

Summary European Election Programme

Party for the Animals believes the crises are linked

The current crises surrounding climate, food security, biodiversity, animal health, energy and economy clearly show that we have seriously gone beyond the bounds of what our planet can cope with. It is high time for a radical change of course and to start sustainable reconstruction. In particular, the unlimited exploitation of animals has proved to be disastrous for people, environment, nature and animal welfare. The intensive livestock production industry is an important cause of starvation, global warming and the irreversible loss of natural resources. As long as Europe continues to treat animals as a commodity, simply because that is the cheapest thing to do, nothing will change. The Party for the Animals wants to break the stranglehold of short-term thinking and the focus on economic gain. We dedicate ourselves to values that *really* count: clean air, a clean Earth, clean drinking water and the respectful treatment of both humans and animals. It is not the rights of the strongest that should be central to our considerations, but the interests of the weakest members of society. Sustainability and compassion are the points of departure, which are literally a matter of life and death to our small planet.

Spearheads for the Party for the Animals in Europe

- The large-scale factory farming industry is disastrous for people, animals and the environment. European agriculture should be humane, sustainable, small-scale and regional in nature.
- The haulage of animals in long-distance livestock transport is unacceptable. Live animal transports should be restricted to a maximum of two hours.
- Large-scale outbreaks of infectious animal disease cannot be solved by the mass culling of healthy animals. We believe that healthy animals should no longer be killed in the EU during epizootics.
- A healthier lifestyle with less meat is not only good for animals, but – according to the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency – can also lead to a 50 percent reduction in the costs of the global climate policy. And it does not cost anything. Europe should, therefore, fully devote itself to sustainable consumption: plant-based and animal-friendly.
- There is no place in a civilised Europe for barbaric traditions. Bullfighting, foie gras and the ritual slaughter of animals without stunning should be banned.
- Stray animals should no longer be treated like garbage. There should be good shelter facilities and programmes to prevent the future reproduction of stray animals.
- Experimentation on live animals is morally reprehensible. Animal experimentation should be ended as soon as possible. Laboratory animal-free science should be the norm and alternatives to vivisection should be vigorously stimulated.
- Genetic experimentation with plants and animals presents a significant threat to our future. The Party for the Animals seeks a 'gentech-free' Europe.
- Europe should stop overfishing and polluting the seas. The establishment of a network of marine reservations is essential in this regard.
- Nature should be given the space it deserves. Steps should quickly be taken to create a large Europe-wide nature network in which animals can freely move and natural balances can re-emerge. The hunting rifle should play no part in the realisation of these balances.
- 'Clean, safe and 100% sustainable' must be the doctrine of the EU energy policy: solar, wind and water power should replace nuclear energy, coal-fired power stations and storage fields for CO₂.
- The EU can only work as long as it is fully democratic. This begins with the initiative rights for the European Parliament, proper controls on the Council of Ministers and the European Commission.

- Civil rights and the protection of privacy are core values in a democratic constitutional state. These fundamental rights should not be tampered with, even under the guise of the prevention of terrorism.

There are limits

The world is in crisis. Our increasing affluence has left a deep mark in its wake in the form of the large-scale contamination of our natural living environment, the loss of biodiversity and the exploitation of animals by the livestock industry. It is now clear that we have exceeded the limits: more than one billion people go hungry, while in the West more than one billion people suffer from obesity. Gaining access to clean drinking water is also a problem for 1.1 billion people. In particular, it is the poorest people in the world who have been the hardest hit by the consequences of climate change. Our natural living environment is being irreversibly damaged by large-scale deforestation, environmental pollution and global warming. And for the hundreds of millions of animals in the livestock industry, life is usually nothing more than continuous suffering. We call for a drastic change in the way we are behaving, also in Europe. We must change course, before we run aground.

Humans seem to be unable to use the abilities with which they are able to distinguish themselves from other animals – the capacity to make ethical decisions and appreciating the consequences of their actions in the long term – to create a sustainable future. Time and time again, choices are made that take us ever closer still to the edge of the abyss. In the meantime, in addition to the food crisis, the climate crisis, the water crisis and the biodiversity crisis, we are now undergoing an economic crisis. We are getting so close to the abyss that taking a step back, away from the edge, should be regarded as the only step in the right direction.

It is, therefore, time to reflect on our actions and the impact that we, as EU citizens and consumers, have on the world around us. We cannot find a sustainable solution if we ignore the fact that the crises can only be solved in relation to each other. Indeed, the bankruptcy of our Western society offers an opportunity for sustainable reconstruction. It is *the* chance to implement measures that show respect for people, animals and our natural environment.

Europe can also not go without hearing this voice. The Party for the Animals' electoral programme bears the title: "Europe: there are limits". With this we mean that there are limits to economic growth, limits to pollution, limits to animal suffering and limits to over-consumption. If Europe wants to prove what it is worth, then it will have to make an 180 degree turn. The model in which market positions and other short term interests of the individual member states stand central has to be rejected. This means an ambitious climate package, true solidarity with the poorest of the world, better animal welfare standards and concrete agreements about conserving biodiversity.

Towards a sustainable and humane Europe

For many decades, the European Union has left its mark on food production and consumption in Europe. Each year, more than 42 million Euros are spent on income subsidies for farmers, advertisements for meat and dairy produce and export subsidies for agricultural products. That is 40% of the total EU budget. With disastrous consequences. While we are forced to listen to radio ads praising the joys of eating chicken, which have been sponsored by the European Union, in the very same media it is becoming increasingly clear that the factory farming industry abuses these animals unprecedentedly and encroaches significantly on our natural resources, the tropical rainforests and the climate.

Our knives and forks can be powerful weapons in the fight against the crisis. Simply by cutting out meat for just one day a week can make a positive contribution to the

countering climate change, global food distribution and the loss of biodiversity. It is the cheapest and easiest contribution that we could all make. We believe that this message should resound throughout European politics, for example, by encouraging people to eat less meat in a positive way, instead of pumping millions into the promotion of meat and dairy produce as is currently the case.

The Party for the Animals is going to Brussels to spearhead a movement, which provides truly sustainable solutions for the crises, and also to act as a protagonist to get the rights of animals higher up on the European agenda.

Billions of animals die in Europe each year. They are used for the production of meat, eggs, dairy products, down and fur and are disgracefully transported throughout the whole of the EU. Animals are experimented on and they are tortured for popular entertainment in, for example, bullfights. A considerable proportion of the pet animals in Europe roam the streets where they are regarded and treated as garbage. Wild animals are hunted, or their survival is threatened because their natural living environments are being eroded and ever more restricted.

Current EU policymaking is a disaster for animals. Many EU resolutions have reduced animals to the status of commodities and their welfare has consistently been subordinated to the power of the market. Aspirations are readjusted to the animals' disadvantage, directives that have been adopted are not observed and inspections to see if the regulations are being enforced are often left wanting. The European Union has proved to be an alibi for Member States not to have to take their own measures for the protection of animals.

Enough is enough. A civilised Europe should not treat its animals as if they were already dead, but instead as living and sentient creatures. The current deal making between Member States should be strongly combated. Animals have the right to be treated respectfully. There is no place for the large-scale exploitation of animals in a sustainable Europe. From the inside, we shall work towards a democratic and transparently functioning European Union within which sustainable and humane cooperation takes centre stage.

In the European Parliament we will strongly promote a shift in priorities: the most important task is to ensure a sustainable relationship with life on Earth. This task demands everyone's full attention now.

Europe stimulates sustainable production and consumption

In Europe, livestock production places a disproportionately high burden on our natural resources and the environment. At least 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions are caused by livestock farming, while 13% are generated by traffic and transport.

Worldwide, eighty percent of agricultural land is used for the purposes of livestock farming, principally for the production of meat for the industrial west. This is at the expense of an honest distribution of food resources. Given that many kilos of plant-based proteins and many thousands of litres of water are needed to produce a kilo of meat, livestock farming is a very inefficient form of protein production.

With the current amount of land used for agricultural purposes, we should be able to feed all the mouths in the world with ease. However, the over-production of meat, eggs and dairy produce in the west prevents this from happening. Furthermore, the European livestock industry is also responsible for the large-scale destruction of tropical rainforests and the devastation of cerrados elsewhere in the world for the production of animal feed. The production of meat, dairy produce and eggs places a disproportionate burden on our natural resources. A radical change is needed in the interests of people, animals, nature and the environment.

Research conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) has shown that the many years of the promotion of meat and dairy produce with the help of European community funds has led to an increase in heart and vascular disease among EU citizens. Eating less meat would therefore improve public health as well as providing a solution to global problems. By reducing western meat consumption, we can stay within the Earth's capacities and we will be able to feed all the mouths in the world. In the European Union, we call for the stimulation of a more plant-based and thus also more humane diet.

Sustainable regionally produced food is the future

The production of food, our primary necessity in life, should be organised regionally as much as possible. This will not only provide more space for food production for the local market in vulnerable parts of the world, but would also make Europe less dependent on agricultural land elsewhere around the globe. Stimulating regional production and seasonal produce is also a good point of departure for a European agriculture, which is focused on sustainability.

Animals should be able to display their natural behaviour

The welfare of animals should become central to livestock production in order to put an end to the sacrificing of animal interests on the altar of the economy. If animals are kept for production purposes, their natural behaviour should at least be taken into account. Chickens should be able to wander around freely, pigs should be able to root around and cattle should be able to graze in the pastures. When it comes to housing standards and freedom of movement, we want to see organic livestock farming standards applied throughout the whole of the EU.

Animals should no longer be subject to painful surgical interventions

We call for the painful interventions, such as the dehorning of cattle and castration of piglets, which are currently widespread in the livestock production industry, to be banned. Member States that lead the way should be rewarded by the European Union by, for example, using some of the funds freed from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to finance the transition to a more sustainable and humane form of agriculture. Moreover, Europe should no longer be used by Member States as an excuse to wait and do nothing until others join in.

End long-distance live animal transports

Billions of live animals are annually hauled throughout the whole of Europe as if they were inanimate objects. For many of these animals, these long journeys will end at a slaughterhouse on the other side of Europe. These disgraceful live animal transports should end as soon as possible.

No more pre-emptive culling of healthy animals

Nearly seven years after the outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth Disease, which led to millions of animals being destroyed on the funeral pyres because vaccination was prohibited purely for economic reasons, history can still repeat itself during the next epizootic. We believe that it is unacceptable for millions of healthy animals to be killed during outbreaks of infectious animal diseases, such as FMD, classical swine fever and avian influenza. Animals are literally being sacrificed on the altar of the economy. In Europe, we demand that the EU animal disease policy no longer claims innocent and unnecessary victims. Firstly, this means no more long-distance live animal transports. Secondly, there should be smaller and fewer intensive livestock farms and, thirdly, the development of natural immunity should be encouraged rather than the large-scale use of antibiotics. In this way, the development of multi-resistant disease organisms, which are harmful to both humans and animals, can be counteracted. Preventative vaccination should be carried out to prevent the mass pre-emptive culling of healthy animals during large-scale outbreaks.

Genetically manipulated crops do not belong in a sustainable Europe

The long-term consequences of genetic manipulation of plants and animals in our ecosystem cannot be predicted. The limits of nature deserve our respect. It seems that the admittance of genetically manipulated crops seems to be being made increasingly easier under pressure of the animal feed industry and the large food manufacturers. EU citizens are opposed to genetically manipulated crops, but their arguments are barely listened to under the current admittance policy. Working from the precautionary principle, we want the cultivation and import of genetically modified crops to be banned in Europe.

A ban on bullfighting and other barbaric traditions in Europe

The bloodiest form of public entertainment in Europe is bullfighting. However, there are other popular rituals, such as pulling the heads off live chickens and geese, which involve the literal torturing of animals to death. The European Union still allows animals to be abused for the purposes of public entertainment. We want to put an end to these barbaric traditions as soon as possible. The declaration that the European Union "takes full account of the welfare needs of animals as sentient creatures" is invariably followed by the restriction of religious rites, cultural traditions and regional cultural heritage. This should be changed. The freedom to practice traditions should end where human and animal suffering begins. In countries, such as Spain and France, there is increasing resistance to bullfighting and the torture of animals during local festivities. We want to strongly support this movement from within the European Parliament. We should also strive for a ban on the 'traditional' production of foie gras.

Europe should strive to end all animal experiments

Each year, an estimated 12 million vertebrate animals are used in experiments in Europe. And many more experiments involved invertebrate animals. The Party for the Animals believes that the European Union should strive to end all animal experimentation. Apart from the fact that we find experimentation on live animals morally reprehensible, animals are simply not a good model for humans. Even if animal-free techniques provide a better prediction of the effects of a product on humans, in many cases animal tests are prescribed by legislation to 'prove' that products and drugs are safe. This is unjust. The Party for the Animals believes that Europe should revise the regulations for the approval of substances and pharmaceutical products, so that good alternative methods to animal tests are accepted as valid and safe test methods. In addition, we believe that Europe should dare to critically review the usefulness and necessity of animal experimentation. Animals are not only utilised for the development of medicines, but also to test cleaning products, animal feed and foodstuffs that make health claims, such as yoghurts that improve intestinal function. We believe that animal experiments for such trivial reasons should be banned without delay.

Stray animals should no longer be treated like garbage in Europe

In many European countries, large populations of dogs and cats roam the streets. The animals are viewed as a nuisance and are mistreated and killed in the most horrific ways. We deem it unthinkable that a Europe that dares to call itself civilised literally treats its stray animals like garbage. The European Union should devote itself to preventing and controlling the problems caused by stray animal populations in a humane way.

European overfishing should end immediately

The seas were originally rich natural areas, in which fish and other sea-life flourished. Europe has seriously damaged these natural areas. Many species of fish have been heavily overfished: eels have almost died out and, thanks to the EU fisheries; the cod population has been under the biological minimum for more than ten years. Marine ecosystems have been transformed into lifeless mudflats by destructive fishery techniques. The seas have literally been ravaged. We want the natural balance in the seas to be restored as quickly as possible. The fisheries must be seriously curtailed to allow fish stocks to recover. In the EU, we will strive to achieve a truly sustainable fisheries policy.

Europe should devote itself to truly clean energy: solar, wind and water power

Global warming and climate change present a threat to billions of people, animals and plants. We seek a stringent and forceful EU climate policy to restrict global warming and to prevent it from worsening. More than ever before, Europe should devote itself to a drastic reduction of greenhouse gasses, energy saving and the stimulation of green and renewable forms of energy sources. A massive switch to renewable and clean energy sources, such as solar, water and wind power, is necessary. Using Community funds that can partially be freed up by the abolition of the Common Agricultural Policy, the development and implantation of these sustainable and renewable energy sources can be stimulated.

Europe should ensure more nature in a linked network

It is necessary to better protect nature in Europe. Many nature areas have already been lost and existing ones are under great pressure. The natural living environments of wild animals are diminishing and they literally have no place left to go. Despite the European Bird Directive and the Habitat Directive, there has been little attempt to protect nature. In this way, the EU nature policy continues to be a paper promise that does little to help nature. We want greater efforts to be made on behalf of nature in Europe. We call for a network of linked nature areas so that wild animals can move freely throughout Europe. In this way the populations can recover and animals can adapt to changes in the climate.

The level of democracy in the European Union should be better

Many Dutch people have an uncomfortable feeling about Europe. We think that this is not without good reason. During the past fifty years, the European Union has indeed grown into an increasingly complicated jumble of decision-making, which citizens can barely comprehend. This decision-making lies beyond our reach, but affects us to an increasingly great extent. More and more matters are being dealt with at a European level. The European cooperation should be given a more democratic basis. We shall strongly fight against the current horse trading of economic interests between the Member States. From within we will work towards a democratic and transparently functioning European Union in which the general interest of a sustainable and humane cooperation takes centre stage. The European Parliament should convene at just one location and the wishes of European citizens, such as the results of referenda on the EU constitution, should be respected.

Civil rights must not be further eroded under the guise of anti-terrorism

A significant degree of personal freedom and responsibility, the protection of civil rights, a transparent democracy, a fair treatment of people and animals, sustainable economic development and (international) cooperation based on equality and mutual respect and compassion are our points of departure in the European debate. Given these starting points, we also oppose the restriction of civil rights under the guise of the prevention of terrorism. We shall also fight against the large-scale violation of privacy, such as the release of air passenger details to the United States.