Animal cruelty cases rise in Switzerland

The number of criminal proceedings related to the mistreatment of animals has increased, according to a Swiss animal welfare group.

After a drop in 2017, the number of criminal cases for animal cruelty has risen again. In 2018, 1,760 cases were recorded by the Zurich-based Tier im Recht organisation, compared to 1,704 the previous year.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the NGO said the increase in prosecutions showed that criminal law on animal protection were being implemented more effectively. Nevertheless, the foundation believes that “much remains to be done” as “offences are frequently downplayed by the authorities”.

Tier im Recht deplores the fact that the punishments imposed are low compared to what the law provides. The average fine for illegal ownership or breeding of animals was CHF492 ($497) in 2018 (CHF432 in 2017), whereas the upper limit is CHF20,000. The foundation believes the sanctions are not proportional to the suffering inflicted on the animals.

Most infringements (50.4%) concerned pets, mainly dogs. One-third (33.3%) related to farm animals and one-tenth (9.8%) to wildlife. When compared to population size, the proportion of criminal proceedings has decreased. The Swiss average is 2.02 proceedings per 10,000 inhabitants, compared to 2.18 in 2017.

There are 2 comments.

1. Mark Goddard
   A 1% increase year on year gets front page coverage. Maybe if there was 5 years of data the article would have more substance. The strap line is technically correct, yet the proportionality is completely inappropriate. Maybe a sanity check is needed before headlines are allocated to articles like this in future?

2. Abraham ABRAHAM
   Better enforcement is surely a good thing but so is the kindness towards animals! This is imperative! Is it possible that kindness towards animals is going down due to reduced living means and growing frustrations of people in coping with the challenges of modern living?