

International Association of Human Animal Interaction Organisations IAHAIO

For the Distinguished Members of the European Parliament

Rio de Janeiro, September 15, 2001

Companion animals play an important role in human health and quality of human life. Numerous studies presented at the recent ninth international congress on Human-Animal-Interaction give a scientific foundation to this premise that also has been shared by the European Council in its treaty on pet animals in 1994. Now the time has come for legislators at all levels to consider regulations that enforce the importance of the Human-Companion-Animal relationship.

The Members of the European Parliament are requested to develop legislation that respects and protects this relationship. In spite of the fact that in several legal fields the European Union is not yet ready for specific legislation, in mid-term thinking the following aspects should be

1. Companion animals are no longer to be treated as “goods” (objects) in civil laws.
2. As a consequence, specific regulations should be established governing e.g.:
 - 2.1 Lost and found pets (removal of delays; central co-ordinating offices);
 - 2.2 Divorce and separation (allocation of the animal to the better caretaker);
 - 2.3 Full compensation in case of injury or death of an animal and reasonable costs paid for veterinary care;
 - 2.4 The basic human right to keep a companion animal unless it seriously impinges on the rights of other tenants, the house owner or the animal’s well being.
3. On the other hand the animal’s well being has to be protected more properly, e.g. by creating an “animal welfare lawyer” who represents solely the animal’s interest in court cases concerning mistreatment of companion animals.
4. The European Parliament is kindly invited to welcome the research which exists to help to develop appropriate legislation governing aspects under 2 and 3 in order to better protect the human-companion animal relationship by international legislation.

The international Association of Human-Animal-Interaction Organisations (IAHAIO) will be grateful for any/all support from the European Parliament in the field of human-companion-animal relationships, a field that is of fast growing public interest.

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