



Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

13th September 2024

Dear President von der Leyen,

I am writing on behalf of Cruelty Free Europe, a network dedicated to creating a world free from the cruelty of animal testing.

We commend the EU's historical commitment to animal protection and recent moves towards phasing out animal testing. While the EU is internationally recognised for its relatively high standards, significant challenges remain. Now is the time for decisive action. As you consider the portfolios of the incoming Commission, we strongly advocate for a dedicated Commissioner for animal welfare to navigate competing interests and drive the EU towards a cruelty-free future.

Animals require protection beyond those in farming, which is why we oppose the transfer of animal welfare back to the DG responsible for agriculture, from where it was rightly removed some 25 years ago.

Our focus is the use of animals in science. Recent Commission data shows over 9.3 million tests on animals in the EU and Norway in 2022, with an additional 9.6 million animals bred and killed in laboratories – a total of almost 19 million uses of animals for scientific purposes in one year alone. Despite some reductions, such as in regulatory testing, overall progress has stalled. The EU has made ambitious strides, particularly in its commitment to a roadmap for phasing out chemical testing on animals, following the success of our European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) – *Save Cruelty Free Cosmetics*. The EU has also played a key role internationally, for example through the OECD where it has supported the development and use of newer regulatory testing methods, and at the UN in finding harmonised approaches to the use of test data.

However, meaningful progress and proper implementation of existing protections requires coordinated action involving many moving parts. A Commissioner with clear responsibility for animal welfare will greatly improve the chances of meaningful progress, but they must be able to influence all areas involving the use of animals in science—fields often far removed from agriculture. Agriculture is not well positioned to deliver on shared objectives such as ending the use of animals in science or advancing integrated approaches like “One Health.”

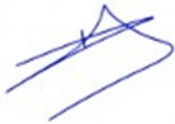
We know that non-animal science can deliver better results. The transition away from animal testing will not only save animals but also offer greater protection for human health, the environment, and better tools for EU industries. Public and political support for action is clear, as evidenced by the ECI, the 2021 Parliament resolution, and surveys of both MEPS

and the public showing majority support for a Commissioner with explicit responsibility for animal welfare.

We look forward to discussing this further and continuing our collaboration with the Commission. As you prepare to announce your proposals for Commissioners, we urge you to take a decisive step towards a cruelty-free future by appointing a Commissioner with clear responsibility for animal welfare and ensuring this role is positioned to align with our shared objective of ending the use of animals in science.

Yours sincerely,
CFE Board Members

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GAIA, Belgium



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Cruelty Free International, UK



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Animal, Portugal

Anita Euschen
Animals Without Borders, Croatia