

Atatürk Bulvarı TBMM
Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi
06543 Bakanlıklar – ANKARA

Zurich, July 25, 2024

Proposed Law on the Killing of Stray Dogs

Dear Members of Parliament,

The Foundation for the Animal in the Law (Stiftung für das Tier im Recht, TIR) and FOUR PAWS – Animal Welfare Organization have been collaborating for years to promote the respectful treatment of animals and the continuous improvement of human-animal relationships in law, ethics, and society. TIR is particularly focused on promoting animal-friendly legislation and its consistent enforcement. FOUR PAWS supports the development and implementation of humane and effective methods for controlling stray animal populations worldwide through numerous projects.

We have been informed by numerous animal welfare specialists and animal lovers across Europe about the alleged plans of the Turkish government regarding the treatment of stray dogs. According to our information, efforts are underway to amend the Turkish Penal and Animal Welfare Law, which aims to remove stray dogs from the streets and place them in shelters. Additionally, the law opens up the possibility that a large number of animals may be killed. Not only is killing healthy strays unethical, but this method has also proven ineffective in reducing stray populations long-term. This is because the resulting population gap is soon filled by the birth of more young animals or the immigration of animals from other areas. Examples from other countries, such as Romania, confirm this.

The humane population management methods we advocate and promote, "catch, neuter, vaccinate, and release (CNVR)," ensure effective, long-term control and reduction of animal populations according to current studies while respecting the sentience and dignity of animals. It is also important to encourage owners to neuter their free-roaming animals, which can be promoted through financial incentives. However, we strongly oppose the permanent placement of stray

animals in shelters. Most animals in shelters never get adopted, except for some lucky ones that have previously lived as companion animals (pets). Stray animals that have lived on the streets and are accustomed to various freedoms would be condemned to a bleak and miserable existence behind bars. One solution is the concept of "Community Dogs," which already exists in some regions of Turkey, Italy, and many other countries. These animals are strays that do not belong to any particular owner but are cared for by the humans living around them and provided with medical care by the municipalities. As a result, these animals are accustomed to the environment and pose no danger to humans or traffic.

It is crucial to promote awareness about responsible pet ownership and how to safely interact with stray animals, and this must begin with children. Consistent identification (through chipping), registration of all dogs, and a licensing requirement for dog breeders is essential to reduce unwanted births and allow for the tracing of abandoned animals. Regulating the import and trade of animals can also help address the problem. In this context, it is equally important that violations of these obligations are consistently prosecuted by law enforcement authorities. We are happy to assist you with any legal questions. For information on setting up a comprehensive CNVR program, please visit the website of the [International Companion Animal Management Coalition \(ICAM\)](#).

The undersigned organizations urgently call on you to live up to your statutory responsibility to ensure the protection of animals and to establish effective and animal-friendly population control through optimized, comprehensive CNVR programs and public awareness-raising. This is the only effective way to ensure a sustainable system that protects both humans and animals from undesirable consequences in the long term.

Kind regards,

Foundation for the Animal in the Law (TIR)



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