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Name of organization: Susy Utzinger Foundation for Animal Welfare

Main areas of action: Switzerland, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Spain, Portugal, Egypt and more

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Our comments are general and concern specially Art. 23/4:

We consider the construction of shelters in Kosovo actually as much too early, given the amounts of stray dogs. CNVR should be applied in all places continually until the straydog population has reduced. We are informed that thousands of dogs roam in Kosovo, in the cities and the country side. It is a well known phenomenon that shelters are overfilled, private companies making profit taking up and killing as many animals as possible! We strongly recommend to stay away from building any type of shelter as long not at least 80% of roaming dogs are sterilized and until each region has a very clear picture about the dog population dynamics in the region. Only then can be decided if a shelter is still needed, for which kind of dogs and how large it should be. Ukraine implemented really well establishing mass sterilization clinics in many municipalities. The dogs were only held until they recovered, then were released or adopted. Each year the dogs were recaptured for rabies vaccination. Over the time less and less dogs were left in the streets – the program worked out without mass culling.

Most huge NGOs as we do too, do not recommend to start with Euthanasia in shelters. It has no effect on the amount of roaming dogs over the years as has been proven. Romania has implemented a concept like you describe in Art. 23/4. The results were mass culling of ten thousands of dogs over the last decades. The citizens get used that they can just dump their pet – the state will take care. The effect was that the dog population in the streets increased and many foreign NGOs came to rescue the dogs – the effect on the image of Romania was and is up to now devastating concerning their treatment of dogs. Killing of healthy dogs is counterproductive concerning the economy of a country and the attraction for tourists.

As Kosovo is starting a chipping program, registering the owners and punishing them, if they abandon their pet, the chance is given, that with every year to come, less dogs are in the streets. Together with a good awareness and education program as well as CNVR we are convinced that the dog population can be controlled in the future and very few shelters for recovering dogs or to keep adopted dogs until all tests are done will be necessary.

In our own interest we want to point out, that Germany is not interested to have more and more dogs imported from so called killing shelters – but that is exactly what will happen. We have so many animal rescue NGOs, most of them worked and work in the Balkan states, once they know that healthy dogs are killed in Kosovo shelters, they will all protest and come for rescue.

Our recommendation is to start with a sterilization program, implement responsible dog ownership and to release friendly and healthy dogs to their territory. Furthermore raise public awareness for the dogs lifespan and his needs as well as education.

Signed:

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