

Mr Costas Kadis
Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans

Mr Olivér Várhelyi
Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare

Brussels, 8th October 2026

Subject: NGOs call for an EU ban on octopus farming

Dear Commissioners Kadis and Várhelyi,

The undersigned organisations are writing to express our concerns about octopus farming and to call for a preventive ban on this cruel and unsustainable practice, which has no place in the European Union. Prospective octopus farms have highlighted the severe animal welfare and environmental concerns associated with this practice^{1,2}.

Octopuses are sentient, highly intelligent, and largely solitary animals³. Their complex behavioural needs, together with the aggression and cannibalism likely to arise when they are confined at high stocking densities, make them fundamentally unsuitable for farming. These inherent welfare problems cannot be resolved simply by improving farming conditions or developing new regulations. On top of the inevitable welfare concerns at the time of their rearing, the slaughter method proposed is ice slurry, causing death by freezing. This method has been shown to cause significant suffering⁴ and has been deemed inhumane by both EFSA and the World Organisation for Animal Health, as well as likely

¹ CIWF and Eurogroup for Animals 2024, [Exposing the environmental risks of octopus farming](#)

² CIWF and Eurogroup for Animals 2023, [Uncovering the horrific reality of octopus farming](#)

³ Jacquet, J., Franks, B., Godfrey-Smith, P., & Sánchez-Suárez, W. (2019). The Case Against Octopus Farming. *Issues in Science and Technology*, 37–44.

⁴ Poli BM, Parisi G, Scappini F, Zampacavallo G. Fish welfare and quality as affected by pre-slaughter and slaughter management. *Aquac Int.* 2005 Jan;13(1–2):29–49.

being a breach of Article 13 of the TFEU that acknowledges animals as sentient beings and the 'full regard' mandate in the Treaty.

As carnivorous animals, farmed octopuses would also require large quantities of wild-caught fish and other aquatic animals, used either live, frozen or processed into fishmeal and fish-oil (FMFO), further exacerbating the pressure on marine ecosystems and food security⁵. With the EU carnivorous aquaculture production expected to increase by 30% by 2040, the demand for FMFO is expected to increase by 70%⁶. Meeting this increased demand would be incompatible with the EU's food security and sustainability objectives, as the Strategic Aquaculture Guidelines explicitly highlight the need to reduce the sector's dependence on fishmeal and fish oil. In line with the findings of the recently published European Commission Study on Feed for Aquaculture, we believe the use of wild-caught fish for aquaculture feed must be phased out and replaced by more sustainable alternatives such as by-products, algae, or plant-based proteins not suitable for human consumption.

Octopus is a stark example of the welfare and environmental issues that can arise within carnivorous aquaculture, but the issues are not limited to this species. Atlantic bluefin tuna - large, highly migratory animals that are fundamentally unsuited to confinement - are already farmed through the capture of wild individuals that are transferred to sea cages for fattening. A single farmed Atlantic bluefin tuna can consume up to 3,000 kilograms of wild fish, placing further pressure on wild fish populations and threatening food security. The expansion of aquaculture to new carnivorous species will cause major welfare and environmental issues and must therefore be halted across the EU.

For these reasons, we believe that octopus farming should be prohibited throughout the European Union, together with the sale of octopus products originating from non-EU farms, in order to prevent unfair competition for EU fishers and processors. Support for such a ban is strong among both scientists and the wider public, with hundreds of thousands of people across Europe having signed petitions calling for an end to octopus farming. Legislative proposals to ban octopus farming have already been introduced in several countries such as France, Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Chile or Italy. In the US, California and Washington already have bans in place. The EU now has an opportunity to demonstrate global leadership by acting before this industry becomes established.

⁵ Alder, J., Campbell, B., Karpouzi, V., Kaschner, K., & Pauly, D. (2008). Forage fish: From ecosystems to markets. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 33, 153–166.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.enviro.33.020807.143204>

⁶ Compassion in World Farming 2025, [The Growing Threat of Carnivorous Aquaculture](#)

Yours sincerely,

Compassion in World Farming International

Eurogroup for Animals

Acción Océanos, Spain

Albert Schweitzer Stiftung für unsere Mitwelt, Germany

Anima International, Europe

Animais de Rua, Portugal

Animal Advocacy & Food Transition, EU

Animal Labour Union, Netherlands

Animal Welfare Observatory, Spain

AnimaNaturalis, Spain

Aquatic Life Institute, Global

Asociación Empatía, Spain

Augalyn, Lithuania

BLOOM, France

Capital V, Netherlands

Changing Markets Foundation, Netherlands

Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements, Europe-Africa

DEPANA, Lliga per a la Defensa del Patrimoni Natural, Spain

Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz, Germany

Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V., Germany

Dier&Recht, The Netherlands

Dierenbescherming/Dutch Association for Animal Protection, Netherlands

Dierencoalitie, Netherlands
Dyrenes Venner, Denmark
Ecologistas en Acción, Spain
Ekowymborca, Poland
Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali, Italy
Essere Animali, Italy
Ethical Farming Ireland, Ireland
FAADA, Spain
Fondation Droit Animal, Éthique et Sciences, France
Fondazione Ambientalista Marevivo ETS, Italy
Foodrise, United Kingdom and EU
Foundation AgriNatura for Agricultural Biodiversity (Fundacja AgriNatura), EU
Frente Animal, Portugal
Fundacja Ekologiczna Zielona Akcja, Polska, Niemcy, Czechy
Fundacja Kwietna, Poland
Fundacja Zielone Światło, Poland
GAIA, Belgium
Green REV Institute, Poland
Greenpeace, Spain
Humánný pokrok, Slovakia
INTERCIDS, Operadores jurídicos por los animales, Spain
Koning Sophia-Vereeniging tot Bescherming van Dieren / Queen Sophia Society for the Protection of Animals, The Netherlands
KYMA sea conservation & research, Europe
LAV, Italy
National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Ireland

Oceana in Europe, Europe

Polski Klub Ekologiczny Okręg Mazowiecki, Poland

Président de la Société Nationale pour la Défense des Animaux, France

Project 1882, Sweden

REthink ANIMALS, Greece

Safe Food Federation, Poland

Sciaena, Portugal

Seastemik, France

Somos Movimiento, Spain

Stowarzyszenie Ekologiczne EKO-UNIA, Poland

Stowarzyszenie Otwarte Klatki, Poland

Stowarzyszenie Prawnicy na Rzecz Zwierząt, Poland

The European Institute for Animal Law & Policy, EU

Unión Vegetariana Española, Spain

Una Terra Foundation, Hungary

UPF-Centre for Animal Ethics, Europe

Varkens in Nood, Netherlands

VIVA!, Poland

Vivamar Society, Slovenia

Wakker Dier, Netherlands

WELFARM, France

WeMove Europe, Europe

World Animal Protection, Netherlands

350NYC, New York, USA

Action for Dolphins, Australia

Advocates for Snake Preservation, USA
Animal Defenders International, United Kingdom
Animal Environmental Legal Advocacy, Canada
Animal Legal Defense Fund, USA
Animal Mirror-Liberia, Liberia
Animal Protection Organization of Nigeria, Nigeria
Animal Research Initiative, USA
Animal Rights Center Japan, Japan
Animal Wellness Action, USA
Animals Aotearoa, Aotearoa New Zealand
Aquaculture Accountability Project, USA
Arba, Peru
Associated Humane Societies, Inc., New Jersey, USA
Beauty Without Cruelty, South Africa
Better Food Foundation, USA
Center for a Humane Economy, USA
Coloradans Against Horse Slaughter, USA
Compassionate Living, USA
CompassionWorks International, USA
Crustacean Compassion, United Kingdom
Direct Action Everywhere, USA
Dyrevernalliansen, Norway
Earthsav Canada, Canada
Ethical Seafood Research, International
Farm Forward, USA
Farm Sanctuary, USA

Fauna Films, Inc, USA
Fish Welfare Initiative, Asia
Gaia Libertas Nature and Animal Rights, Brazil
Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), Global
Godspeed Horse Hostel Inc, USA
Grito Animal, Brasil Rio de Janeiro
Humane Action Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania, USA
In Defense of Animals, USA
Indian Vegetarians and Vegans, London
Knight Executive Research Ltd, United Kingdom
LatinGroup for Animals, Latin America
Law Scholars for Change, USA
Luvin Arms Animal Sanctuary, USA
Maine Animal Coalition, USA
Montreal SPCA, Canada
NYC H2O, New York City
Ocean Conservation Research, USA
One step for animals, Global
One ocean planet, UK
OneKind, Scotland, UK
Our Planet. Theirs Too., USA
Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics, United Kingdom
Pasado's Safe Haven, USA
PEACE Japan, Japan
Plant-Based Health Professionals UK, United Kingdom
Predator Defense, America

Protección Animal Ecuador, Ecuador

RENTAS, Brazil

SAFE (Save Animals from Exploitation), Aotearoa New Zealand

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of the Earth), Malaysia

SeaLegacy, Global

SEED, USA

Sinergia Animal, Global South

Social Compassion in Legislation, USA

Species Unite, USA

The All Animals Initiative for Multispecies Community Building, US

The Amber and Adam Tarshis Foundation, USA

The Changemaker Project, Internationally

The Humane League US, USA

The Humane League UK, United Kingdom

The Raven Corps, USA

Turtle Island Restoration Network, USA

UNCHAINEDTV, USA

Voiceless: the animal protection institute, Australia

Voters For Animal Rights, New York, USA

We Animals, Global

Dr Marc Abraham OBE, Vet & Animal Welfare Campaigner, United Kingdom

Maya Bach, MS, MPH, RDN, Clinical Research Dietitian, PCRM, USA

Dr. Carles Barril Basil, Professor at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Dr Heather Browning, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Southampton, United Kingdom

Dr Silvia Caprioglio Panizza, Senior Researcher at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

Prof. David L. Clough, Chair in Theology and Applied Sciences, University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom

Dr James Dyke, Associate Professor in Earth System Science, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

Dr. Laura Fernández Aguilera, Assistant Professor at the Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha and member of the UPF-Centre for Animal Ethics, Spain

Dr Jennifer Flo, Physician in Minneapolis, USA

Prof. Becca Franks, Assistant Professor at NYU, USA

Dr. Lorenzo Fruscella, Career Advising Specialist at Animal Advocacy Careers, Italy

Prof. Dave Goulson, Professor Emeritus at University of Sussex, United Kingdom

Dean Kathy Hessler, Assistant Dean, Animal Law, The George Washington University Law School, U.S.

Dr. Andrzej Kassenberg, Senior Researcher, Poland

Prof. Andrew Knight, Adjunct Professor, Murdoch University School of Veterinary Medicine, Australia

Dr. Paulina Kramarz, Professor at the Jagiellonian University, Polska

Professor Peter Singer, Professor of Bioethics, Emeritus, Princeton University, Australia

Mark Snyder Jr, JD, Articling Student and Professor, Canada

Dr Richard Twine, Associate Professor, Edge Hill University, UK

Dr. Marina Vegué, Professor at Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain

Dr. Walter Veit, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Reading, United Kingdom

COMPASSION
in world farming



EUROGROUP
FOR ANIMALS



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DEGLI ANIMALI



**HUMANE
ACTION**

Pennsylvania



**DIEREN
BESCHERMING**



dierencoalitie
Samenwerkende
Dierenwelzijnsorganisaties
Nederland



SCIL
Social Compassion
in Legislation



Earthsave
Canada



THE **HUMANE
LEAGUE**



**AQUACULTURE
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PROJECT**



**ANIMAL
LABOUR
UNION**



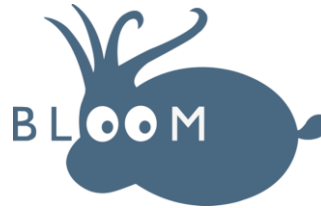
**THE
CHANGEMAKER
PROJECT**



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ACHIEVING BETTER TREATMENT FOR ANIMALS



**ACCIÓN
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Dyrevernalliansen



EKO WYBORCA



INTER
CIDS

Operadores
Jurídicos por
los Animales



FARMFORWARD



SeaLegacy



PRAWNICY
NA RZECZ ZWIERZĄT



DEUTSCHE STIFTUNG
MEERESSCHUTZ (DSM)



Fundacja Ekologiczna
ZIELONA AKCJA

zielone światło



Fish
Welfare
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kwietna
FUNDACJA



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Lliga per a la
defensa del
patrimoni natural



ANIMAL ADVOCACY
& FOOD TRANSITION



WEMOVE
EUROPE

wakker
dier



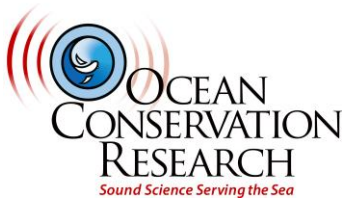
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animal
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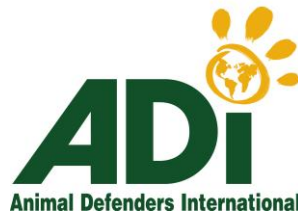


NSPCA

National Society
for Prevention of
Cruelty to Animals



Albert Schweitzer Stiftung
für unsere Mitwelt



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