urgent work we as lawmakers have to do. Indeed, post-Brexit, animals will need even greater protections to ensure new policies and trade deals don't compromise their needs.

On the whole, the UK can be proud of its contribution to animal welfare action in the EU. As President of the Council of the European Union, we pushed for a groundbreaking change in the way animals are treated across the continent. This protocol adopted in 1999 meant that, for the first time, animals were to be regarded as sentient beings, not just agricultural 'goods'. This historic moment for animal protection was to ensure all future legislation took account of the fact that animals, like us, feel pain and experience stress as well as other feelings and emotions.

You will be aware, no doubt, that a significant number of British animal protection groups have come together to call for animal sentience to be explicitly enshrined in UK law, as it is in the EU. This would mean that all Ministers in the UK must fully regard animal welfare when creating any future legislation or Government policy. Without this, the current planned legislation will drastically weaken protection for animals across the country.

I wholeheartedly support their campaign for a #BetterDealForAnimals and urge you to ensure animal welfare will not be compromised as part of the process of leaving the EU. I also urge you to hold the Government to account over its promises to improve welfare protections; they must not be quietly abandoned.

Yours sincerely,



KEITH TAYLOR
MEP for South East England