COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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NOTE

from: Lithuanian delegation
to: Council
Subject: International Conference on "Animal welfare in the Baltic region - responsible ownership and best practices"

Delegations will find attached a note submitted by the Lithuanian delegation, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 17 May 2011.
International Conference on "Animal welfare in the Baltic region - responsible ownership and best practices"

On May 5-6, 2011 the First International Conference on Animal Welfare in the Baltic region “Responsible ownership and best practices” was held in the Lithuanian Parliament. For the first time such a conference, convened in Vilnius, brought together animal welfare professionals not only from the Baltic region, but from all over Europe, as well as from Russia and Belarus.

The conference was organized by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture, and the international animal welfare organization "Four Paws", in cooperation with the Teramo G. Caporale Institute, the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, the public movement “People for animals” and other organizations. The aim of the Conference was to draw public attention and to promote responsible attitudes towards pets and strengthen animal welfare policy in the Baltic countries.

Participants of the conference had the opportunity to listen reports on human-animal relations, on the EU animal welfare policies, reports about the homeless animal population control and on measures to promote a responsible approach to animal keeping. Speakers from European countries made presentations on animal welfare state and trends in the EU and non-EU countries. Speakers from Belarus and Russia made reports on their experience.

During the conference three workshops were organised: "Animal population control policies and management of shelters," "Dog marking and registration", "Education, training, information, and communication strategy”. Participants shared the most recent information on animal welfare policy development, discussed the role of the education system and the most promising methods of running animal care organizations, and shared best practices of homeless animal population control and in other areas of concern.
Organizers of the conference expressed their satisfaction with considerable interest shown towards this conference. More than 220 participants from 23 countries expressed their wish to participate in the conference.

The declaration adopted by the conference reflects the joint opinion of participants regarding ethical treatment of animals, responsible animal keeping, education of public and professionals in animal welfare, and legislative and law enforcement issues. It calls on the European Union for signature and ratification of the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals. Declaration also invites Member States to take immediate steps to appropriately ensure that the notion of animal protection and welfare as well as responsible ownership for sentient beings are further promoted via education, especially that of children, of veterinarians and juridical staff and information campaigns.