

## Press Release - For Immediate Release 5 March 2026

### Court hearing puts EU participatory democracy on trial in End the Cage Age case

Today's public hearing before the Court of Justice of the European Union offered a rare opportunity for over 1.5 million citizens to ask the Court to hold the European Commission accountable for failing to follow up on their demand to ban cages in animal farming.

The case concerns the End the Cage Age European Citizens' Initiative, which gathered more than 1.4 million signatures across the EU and in 2021 secured a formal commitment from the Commission to propose legislation to phase out cages in animal farming by the end of 2023. That deadline passed - followed by 2024, and now 2026 - without any legislative proposal.

At the hearing, a five-judge chamber questioned the animal welfare organisations involved in the case and pressed the Commission's representatives on why it has not provided a clear timeline for delivering on its commitment.

The Good Lobby's legal team was present in Luxembourg, representing Eurogroup for Animals as a third-party intervener in support of the citizens' case.

"The European Citizens' Initiative was designed to give ordinary people a voice in EU law," said Professor Alberto Alemanno, founder of The Good Lobby. "End the Cage Age is the only initiative in history to secure a full Commission commitment. And yet here we are, before the Court of Justice, because that commitment was broken. If this case fails, future citizens will rightly ask: why bother?"

A ruling against the Commission would not only benefit the hundreds of millions of animals still kept in cages across Europe. It could also set a critical precedent confirming that EU participatory democracy has legal consequences - and that citizens who mobilise through the European Citizens' Initiative cannot simply be ignored when their demands become politically inconvenient.

The Court's ruling is expected in the coming months.

At The Good Lobby, we have pioneered and championed the European Citizens' Initiative as a privileged instrument of direct participation in Europe's transnational democracy over the past decade. We have supported around a dozen ECIs and have helped amplify efforts calling for stronger ethics and transparency in European politics.

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