

# STRAY DOG SITUATION IN ROMANIA

## The reality on the ground

*(English version)*

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by Carmen ARSENE

President, National Federation for Animal Protection /Federatia Nationala pentru Protectia Animalelor (FNPA)

[cmarsene@yahoo.com](mailto:cmarsene@yahoo.com)

Especially during the last 13 years, hundreds of thousands of street dogs have been killed throughout Romania.

The problem did not disappear, on the contrary it got even worse as the density of the dog population increased proportionally with the 'catch and kill' rate.

In contrast, **mass sterilization** (of dogs with and without owners) has **proven everywhere to be the ONLY solution** for permanently solving the stray dog problem. For example, over a period of 6 years, the number of stray dogs from Oradea has decreased from 5000 to 350, by running a sterilization and return program.

**In spite of the dismal failure of dog management by mass killing, in spite of the fantastic results obtained by Neuter and Return programs wherever they have been applied**, and in spite of all technical arguments, recommendations, studies from specialized institutions including the conclusions of the research made over an 8 years' period by the World Health Organization, **the Romanian authorities insist with their intensive campaign to ensure the continuously implementation of mass killings**. The intention of the Romanian authorities is based precisely on the fact that this method is inefficient, ensuring a constant number of dogs in the streets, which justifies a continuous stray dog management program, and the management by mass killing or incarceration has created **businesses worth tens of millions of euros**.

### **THE DIRECT ABUSES: MISTREATING AND KILLING THE STRAY DOGS**

According the law 258/2013 (that modifies the specific Ordinance 155/2001 for stray dog management), the responsibility for managing the stray dogs belongs to the city halls.

The stray dogs are managed by the city halls, directly or by private companies who make in this respect contracts with the city halls.

The law 258/2013 provides for the catching of dogs by civilized methods, good shelter conditions, killing the dogs by euthanasia.

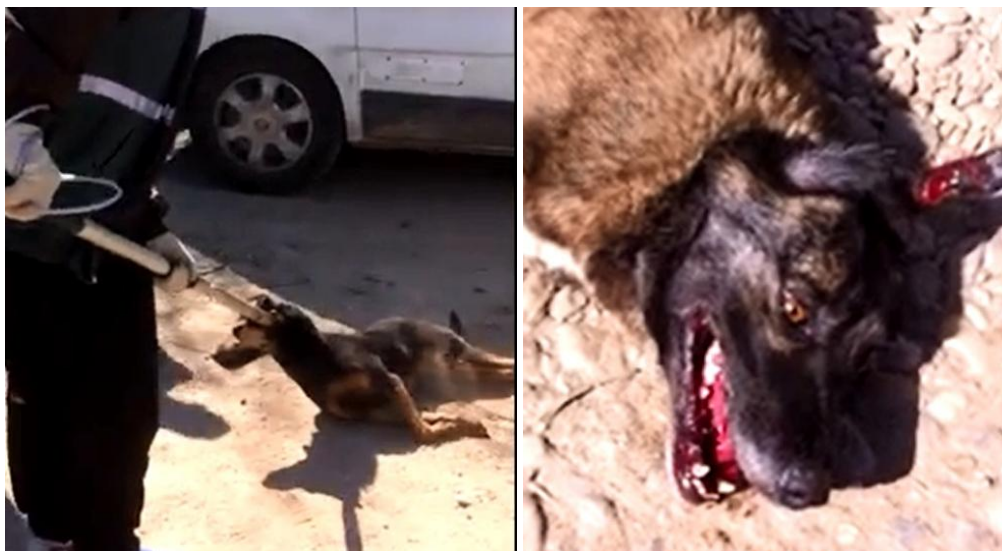
According to the law 205/2004 for animal protection it is forbidden to apply bad treatments and cruelties (killing, mistreating, inobservance of providing for the animals a proper shelter, enough food and water, care and attention, medical assistance). The inobservances of these dispositions are contraventions or penal offences.

### **Capturing and transport of dogs to the city halls' dog pounds**

The dogs are hunted, tortured, beaten to death, stabbed, strangled, being dragged through the streets often bleeding. Many dogs die during their capture because they are strangled, or they die during capturing because the brutality of the way they are handled causes a heart attack.

Because, according the contracts signed with the city halls, huge taxes for every captured dog are paid to the private companies; the dog catchers capture even the owned dogs, by entering and forcing properties or private shelters.

Illegal action of Stray Dog Management Service of the City Hall Bucharest, ASPA had an abusive and criminal action: 91 dogs have been brutally taken (8 dogs were killed during capturing) from a shelter in care of two NGOs, part of them from the veterinary clinic where they were under treatment, part of them were waiting to leave to the adoptive homes.

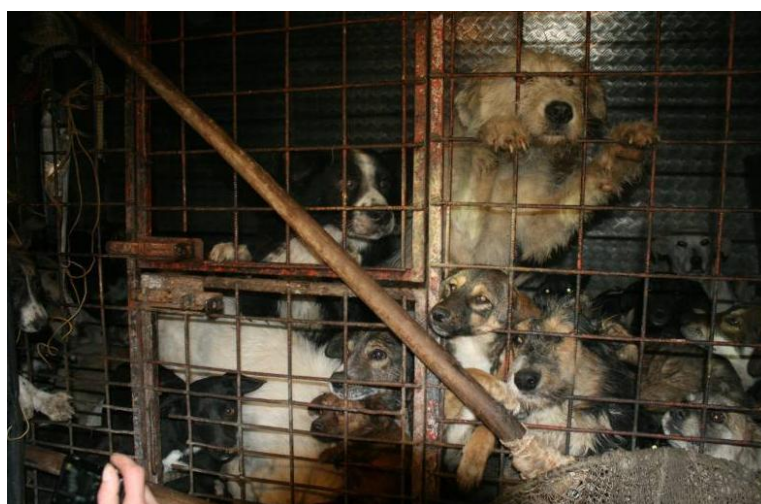


*Capturing dogs by ASPA*

*Killed during capturing*

*gravly injured*

The dogs are transported crowded in common cages, in unventilated vans, some die during transport because they are suffocated.



*Transport of 70 dogs in a van*

### Sheltering dogs in the city halls' dog pounds

The public shelters are generally in fact miserable extermination camps where the dogs are exhausted from fear, hunger and thirst, until they are finally killed.

Generally the dogs are kept without water, food or room to move. Puppies are kept together with adults, ill dogs with healthy dogs, in urine and excrement. No medical assistance is provided for injured or ill dogs.

Sometimes the dogs are eating the cadavres of other dogs.



City halls' dog pounds

The personnel employed are untrained people, they do not have any empathy with animals, sometimes they are dog haters and sadistic.

### Killing dogs in the city halls' dog pounds

The dogs are killed generally by illegal, cheapest and painful methods.

Within the stray dog management program "euthanasia" in practice means starvation, poisoning, strangulation, and/or injection with illegal substances.

The Sanitary Veterinary National Authority and the College of Veterinarians from Romania (CMV) – institutions which in any other country would fight for and defend the welfare and life of the animals – have introduced in the law the fact that euthanasia must be done in compliance with the Euthanasia Code which was drafted and issued by the the College of Veterinarians from Romania!

[http://media.wix.com/ugd/7baf9f\\_1a7ea7b424a892e9d823ebda070c19ef.pdf?dn=Ghidul%2BCMV%2Be%2Beutanasie%2Bal%2Banimalelor%2B\(2\).pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/7baf9f_1a7ea7b424a892e9d823ebda070c19ef.pdf?dn=Ghidul%2BCMV%2Be%2Beutanasie%2Bal%2Banimalelor%2B(2).pdf) Thus, according the law no.258/2013, the dogs may be "euthanasied" with carbon dioxide, carbon oxide, potassium chloride, nitrogen, electric shocks, penetrating capitive gun – cruel methods non-acceptable in EU.

The Sanitary Veterinary National Authority has banned from the law the right of the NGOs to assist at the euthanasia of the dogs from the shelters!





As well, thousands of dogs have been killed by poisoning campaigns directly in the street. Others were shot.

About 20 dogs captured by the city hall Harsova, Constanta county, in 14 January 2014, left in cage at the landfill of town



### **ABUSES, IGNORANCE AND COMPLICITY OF AUTHORITIES AND PROSECUTORS**

The authority in charge of the monitoring and enforcement of animal protection legislation and of the management of stray dogs is **The National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (ANSVSA)**, through its territorial units: **the Sanitary-Veterinary Directions (DSVSA)**

But their occasional controls (generally as the result of many complaints coming from citizens or NGOs) don't change anything. Most of the **official answers of DSVSA obsessively repeat the same line: "our control revealed that all animal welfare standards and the legislation in force are met"**.

As an example the official answer of Sanitary Veterinary Directorate Olt to FNPA, with regards to the city hall shelter Slatina: *"our controls done during the year 2013 did not reveal nonconformities relating to the accommodation, feeding, watering, hygiene"*.



*Photo: City hall dog shelter Slatina, February 2014, dead dogs*

Through their inefficiency, disinterest or interest, these institutions actually contribute to the continuity of animal abuse. Generally, their actions are against animals, against animal lovers and they persecute and blackmail the animal welfare organizations.

Despite proof of illegalities, the prosecutors and judges ignore the countless complaints, and most of their decisions in fact support the lawbreakers.

**The ignorance and complicity of authorities actually support animal cruelty.** Furthermore receiving no punishment for their deeds allows abusers to commit crimes against humans later on.

### **Adoptions from many city halls' dog shelters - almost impossible.**

#### **The city hall fine the people who rescue and adopt dogs**

- According to the law 258/2013 the adoption of shelter dogs can be carried out only by observing (cumulatively) the following conditions: a) the adopter's submission of evidence for space, certifying the appropriate conditions for the dogs' breeding and sheltering b) the adopter's submission of the justifying material resources for the dogs' breeding and care; c) the adopter's submission of the agreement given by the lodgers associations or, as the case may be, by the neighbours, in case of adopting more than 2 dogs

The city halls and their contractors abuse the people by asking for house contracts, special documents from the working places, or they simply refuse to give the dogs up for adoption.

- On the other hand the houses of animal lovers are already full of dogs rescued from the streets, and cannot absorb hundreds of thousands of dogs from the street
- Some mayors harass people who have animals in the house, going over to them and giving them fines on behalf of local decisions, and you cannot keep your pet without the consent of neighbors

For example, one of the last cases reported to us (April 2014) of direct abuse of the public authorities against the dog owners is of Csutor Arpad, animal protector and rescuer from Targu Mures. He is being constantly fined and threatened by the public authorities for having rescued and holding a number of 25 dogs (according to the law 205/2004 for animal protection there are no legal restrictions to the number of dogs one may hold). Not only is it very difficult for him to support all these animals properly but having him fined on an almost regular basis has practically made it impossible. He has started many litigations against the authorities, but the entire situation has put him into the hospital with high blood pressure and diabetes, exhaustion and stress.

The last case that came to our attention of direct abuse of the City hall against the dog owners is of Cristina Z, Professor of Physics at University Pitesti, who was fined (twice, only 5 days apart) and threatened by the public authorities for having rescued and holding in her house a number of 6 dogs.

### **College of Veterinarians from Romania (CMV)**

CMV (member of Federation of Veterinarians of Europe), who is **in charge to sanction actions which broke the law during exercising the profession of veterinary physician** and cancelling the right to practice, **in spite of the cruelties, malpractice, illegalities proven to have been committed by some veterinarians, CMV never issued any sanctions, and actually supports them with its passive and protective attitude.**

For example, in Curtea de Arges, all females (about 500 dogs!) that were "sterilized" by vet Radu Niculae hired by the mayor, died after days of agony in the streets. FNPA filed a criminal complaint and complained as well to the Commission of Ethics and Litigations of the College of Veterinarians but,

despite all declarations, medical certificates from other veterinarians, samples, pictures, videos, the doctor was declared "not guilty" by the College of Veterinarians from Romania affirming that Dr. Radu Niculae did not infringe on any Code of veterinary medical ethics (Decision no. 64/25.06.2014)!

### **Stray dog business - dog management run by authorities**

**An entire industry has developed in Romania under the pretext of stray dog management programs.**

It is proved by the huge public budgets allocated in this respect, far exceeding the necessary funds, and especially in contrast to the reality of the minimal support provided to the dog camps. They are in fact extermination camps where no 'sheltering' conditions exist, the dogs die of starvation, of lack of water, of lack of veterinary care or they are killed, sometimes grotesquely.

Many city halls allocate huge budgets - just on paper, reporting fictitious costs for sheltering, feeding, sterilization, identification, euthanasia, incineration etc. by forming partnerships or signing service contracts with dubious companies that collect exorbitant prices.



**The "expenses" of the city halls per dog** for a cruel and inefficient program are up to 300 Euro per dog, **10 times more than the expenses of animal welfare organizations** that run an efficient, humane, professional program, done by sterilization, identification and return and education of population.

Generally, the companies that signed contracts with City Halls for catching/management of stray dogs, do not have any connection with animals, but they are, for example companies for construction, sealers of furniture, or consultants for business and management.

**Abuses and lack of legislation will lead to mass abandoning of millions of owned dogs who will be killed by stray dog management law**

**Examples of expenses of some city halls in Romania for stray dog management in certain periods:**

Bucharest: in the period 2001-2007, 9 millions Euro were spent for killing 145,000 dogs (meaning 62 Euro/dog);

Timisoara: in 3 years, 1,223 millions Euro were spent for killing

Arad: in the period 2008-2010, 2,986 dogs were killed + died in the shelter, spending 308,048 (meaning 103 Euro/dog)

Alexandria: for killing 5860 dogs the budget spent was 507,140 (meaning 87 Euro per dog)

Slatina: in the period 2008-2009, 3215 dogs were managed (from which 1160 killed), spending 407,773 euro (meaning 127 euro/dog)



Brasov in the period 2003 - 2008, 20,000 dogs were killed, 1.45 millions Euro were spent (meaning 72 Euro/dog)

Constanta: for 2011, 1.2 million of Euro was allocated for the stray dog management to a private company

### **A continuously business is guaranteed by the owned dogs**

In Romania there are about 6.3 million dogs with owner, 82% being in rural areas where the people have severely limited finances. According to the new law 258/2013, sterilization and identification are compulsory before the end of 2014. Because the owners do not have the financial resources to neuter their dogs, they will mass abandon their dogs in order to prevent the fine, up to 2500 Euro (average salary in Romania is 350 Euro). The streets will be continuously crowded with more and more new dogs. Neither the Romanian Government nor the City Halls agree to allocate funds to support the sterilization and identification of owned dogs. But, on the other hand, the authorities will allocate huge budgets for managing the stray dogs which are the result of the huge abandonment of owned dogs.

On the other hand, as it is already presented above, the mass malpractice is not checked by the College of Veterinarians from Romania (CMV) so there is no way to stop new atrocities will be committed against owned dogs who will be sterilized according the law 258/2013, by unprofessional vets.

### **ABUSES AGAINST ANIMALS PRODUCES DRAMA IN ROMANIA**

This law which legalizes the mass killing of dogs does not only severely breach any ethical and European norms regarding animal protection and management but also seriously impacts the human dignity and the physical and psychological welfare of the Romanian citizens!

A war without precedent was launched against dogs and animal lovers by mental manipulation. The people were set up by the authorities and media in an unbelievable manner against the dogs and animal lovers.

People are running with the dogs in their arms in order to hide them from the dog catchers, crowd them in their apartments which are already full of animals.

The dog catchers act aggressively towards the people, they destroy them mentally, especially the children! The unconscionable amount which the dog catchers receive (up to 50 Euro/per each dog, for instance in Bucharest) only for the catching and transportation of the dogs to the public extermination camps make them fight for each dog, stray or with an owner! Ecaterina Moraroiu was one of the people abused by the dog catchers when she was trying to defend her dog when the dog catchers caught her dog just from her side; the dog catchers immobilized her with the cross between her shoulders and she was dragged between the cars: <http://m.rtv.net/97917>

The children developed depressions because of watching and noticing how their friends are being caught. An 8 year old child from Bucharest almost threw himself from the 2nd floor when he heard that his friend, the stray dog, was caught by the dog catchers.

A 6 ½ year old boy from Pitesti is under psychological treatment because he witnessed how the dog from the block with whom he grew up was apprehended aggressively by the dog catchers.

Many report to us having developed severe anxiety and panic attacks, after witnessing the abuse of the strays on the streets, which are recurrent and persistent sometimes even to drugs [I can't understand: does it mean they need drugs because they're so traumatized?]. The life of the people is irremediably affected within the family and their professional activity.

Avedis Ghazarian suffered a stroke after the dogs in his vicinity were caught abusively by the dog catchers, and he has lost his life. Many people have died in Romania because they were subjected to such powerful abuses, constantly or not.

Apart from the irremediable act of killing hundreds of thousands of dogs (with no result), an irremediable trauma affects compassionate, moral citizens, who cannot accept barbarism. Killing or the prospect of seeing the dogs that they protect be killed, is destroying any hope that the society can go on to become a civilization embracing the rules of morality. The understanding that the financial interest of the authorities is beyond anything and anyone's life can so dramatically destroy people's psyche that it can become fatal.

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