

Correspondence

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The EU must stick to its animal-welfare commitments As part of its 'Farm to Fork' strategy and in response to a proposition backed by 1.4 million citizens to ban the caging of farm animals, the European Commission committed to tabling legislative proposals by the end of 2023 that would adopt stricter animal-welfare regulations. But concerns are mounting that these proposals might be dropped (see, for example, go.nature.com/46muzan). The commission president's State of the European Union speech last month cast doubt on this proposed revision to animal-welfare legislation (see go.nature.com/3fkhqah). Although the EU's executive branch is under no legal obligation to implement the proposals, not doing so would undermine the credibility of the EU's tools for democratic participation. It could also feed a growing defiance against EU institutions. The well-being of animals has yet to be considered in cost–benefit evaluations that inform agricultural policy (K. Kuruc and J. McFadden *Nature Food* 4, 355–356; 2023). Policies such as a cage ban could improve the lives of billions of farm animals and would make EU agricultural industries more socially sustainable, given that their social licence to operate is frequently challenged on animal-welfare grounds.

Eugénie Duval University of Essex, Colchester, UK.
eugenie.duval@essex.ac.uk

Benjamin Lecorps University of Bristol, Bristol, UK.