

Mr. President of Romania  
Honourable Prime Minister and Vice Prime Ministers  
Honourable Ministers for Tourism  
Honourable Minister of Health  
Distinguished Members of the Romanian Parliament and the Romanian members of the  
European Parliament  
Officials and media

CC President of the Animal Welfare Intergroup of the European Parliament

Dear Sirs

**Helsinki Humane Society, SEY Finnish Federation for Animal Welfare Associations and Animalia - Federation for the Protection of Animals**, are the largest, nation-wide operating NGOs which work for better animal welfare in Finland. The organizations work amongst other things for stray and homeless animals in Finland but also in European and international level to achieve legal protection and standards to improve the way animals are treated. It is our obligation to promote animal welfare and prevent animal suffering anywhere it is encountered within the limits of our resources. The immense suffering of dogs encouraged by Romanian authorities has come to our attention thus we must urge you to stop the immoral practices of killing stray animals in Romania immediately.

We cannot avoid all the horrible news and pictures of mass killings that are spreading in the media. Without any justification based on the law, the dogs are being poisoned, strangled, burnt alive, beaten to death, left to starve or freeze to death, or left to die of the consequences of diseases or of injuries in public shelters as well as on the streets. Such a serious ill-treatment of dogs violates both international treaties binding on Romanian authorities and Romanian own laws on animal protection.

We are well aware of the Slaughter Law (GEO 155/2001) that was recently approved by the Romanian Senate. This law not only contradicts Romania's own National Animal Protection Law 9/2008, but also shows Romania's utmost lack of respect towards international obligations binding on it.

Even if some of the provisions in the Slaughter Law might bear a resemblance to the laws of certain countries, the law is being applied in an extremely cruel manner in most parts of Romania. A correct application of the above-mentioned laws requires that the practical application of the law is independently supervised, and that anyone acting in breach of the law is punished without delay.

As a member of the OIE (the World Organisation for Animal Health), Romania is responsible for implementing OIE recommendations. The OIE rules foresee that the killing of stray dogs should not be the only method of controlling the dog population. Instead, a variety of long-term measures, such as **Spay & Neuter**, registration and identification, education and promotion of responsible ownership, should be applied. Euthanasia can be a very last-resort option only, and it has to be carried out in a humane way without causing pain or suffering. Let us emphasise that the **only** painless way to euthanize a dog is a lethal injection preceded by full anesthesia.

According to the recommendations of the WHO (World Health Organisation), **Catch, Neuter and Return** (CNR) is the only effective way to handle stray dog situation in humane and civilized manner.

European Council's Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals has been signed and ratified by Romania in 2004. This convention sets a **binding obligation** for Romania to take adequate measures in the field of stray animal population control, and strictly prohibits causing pain and suffering to the animal. Furthermore, a large majority of the members of the Romanian Parliament have signed the written declaration 26/2011 on dog population management in the European Union adopted by the European Parliament on 13 October 2011, which expressly calls on the Member States to adopt comprehensive dog population management strategies, including **Spay & Neuter** and **anti-cruelty laws**.

The ongoing ill-treatment of dogs in Romania is in direct conflict with the values and objectives of the European Union, and constitutes a serious criminal offence everywhere in the Western world. You must be aware that the European Commission, in a letter dated 2 October 2013, has officially condemned the actions taking place in Romania. You have also received many letters and appeals from several Members of European Parliament that clearly states that this horrible and useless massacre of dogs goes against the values and objectives of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and in particular its Article 13, which acknowledges that animals are sentient beings, reflects the profound spirit of the EU. As an EU member country, Romania should respect these values and spirit that EU stands for.

As long as the Romanian government continues to disregard international treaties, values of the EU or the EU's requests and appeals to stop brutal killings, we advise our countrymen **not to travel to Romania or buy any products originating in Romania**.

We strongly urge Romania to immediately stop the killing and to show the world that it is indeed a civilized country and lives in the 21st century. We sincerely hope that you will put an end to this horrific action.

Stray dog problem can and must be solved in a civilized, humane and efficient manner without the legalization of the mass killings of homeless dogs. A recommendable course of action is the establishment of a **long-term stray Spay & Neuter programme**, as already successfully implemented in a number of Romanian cities in accordance with international standards. In this case, a network of top international experts and volunteers would be at your service. In this case, in the eyes of the entire world, Romania would again be associated with **modern European values** and a civilized culture.

Helsinki, November 18th 2013

SEY Finnish Federation for Animal Welfare Associations  
Helsinki Humane Society  
Animalia - Federation for the Protection of Animals