

ALDI Nord  
Barilla  
Fattoria Roberti  
Ferrero  
Inter IKEA Group  
Jamie Oliver Group  
Le Groupement Les Mousquetaires  
Mondelēz International  
Nestlé  
Unilever

Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans  
Vice-President Věra Jourová  
Commissioner Stella Kyriakides  
Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski  
MEP Norbert Lins, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development  
MEP Dolors Montserrat, Chair of the Committee on Petitions

17 March 2021

**Subject: The time is right to act now**

Dear Executive Vice-President Timmermans,  
Dear Vice-President Jourová,  
Dear Commissioners Kyriakides and Wojciechowski,  
Dear Committee Chairs MEPs Lins and Montserrat,

We represent leading companies ALDI Nord, Barilla, Fattoria Roberti, Ferrero, Inter IKEA Group, Jamie Oliver Group, Le Groupement Les Mousquetaires, Mondelēz International, Nestlé, Unilever who are committed to improving animal welfare standards. In line with popular support for legislative action, we support a phase out of the use of caged hens in EU animal farming.

A wealth of animal welfare science research demonstrates that animals suffer in cages and that well-managed cage-free systems provide them with a much better quality of life.

Companies moving away from eggs from caged hens have paved the way for changing how EU farmed animals are kept. Cage-free systems are widespread, economically viable, and provide better living conditions for hens.

The business case for phasing out cages for egg laying hens in particular at EU level is strong. Along with our companies, [over 1000 businesses in Europe](#) - retailers, manufacturers, and food service providers - have already eliminated cages for hens or have pledged to do so by 2025. Indeed, since 2019, the majority of hens kept commercially in the EU have been in alternative systems, whether barn, free range or organic.

We share consumer, civil society and government concerns about the welfare of farmed animals. 94% of Europeans believe that protecting farmed animal welfare is important (Eurobarometer 2015) – and 1.4 million citizens supported the ‘End the Cage Age’ European Citizens Initiative.

As leaders in the food sector, we commend the aims of the End the Cage Age Initiative.

We are committed to help reform the food industry, from within.

The revision of animal welfare legislation presents the ideal opportunity for a legal basis to end the use of cages in EU animal farming, starting with caged hens, and supporting farmers in the transition. We are ready and willing to share our expertise and collaborate on achieving that goal.

Yours,

ALDI Nord

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