



## Serbian Animals Voice

<http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/>



To whom it may concern,

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2008.**

I am writing to you as the representative of “Serbian Animals Voice” (SAV), <http://serbiananimalsvoice.wordpress.com/>, a non governmental animal welfare organisation (NGO) currently working within the European Union (EU) and the EU Parliament regarding animal welfare issues within the Republic of Serbia.

We are very aware via the EU in Brussels that Serbia is aiming for EU accession. We would like to point out that in order to join the EU, a new (potential) Member State must meet at least the following three criteria:

- political: stability of institutions **guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law**, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- economic: existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;
- acceptance of the Community acquis: ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

During recent months, SAV have been working with Serbian animal welfare organisations, together who form the “Alliance for animal rights”, on one of many projects which has included petitioning and registering a formal complaint to the EU Commission regarding animal welfare atrocities perpetrated by the Serbian authorities; which include the contravention of existing current Serbian Legislation ‘Article 269’. This contravention thus reflects a failure of implementation of the rule of national law – a basic but vital requirement for EU accession.

A ‘pdf’ copy of all signatures and comments associated with this petition, comprising 5,538 in total, are attached for your reference. It is signed by very many citizens who are members of existing EU nations and who wish for Serbia (a possible future member) to adopt humane animal control policies. As EU citizens, these people have influence on the European Parliament and its decisions.

SAV are aware of and have signed proof that over 32,000 signatures relating to animal killings were presented to the Serbian government on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2008, to then Prime Minister Kostunica, and for which, to date, no official response has ever been given by the government. We ask please that you provide an official response to this petition immediately.

For your information, “**One unspayed dog and her offspring can lead to 67,000 dogs in six years. One unspayed cat and her offspring can produce 400,000 cats in seven years** (Source - The Humane Society of the United States, “**HSUS Pet Overpopulation Estimates,” 2004** )”.

“Spaying and neutering helps stem the tide of overpopulation. The real answer to the massive street animal population in Serbia is for all authorities to adopt a ‘No Kill’ sterilisation programme, and to implement it now, immediately.



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*It must be a national priority to reduce the number of stray animals over time. Shinters/dogcatchers are not animal control agencies - they are simply communal enterprises working on attempted controlling of the stray dog and cat populations”.*

*Only by implementing widespread sterilization programs, only by spaying and neutering all companion animals, will you, as the national government and national / regional authorities, ever obtain any control on pet animal overpopulation.*

*Given the staggering reproductive rates detailed above, it stands to reason that, within only a few years, carefully planned and implemented national sterilization programs could produce a dramatic reduction in the number of unwanted companion animals born. According to news received from other countries, in those towns and cities that have implemented similar programs, it has already been seen that **the number of companion animals who had to be euthanized declined by 30 to 60 percent.***

*Successful pet population control programs range from subsidized sterilization clinics to cooperative efforts involving local veterinarians to mass media supported public educational campaigns. The key is providing the means for people who are unable or unwilling to pay for surgeries to have access to these procedures.*

*Education, too, is an essential part of solving this problem. Unless people know the facts about pet overpopulation and the positive effects of animal sterilization, they are virtually helpless to do anything about the problem.*

*Only through the nationwide establishment of such sterilisation programs will you ever begin to achieve an end to the Serbian national tragedy of pet overpopulation.*

*In addition, experience has shown that programs oriented toward preserving life **are actually more cost effective and cheaper than ones oriented toward killing.** For example, it is far less costly to neuter a feral cat than it is to impound, hold, kill and dispose of a feral cat's body. The savings are also exponential (preventing future generations of feral cats from being born and potentially entering shelters)”.*

*We wish the Serbian government to implement a strategy which provides the humane treatment and keeping of all animals taken from the streets, including that of the keeping of animals within authority pounds for an indefinite period.*

*We wish to see the national overpopulation control programme include:*

- Humane treatment of all animals taken from the street(s);
- No time limit on the period which an animal is kept at a shelter
- Euthanasia where necessary, but only in agreement by several parties, including those from animal welfare organisations and non governmental associations
- Euthanasia only in the interest of the individual animal; ie. due to illness or non-recoverable injury



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- *Sterilisation of all owned and roaming animals, except special breeding animals*
- *vaccination of all animals, to be given during the sterilisation process, for prevention of all animal carried diseases*
- *a general health check for each and every animal, also undertaken during the sterilisation process*
- *fitting of an animal-specific identification system - ie. a microchip inserted under the skin, the process which could be undertaken during the sterilisation process*
- *the need for a government / authority managed national database to identify all owners - using the microchipping system, which will specifically identify an animal to its specific owner*
- *implementation of a full national public education programme - using national press and media, to provide information well in advance of the above.*

*As we have previously informed, the referenced petition above which will be presented to the EU has been intended to highlight the current situation of Serbian authorities not implementing their own existing animal welfare legislation. And we repeat, "implementation of the rule of la" – **a necessary requirement for EU accession.***

*The formal petition will be presented to the EU Commission in Brussels within the next working week. We will ask that this petition and our suggestions for a Serbian national no kill strategy be accepted by the Commission as a contribution to the EU 'animal health strategy' aimed at establishing new definitions for animal welfare throughout EU member states – both for existing and future accession members.*

*Along with Serbian animal welfare organisations, SAV have other serious concerns about the current situation for many animals within Serbia, including:*

- *Hunting and hunting legislation*
- *the conditions in which animals are kept in Serbian Zoo's*
- *the conditions in which animals are kept by travelling circus'*
- *animal experimentation, including the sources of supply of animals for same*
- *the methods and procedures used for the killing of farm animals; ie. slaughterhouses and ritual slaughter procedures.*

*All of these issues associated with animals are regulated by strict legislation throughout the EU. Future member states currently seeking EU accession will need to ensure that they are compliant with at an EU approved standard in whatever sphere of animal usage before gaining accession. SAV and Serbian welfare organisations will be closely monitoring all aspects of animal treatment in all spheres within Serbia, and will be raising awareness within the EU when it is considered necessary to do so.*



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*I trust you will consider the points made in this letter and will respond on all points raised in the very near future.*

*We wish to set a **deadline response of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2008**; the date at which the EU will be informed of your intentions or non intentions to enforce animal welfare legislation(s) within Serbia. We will consider that a failure to respond by the 13<sup>th</sup> October will mean that you have no intentions to enforce animal welfare legislation. Additional time can be mutually agreed on, but we always wish that dates be set; especially regarding your failures to respond to petitions presented earlier this year.*

**Would you please ensure that responses are provided prior to this date (13<sup>th</sup> October 2008)**, and specifically addressed to Dr. Medicine. Slavica Mazak Bešlić - President of the Society Friends of Animals~FRIEND – EPAR, Subotica, Serbia.

*Finally, thank you for your time and attention in reviewing our requests; we look forward to your response before the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2008.*

*Yours Sincerely*

*Mark Johnson – on behalf of “Serbian Animals Voice”.*

### *About SAV:*

*“Serbian Animals Voice” (SAV) is an organisation which campaigns for the better treatment of all animals within the Balkans states; especially on behalf of stray / street animals. SAV is a completely non-violent organisation which undertakes all of its campaigning through information networking and the written word. SAV has a worldwide supporter network, which can be viewed at <http://www4.clustrmaps.com/counter/maps.php?user=9b44b4e0>*

*The aim of SAV is to work with Balkan state animal welfare organisations in order to achieve the enforcement of currently existing national legislation for stray and all animals throughout the Balkans states by both government and regional/local authorities, a policy which is currently not happening in the main. Implementation of, and adhesion to national legislation is a prime requirement which has to be shown to be enforced by any future states requiring accession (membership) of the European Union (EU). SAV has regular liaison with the European Union Parliament Animal Welfare Eurogroup and every MEP throughout the union to inform them of the situation for stray animals within the Balkans.*