

Dear Mr. Smyth;

I am writing regard your e mail which I received:

"This Thursday please vote to ensure animals throughout Europe are kept safe".

Firstly, I want to thank you for your support of animal welfare issues in the EU. I note what you say in your mail above, but am afraid there are several issues where I feel the EU is certainly not doing enough for animal welfare.

My name is Mark and I am the founder of 'Serbian Animals Voice'; based in Kent, England. We have campaigned for the last 11 years for the fair and better treatment of stray animals within Serbia – a current EU Candidate Country. My site can be visited at <https://serbiananimalsvoice.com/> and you can read more about me at <https://serbiananimalsvoice.com/about-us/>

I have over 25 years experience in campaign and investigation work regarding live animal transport within the EU. In 2003 I was given an award from CIWF for my work involving live animal export investigations – see <https://serbiananimalsvoice.com/about-us/>

There are a couple of issues that I wish to draw your attention to especially; one being that of live animal transport, and the other being Serbian stray animals of which I have many years experience dealing with – being their voice.

Live exports. All animals being transported by EU carriers should be fully compliant with EU Regulation 1/2005 on the welfare of animals during transport. It is a Regulation and the rules stated should be fully complied with. The EU exports a lot of animals to Turkey for slaughter. I have a good friend (Lesley) who is the founder and Director of 'Eyes on Animals' in the Netherlands. <http://www.eyesonanimals.com/> Lesley spends a lot of her time in Turkey filming EU animal transporters and also giving advice on slaughterhouse improvements.

Lesley produced a video very recently showing the extreme and unnecessary suffering of live EU animals having to wait for many days to enter Turkey at the EU / Turkish border. This footage has been taken over visits for the last 5 years. I very much ask please that you take a look – here is the link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udReHkAumrY&feature=youtu.be>

I have produced a lot to support the work of Lesley on my site and in the past we have worked together doing animal export investigations. I, like her, was very disappointed when she had a meeting at the EU within the last few weeks with Mr. Bernard Van Goethem – the Director responsible for animal welfare at the DG for Health and Consumers at the EU Commission. At the meeting, which included Lesley and a Director from TSB/AWF, along with 3 animal rights lawyers on the issue of EU / Turkish exports; Mr. Van Goethem informed them all that the EU "cannot take any concrete steps to change the situation"; and "they say they do not have the power to put an end to the way this trade is being run despite it being in violation of their own EU legislation". They (as the EU DG) claim that "they cannot insist that a stable (lairage) be built at the EU / Turkish border to unload animals in urgent situations, nor insist on shade or more water pumps being placed there". Water and shade requirements are very much needed as shown in the video link given above.

As Lesley declares, Eyes on Animals and the TSB / AWF are truly disappointed and question the purpose of EU legislation for animal welfare if the EU Commission has

so little power over exporting member states that routinely cause problems that it is incapable of doing anything.

I fully support their concerns. I ask, what is the purpose of EU legislation (1/2005) if even the EU DG Commission responsible for animal welfare does not take any action to ensure it is being enforced ? Regulation 1/2005 has always been regarded as a bit of a joke by animal welfare campaigners; and now the attitude of Mr Van Goethem fully shows that is how the whole EU live transport policy is viewed.

Serbia – stray animals (primarily dogs, but also cats).

Serbia has (on paper) some good animal welfare laws, but they are never actually enforced. These are detailed much more fully on my site - <https://serbiananimalsvoice.com/about-serbian-animals/>

I have for the last 11 years been investigating and reporting on the situation of stray animal abuse within Serbia. There are many, many posts relating to this on my site. It was initially why I founded the site – to be a voice for the strays. I have attempted to keep the EU Enlargement Commission (Commissioner Hahn) informed over the years, especially as Serbia is currently an EU Candidate Country which should therefore be fully enforcing ‘the rule of law’ as required for any state seeking EU accession. It (Serbia) is currently taking a lot of money (1.5 Billion Euros) from the EU prior to its membership - http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/serbia/index_en.htm

I was somewhat dismayed therefore to see this Monday that my latest information to the EU Enlargement Commission (Commissioner Hahn) relating to Serbian strays, funding, and the treatment of Serbian animals **had been deleted without even being read** - <https://serbiananimalsvoice.com/2016/06/20/eu-commission-ignores-info-sent-by-eu-citizens/> refers.

Many EU welfare groups, including ourselves and those especially from Germany and Austria (many of whom undertook free / week long sterilisations of stray animals) have now largely given up on trying to help the situation in Serbia. In some cases at present, the Serbian government is paying local authorities up to 500 Euros to kill each and every stray dog; and this compares to the situation where the average monthly salary in Serbia is around 300 Euros !. This method of getting lots of money back from national government is a very financially rewarding business for some in regional authorities; and with EU money allocated for the welfare of animals definitely not going there – rather into the back pockets of some in authority, one has to question if Serbia should even be considered for the EU. Mass sterilisation and a no kill policy (and law !), which should be the norm, is being ignored continually by the Serbian government and authorities. Hundreds of animals are still being killed and the government is still supporting and funding this work. Animals are being slaughtered by horrific ways (such as the banned T61 injected into the heart to cause respiratory paralysis) when the only way to really reduce national stray numbers long term is to adopt a national sterilisation programme. The government will not do this as they are scrounging the money from the EU and getting rich on it. They do not want to undertake a national sterilisation programme using EU funds which would see those corrupting the system stop making personal financial gain.

The entire system is a complete abuse of animals at the cost of animals – and the EU Enlargement Commission is doing nothing about it, apart from deleting files of mine and others no doubt, when supplying evidence which is being sent to them !

Thus for the above reasons I cannot support the UK remaining in the EU. Many will quite rightly declare that leaving the EU would not improve the welfare of animals in transport. This is possible but I respond by asking – what exactly is the EU Commission doing to improve things ? – as I have explained with Turkey, Van Goethem just holds his hands up and says “we cannot do anything”. This is not good enough; un elected self importants telling the citizens of the EU what they are and are not going to have to accept ! – in a so called ‘democracy’.

If the UK does leave the EU, UK welfare groups and organisations will gather more vigour to fight – free from the non listening, un elected, do nothing jokes that we have to endure at the Commissions.

Thus I cannot support your call to remain in the EU; a non democratic ivory tower full of people who think that they are one step above the normal citizens of the EU; citizens who no longer really have a voice on what happens; but who instead have to endure the very wrong wants of un elected commissioners much of the time.

We will continue to work with and support the excellent animal welfare folk of Serbia; those which you can see on my SAV Facebook site – an open forum where the welfare community comes together to help and support each other.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SerbianAnimalsVoice/>

We do not want to have to sit and endure weasel words from the no action politicians of the EU Commissions – we want action and we want it now ! Without positive action for animals, the UK may start a trend by leaving the EU. Who wants to pay millions of pounds every day into a club which says it cannot do anything; or maybe does not want to do anything where animals are concerned ?

Regards and best;
Mark Johnson
Founder – ‘Serbian Animals Voice’
Kent, England.





Above – animals suffering at the EU / Turkish border – thanks to Mr Van Goethem and his Commissioners !

Below – Serbian stray dogs captured by local authority 'shinters'.







Welcome to the EU Serbia.

