

**Focus on the revision
of EU animal welfare legislation**



TRANSPORT



Proposed text in 2023

Must decide jointly



Study of the text by the representatives of the Member States during the Presidencies of the Council:

- Spanish Presidency
- Belgian Presidency
- Hungarian Presidency
- Polish Presidency
- Ongoing: Danish Presidency
- Coming soon: Cyprus, Ireland

Objective : 2026

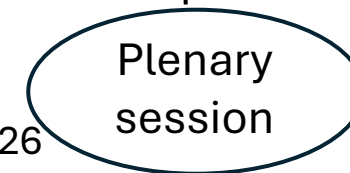
Council text



Rapporteur
Tilly METZ



Rapporteur
Daniel BUDA



Objective : 2026

Parliament's text

Trilogue

Final text: 2027?

OTHER TOPICS/Animal Welfare



Next steps: other texts on breeding, phasing out of cages, other ?...

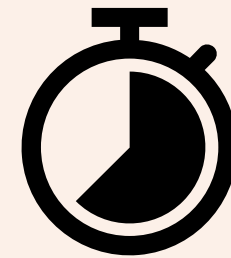
- Following a first public consultation this summer, the European Commission has just published a new public consultation addressing 4 themes in particular: **the phasing out of cages, the elimination of male chicks in the laying sector, welfare indicators, and the reciprocity of import standards**. Deadline: 12/12/25.
- The Commission will carry out an **analysis of the social, economic and environmental impacts** of the proposed changes.
- The Commission plans to present a **legislative proposal on animal welfare on farms in the 4th quarter of 2026** that will cover only certain species.



Rural poultry have many specificities.
They can be the first productions
to be penalized
by new rules if their specific
characteristics are not taken into
account.



Rural poultry issues/ **TRANSPORT** :
illustration of **journey times**



CASE 1 : Journey time for poultry transported to other farms to be reared

ERP requests the following amendment:

ANNEX I – Chapter V – Point 2

Proposal of the Commission

(2.2) Maximum journey times are defined as follows:

(a) 12 hours ***including*** loading and unloading time for journeys including those to a slaughterhouse; or

(d) 10 hours for end-of-lay hens including the loading and unloading time.

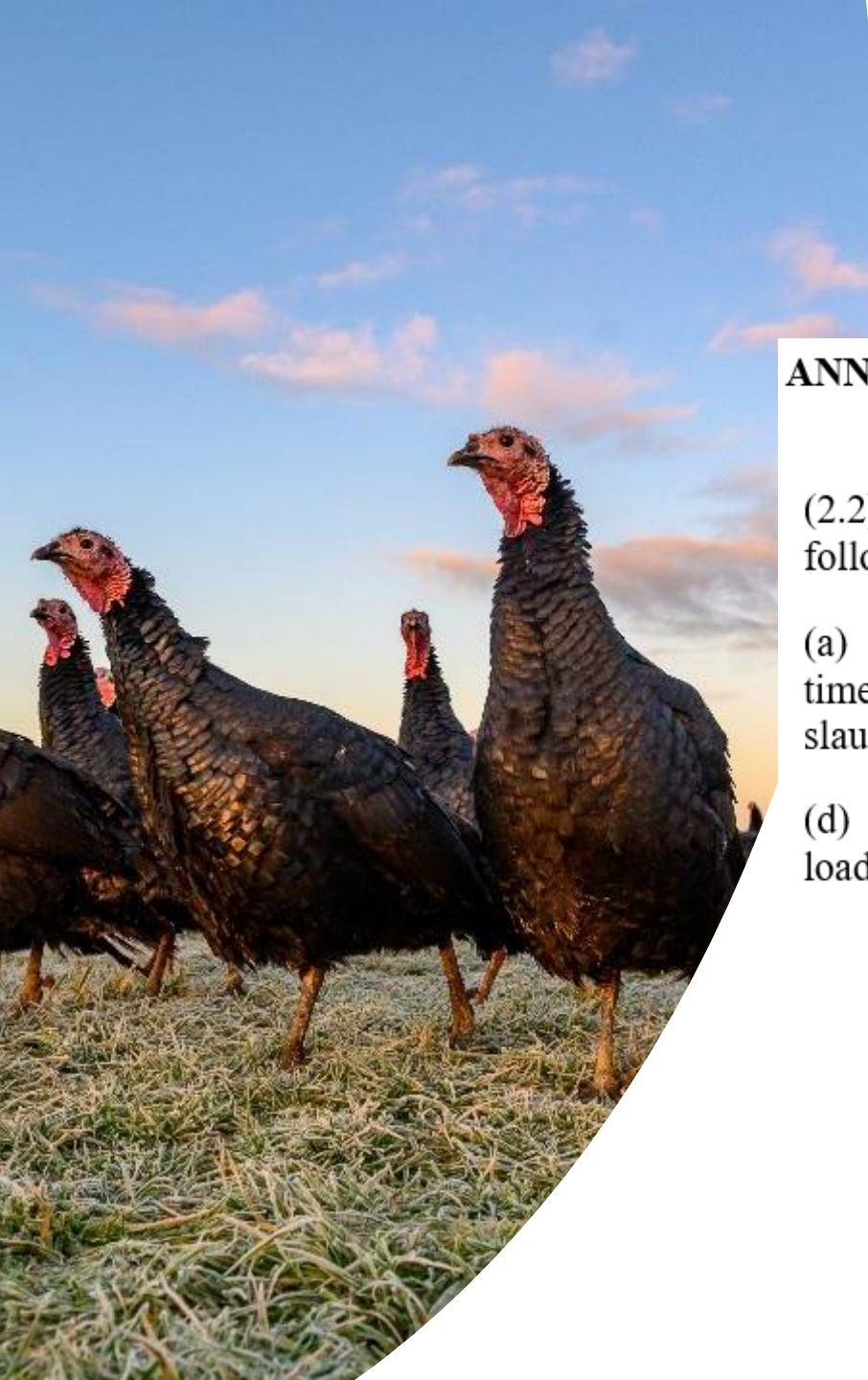
Amendment proposed by ERPA

(2.2) Maximum journey times are defined as follows:

(a) 12 hours ***excluding*** loading and unloading time for journeys ~~***including those***~~ to a slaughterhouse; or

~~(d) 10 hours for end-of-lay hens including the loading and unloading time.~~

(new d) 12 hours excluding loading and unloading time for journeys of live poultry to other farms. This journey time can be extended to 24 hours if the poultry is provided with a hydrating and nutritious gel after 12 hours. This journey time can be extended to 36 hours for poultry intended for small farms of less than 3,000 birds.



Why this proposal:

- **WHICH POULTRY ARE CONCERNED:** **Poultry breeders** & **rural poultry** reared in 2 different places depending on their age **YOUNG/ADULTS:**

Young/teens:

- Pullets < 18-20 weeks
- Other poultry (chickens, turkeys...) < 4-6 weeks



Conditions optimized for growth and development ; features adapted to grow young poultry (heating equipment...)

Between regions of the same Member State, but also between different Member States, as these productions are specific

→ Their regions may require breeding areas with special health status (free of certain disease)

Adults: laying hens (breeding or "commercial") and others



Features specific to production (nests, flecth floors, no heating equipment...)

EXAMPLE OF A DELIVERY OF "TRADITIONAL" READY-TO-LAY PULLETS IN SPAIN

The distance between the 2 types of farms is high because:

- the suppliers of these productions are very few: example of a supplier from Zaragoza
- customers are few and can be located far away
- the rural poultry model, based on small farms and small flocks, means more stops for trucks, also lengthening some journeys.

Taking into account the mandatory rest time for the driver as well as the numerous unloading operations in small farms, the last farm in Seville is more than 24 hours away.



➤ THESE PRODUCTIONS RESPECT THE PROTECTION OF POULTRY:

The transition between the 2 places is a critical step in poultry production, producers absolutely need their poultry to arrive in good shape.

For this, they **already require transport that minimizes stress and preserves welfare**: they are already applying rules of the 'European Guide to Good Practice for the Transport of Poultry' (2018) for journeys of more than 8 hours.

And, to counterbalance the length of these journeys for these specific rural poultry, **ERPA propose to provide poultry with a hydrating gel after 12 hours**.

This proposal is in line with the European Commission's guide to good practices:



Guide des bonnes pratiques pour le transport des volailles

Guide des bonnes pratiques pour le transport des volailles

128. Pour les poulets de chair, les poulettes, les dindes et les poules en fin de ponte, **de l'eau et de la nourriture ou un gel hydratant doit être fournis aux oiseaux voyageant plus de 12 heures** (sans tenir compte du temps de chargement et de déchargement).

RESUME ETUDE ERPA

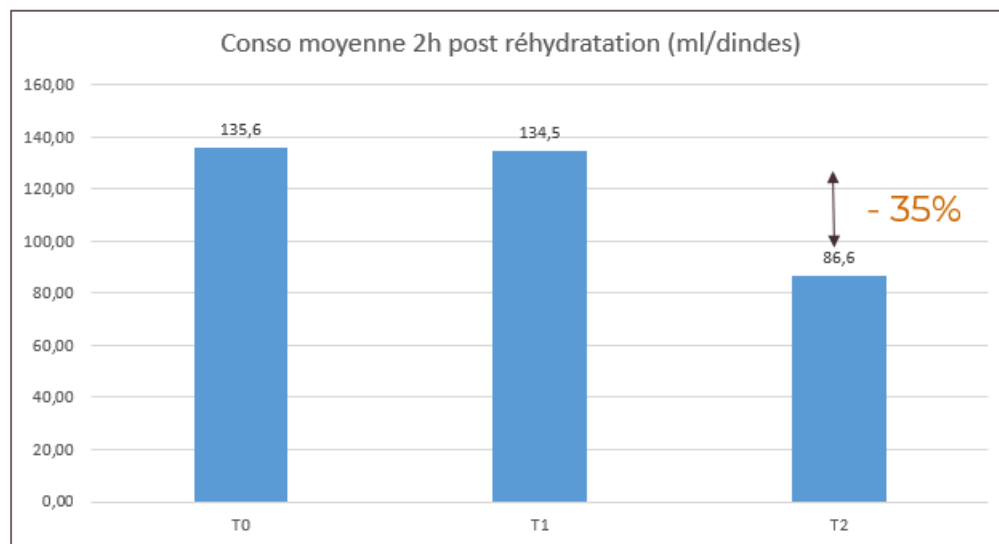
Apport d'une solution nutritionnelle en caisse de transport

Organisation de l'étude

Dindes de 2,530 kg / 18 dindes par caisse
4 caisses / traitement (72 dindes) ; 3 traitements : Témoin / S'Cube 4 / So'Cube 8
(pas de transport / condition de température contrôlées : 26°C+/-2°C dans les caisses)

Une réduction de la sensation de soif

Suivi de la consommation d'eau par traitement pendant 2h suivant le test de réhydratation



T0= Témoin T1 = 4 So'Cube/caisse T2 = 8 So'Cube/caisse

Le traitement so'Cube 8 :

← Une réduction de la consommation d'eau de près de 35% après 22h en caisse

Journey time for

Poultry transported to other
farms to be reared

Take home message



To preserve rural poultry, journey times to other farms **must be accepted** > 12 hours, up to 24 hours, with the use of moisturizing gel.

Otherwise, these poultry and the operators will disappear.



CASEE 2 : Journey time for **day-old chicks'** transport

ERP requests the following amendment:

ANNEX I – Chapter V – Point 2

Proposal of the Commission

(2.2) Maximum journey times are defined as follows:

(b) **24** hours for chicks of all domestic bird species, *if it is completed within 48 hours after hatching*;

Amendment proposed by ERPA

(2.2) Maximum journey times are defined as follows:

(b) **72** hours for chicks of all domestic bird species, ~~if it is completed within 48 hours after hatching~~;

Why this proposal:

➤ WHY EXPORTS ARE IMPORTANT:

The quality of the European breeding stock for rural poultry is such that **European breeders and hatcheries export hatching eggs and day-old chicks worldwide**, especially by air freight.

Breeders provide **sought-after products for their hardiness**, which allow people around the world to produce in their country and consume quality poultry and eggs.

⇒ **International exports of European breeders needs to remain possible.**

➤ WHY DOES THIS RESPECT THE PROTECTION OF CHICKS:

Optimal transport conditions are the most important: thanks to their yolk sac, day-old birds have sufficient food and water reserves to meet their needs for the first few days after hatching + good temperature management.



Why consider **moving** day-old chicks

Poultry chicks are **precocial**

Yolk sack at time of hatch designed to maintain them for a period of time until they are fed



62g egg
20g of yolk

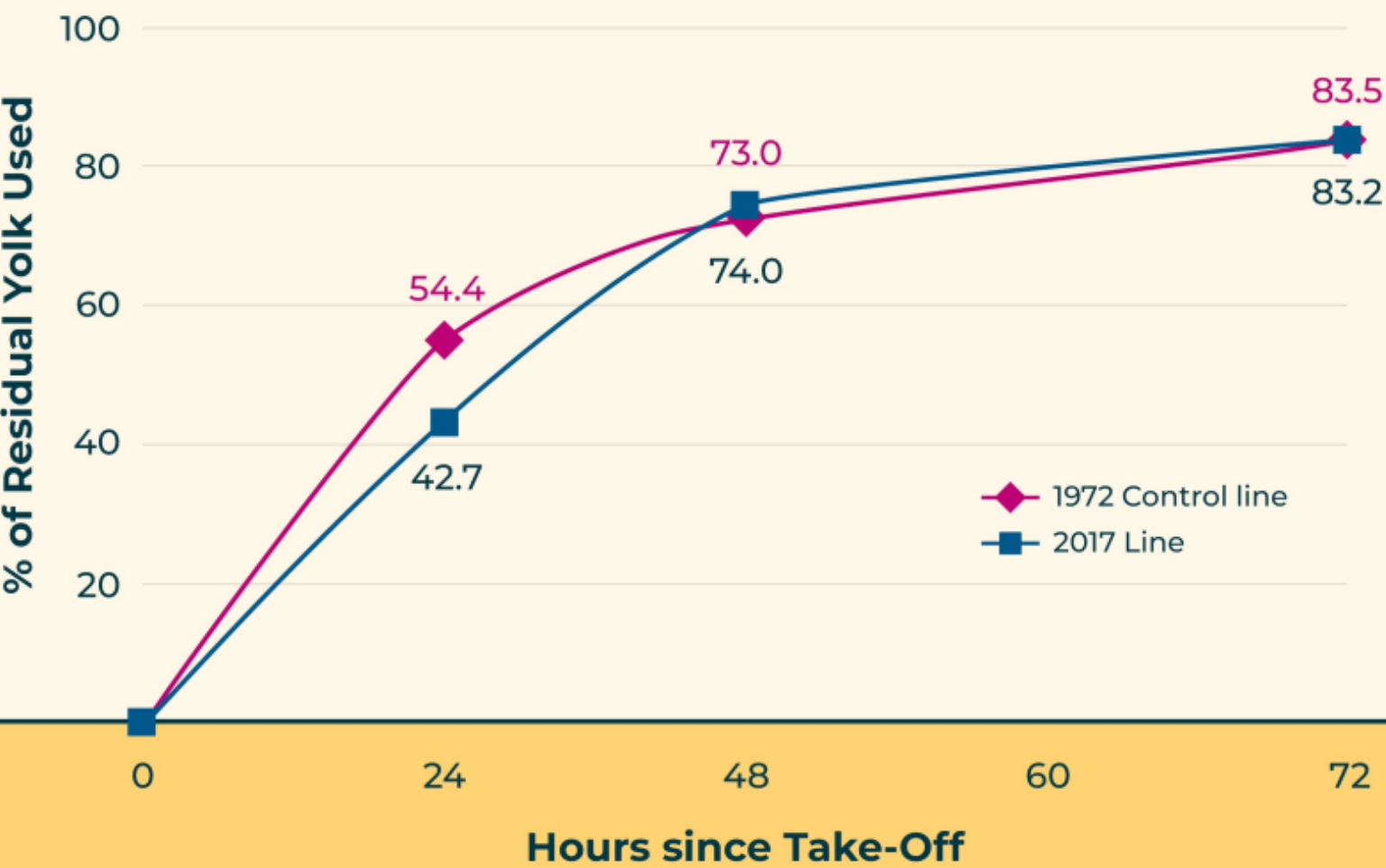


At hatch residual yolk will weigh between 4 and 5g

Between 9.5% and 12 % of the fresh chick body weight

Residual yolk utilisation to 72 hours

1972 control line vs modern lines



Journey time for
day-old chicks' transport

Take home message



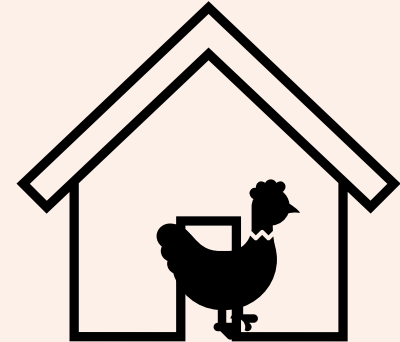
Chicks can travel for **72 hours, they have the physiological resources to do so.**

Reducing this time would lead to preventing the activity of European breeders important for rural poultry.

And other subjects concern rural
poultry / **TRANSPORT** :

- Temperatures
- Space allowance
- Height of containers

Rural poultry issues
/ **HOUSING SYSTEM**
(future European text?)



Rural poultry are **not raised in cages**.

BUT their ancestors can be during the **selection** phase:

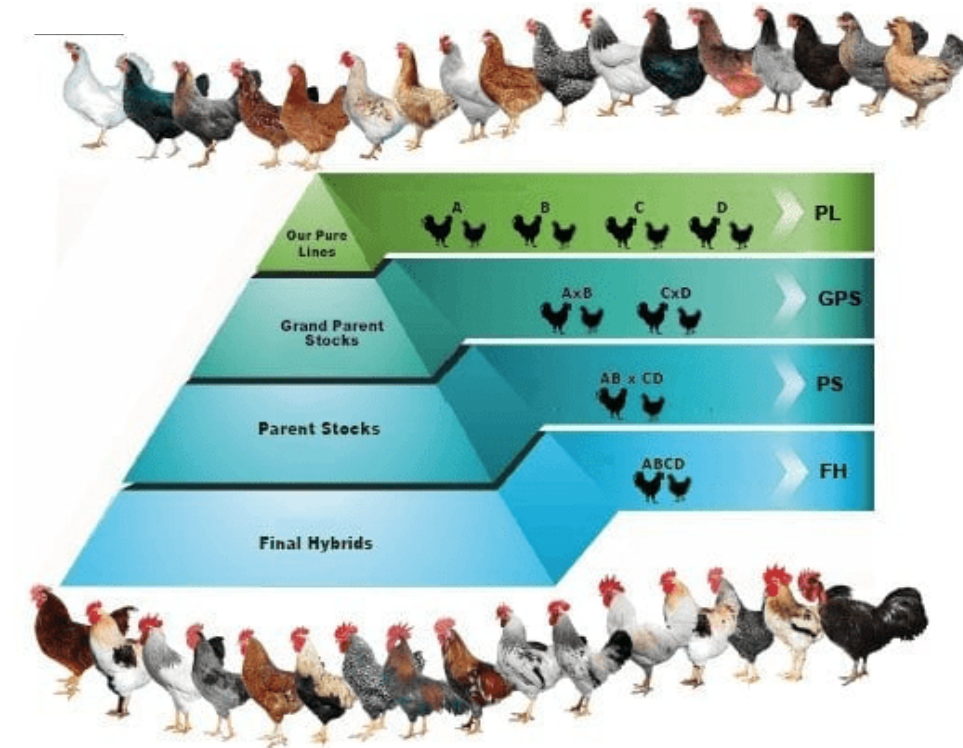
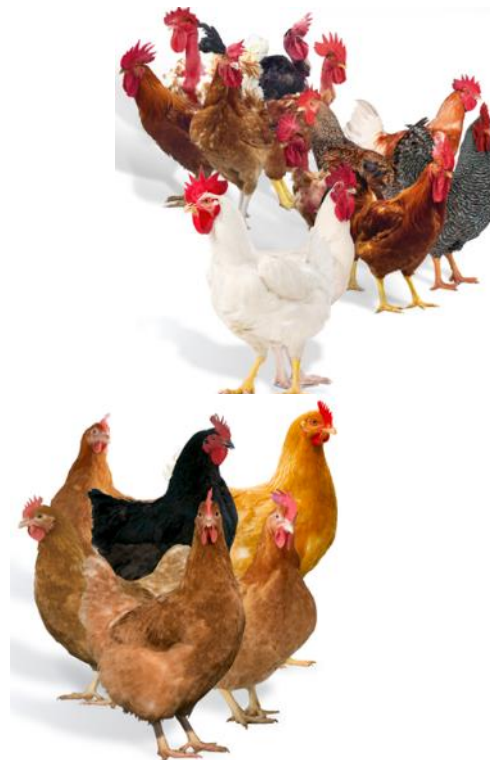
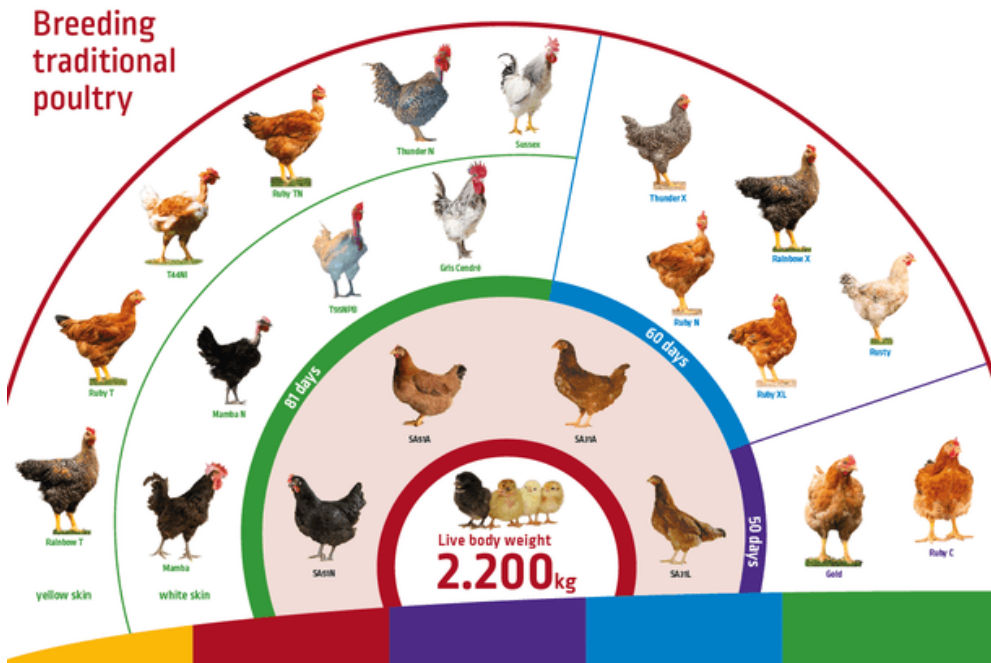


WHY CAGES FOR SELECTION?

- **No current alternatives to the cage system** for pedigree breeding, great grandparents, and grandparents
- **Poultry selection phases are highly technical steps that require cages.** They allow to:
 - ✓ Measure individual selection criteria in an optimal way
 - ✓ Control mating between males and females
 - ✓ Select birds with the least aggressive behaviour

The rural poultry sector would be the most affected by a ban on cages at the selection stage:

- Too costly investments for small and medium-sized companies
- A ban would undermine the maintenance of the breeding/selection activity in the EU
- Rural breeders select between 30 to 40 lines = disappearance of genetic diversity, in particular for rural poultry



Housing system for poultry

Take home message



No phasing out of cages for selection

(pedigree, great grandparents, and grandparents)



For any future revision of the animal welfare legislation ...

... ERPA calls for:

- **Measures which are technically and economically feasible for our sector**
- **Sufficiently long transition periods to allow operators to adapt**
- **Adequate financial support measures at both European and national level**

M. Daniel BUDA, can these specificities of rural poultry be taken into account in the process of revising European legislation on animal welfare?

