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European Union

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	5870/19
Subject:	European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 31/2018: "Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation" - <i>Council conclusions (12 February 2019)</i>

Delegations will find in Annex the Council conclusions on the above-mentioned subject adopted by the Council on 12 February 2019.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**on Special report No 31/2018 from the European Court of Auditors entitled "Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation"****THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

- (1) WELCOMES the Special Report No 31/2018 from the European Court of Auditors ('Court') entitled "Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation";
- (2) WELCOMES the findings of the report that actions to achieve compliance have been successful in important areas, most notably on group housing of sows and the ban on unenriched cages of laying hens;
- (3) NOTES the finding that there are still some weaknesses in compliance with minimum standards and room to improve the coordination of cross-compliance checks with official inspections on animal welfare and the use of financial resources of the Common Agricultural Policy to promote higher animal welfare standards;
- (4) AGREES with the Court that the Member States' official control systems are a key factor in ensuring that animal welfare standards are properly enforced and EMPHASISES that the controls should be performed on a risk basis and with an appropriate frequency;

- (5) STRESSES the importance of promoting animal welfare through the Common Agricultural Policy and through the EU's bilateral and multilateral international activities;
 - (6) WELCOMES the Commission's intention to perform an evaluation of the 2012 Animal Welfare Strategy, to take action to better address risky areas, to disseminate good practices and to encourage the effective use of rural development support for animal welfare;
 - (7) NOTES that the latest EU strategy from the protection and welfare of animals covered the period from 2012 to 2015 and ENCOURAGES the Commission to consider, in the light of the outcome of that evaluation, a new strategy for the coming years to further promote animal welfare in the EU and as far as possible beyond the EU;
 - (8) ENCOURAGES Member States to support the Commission in achieving these objectives.
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