

Fundamental Animal Rights: Proposal by the Finnish Animal Rights Lawyers Society

All legal decision-making in Finland is bound by EU and Finnish law, which is interpreted and applied in accordance with the hierarchy of norms. However, both EU legislation concerning animals and Finnish animal protection legislation is based on an animal welfare paradigm. By this, we mean that animals have a weak legal status compared to humans, as the current ongoing exploitation of animals reveals. The inferior legal status of animals contributes, in turn, to the continuation of the exploitation and oppression of animals, partly because there are no effective, legal tools at the highest level of the hierarchy of norms to counter human interests and activities when animals are used for human purposes. Therefore, the Finnish Animal Rights Lawyers Society has made a proposal to strengthen the legal status of animals by including animals in the Finnish Constitution. The intention is to guarantee animals certain fundamental rights and provide effective legal tools for the balancing of human and animal interests in the future. The presentation focuses on the proposal and the re-evaluation of animal protection.



Birgitta Wahlberg

Birgitta Wahlberg teaches in the Department of Law at Abo Akademi University in Finland. She is the founder of the internet-based publication Global Journal of Animal Law and a member of the steering committee of the Global Animal Law project.