



From:	StrayCoCo Foundation / c/o Probst Partner AG Bahnhofplatz 18 CH-8401 Winterthur, represented by Ms. Helen Wormser
To:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Mayor of Vushtrri Municipality,• The Ombudsman,• The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development,• The Food and Veterinary Agency,• NGOs and animal protection groups
Date :	05.12.2024
Subject:	Urgent Request for the Cancellation of the Vushtrri Municipality Tender for the Euthanasia of 800 Dogs and the Implementation of Humane Solutions for the Management of the Stray Dog Population.

Dear ,

We, the Stray Coco Foundation, have been operating in Kosovo since 2015.

Our mission is to ensure the welfare of both animals and humans, focusing on the humane and professional treatment of stray dogs, reducing the stray dog population through humane CNVR (Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate, Return) methods, providing veterinary care, and educating the public, particularly the younger generation, on how to responsibly interact with stray dogs. We encourage individuals to contribute to reducing the number of stray dogs on the streets, thereby mitigating the potential risks associated with an uncontrolled increase in the stray dog population.

Additionally, at the end of 2019, we dedicated time and resources to assist in the construction of an animal shelter in Vushtrri, with the goal of offering better and more humane conditions for stray dogs.

Our shelter has ensured sufficient space and proper conditions for the animals, while also providing appropriate medical treatment. We have also conducted ongoing educational programs in schools, promoting awareness regarding animal welfare.

This effort is a testament to our commitment to implementing humane alternatives for managing stray dog populations and avoiding extreme practices like euthanasia.

Through this letter, we urgently request the intervention of state institutions regarding the tender announced by the Municipality of Vushtrri, which proposes the euthanasia of 800 dogs. The tender is titled "Re-tendering for the Treatment of Stray Dogs," with procurement number VU644-24-9513-2-1-1 and internal number VU644-24-050-211.

Legal and Ethical Arguments:

1. Lack of Data and Statistics:

It is important to note that there are no reliable documents, analyses, or studies to justify the euthanasia of 800 dogs as planned by the Municipality of Vushtrri. On the contrary all worldwide studies have proven, that culling will change nothing. New dogs will arrive non-stop if the source is not stopped. There are countries that have proven how to deal with dog owners and to stop abandoning pets.

This number is extraordinarily high and lacks factual support for such **an extreme** measure. If there is a genuine need to address the stray dog population, it should be supported by a detailed study and a clear evaluation of the actual number of dogs to be treated. Without such an analysis, the euthanasia of 800 dogs cannot be justified either legally or ethically.

2. Refusal to Access Public Documents and Violation of Transparency:

In our attempts to exercise our right to access public information, we requested to review the relevant documents of the tender in the Municipality of Vushtrri, including how the tender was initiated and the proposal for euthanizing 800 dogs.

However, we were informed that our request could only be processed once the procedure is completed, implying that we have no opportunity to influence the decision-making process or present our arguments before the conclusion of the tender.

This stance is unacceptable, as early access to public documents is crucial to allow a full and informed assessment of the procedures and to ensure that decision-making aligns with the interests of the citizens and animals. Denying us the opportunity to review these documents prevents us from exercising proper oversight and seeking timely intervention to prevent a decision that could have negative consequences for both animals and the environment.

3. Kosovo Penal Code:

According to Article 344 of the Kosovo Penal Code, the mistreatment and killing of animals without justifiable cause is a violation of the law. This article clearly states that any act causing violence to animals is prohibited and constitutes a crime, except in special cases where necessary to protect human life or in other cases of direct violations of the law.

In this case, euthanizing the dogs without a thorough and verifiable assessment, without a clear document justifying the number of 800 dogs to be killed, constitutes a direct violation of this article. There is no strong, data-supported argument

showing that euthanasia is necessary to prevent a public health risk or to justify such an extreme action.

In accordance with Article 344, any act related to the mistreatment or killing of stray dogs, in the absence of an evidence-based assessment and without proper legal support, is illegal. The mass euthanasia of dogs, carried out due to an unclear tender and lacking complete data, could be considered a violation of this article and an unacceptable legal action.

Furthermore, we request that the Municipality of Vushtrri take into account the provisions of the Penal Code and comply with the law by taking the necessary measures to prevent any actions that could be considered mistreatment of animals and violations of their rights.

4. Constitution of Kosovo and International Legislation:

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, particularly Article 23 and Article 44, guarantees the right to a healthy environment and the protection of life and dignity of every living being, including animals. The mass killing and euthanasia of stray dogs, without a thorough and fact-supported analysis, threatens these rights and may violate the principles of animal protection and environmental health.

Kosovo is also part of international agreements that require the humane treatment of animals, and any act involving mistreatment or killing of animals without a justifiable and legal reason may constitute a violation of these rights.

Therefore, we request that the Municipality of Vushtrri cancel this tender and stop the mass euthanasia of dogs, seeking alternative, humane, and sustainable methods for managing the stray dog population.

According to the Animal Protection Law (No. 04/L-058), the treatment of animals, including stray dogs, must be in accordance with humane and sustainable standards. Mass euthanasia, without a proper assessment of the condition of the dogs, is a violation of the principles of animal protection and environmental protection.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION (MAFRD) NO.XX / 2022 ON TECHNICAL CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS TO BE FULFILED BY ANIMAL PET SHELTERS

This tender is in violation of the principles established in the Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) - No. XX/2022, particularly Article 23, which defines the conditions and procedures for the treatment of companion animals and the use of euthanasia.

Article 23 of the Instruction emphasizes that euthanasia should only be used in cases where animals are severely ill, unable to be rehabilitated, or pose a danger to human health, and always following a detailed assessment by a veterinarian. According to this instruction, a

full assessment must be conducted to determine whether an animal requires euthanasia, including factors such as aggression and the animal's health.

Without this assessment, it is impossible to determine whether the dogs are aggressive or ill in a way that necessitates the use of euthanasia.

In this context, it is unclear how the conclusion was reached that 800 dogs in Vushtri should be treated with euthanasia, without a full evaluation of their health and characteristics.

Any decision regarding the treatment of animals must comply with legal and international animal welfare requirements, as well as respect the rights of animals in order to avoid using euthanasia as a first solution, which the Municipality of Vushtri is currently doing in a completely unlawful manner.

6. **Humane and Sustainable Alternatives:**

To address the issue of stray dogs, alternative methods such as shelters, castration, and sterilization should be implemented to control the population growth.

As mentioned earlier, the Stray Coco Foundation has contributed to the development of veterinary infrastructure in the Municipality of Vushtri to offer optimal conditions for the professional treatment of stray dogs.

Instead of extreme measures like mass euthanasia, we urge the Municipality of Vushtri to adopt and implement the humane and scientific CNVR (Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate, Return) method, which is internationally accepted and proven effective in managing stray dog populations. This method has shown success in reducing the stray dog population without resorting to killing, ensuring a dignified and humane treatment of animals.

The data from the ongoing work with the CNVR method, which suggest that only 1–2 dogs per month require euthanasia, highlight the unfair and unreasonable nature of this tender.

7. The CNVR method includes:

- **Capturing the dogs:** The use of safe and humane tools to capture stray dogs without causing pain or stress.
- **Neutering/sterilizing:** The procedure of neutering and sterilizing to control the sudden growth of the stray dog population, preventing uncontrolled breeding.
- **Vaccination:** Ensuring vaccination against infectious diseases to protect the animals from illness and maintain their health.

- **Returning to their natural habitat:** After being treated and made healthy, the dogs are returned to their natural habitat, avoiding the creation of a continuous problem with the dog population.

This method is supported by major international animal protection organizations, such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the European Union, and aligns with legal requirements and ethical standards for the humane treatment of animals.

Implementing CNVR can bring positive results by reducing the dog population in a controlled and humane manner, preventing the increase in the number of abandoned and uncontrolled dogs. Furthermore, the CNVR method is more sustainable and effective in the long term compared to euthanasia, as it helps manage the dog population through a natural and ethical process, respecting the life and welfare of the animals.

8. International Practices and Humane Solutions:

International organizations like World Animal Protection and RSPCA, as well as many developed countries, emphasize humane and sustainable practices for managing stray dog populations. These include castration and sterilization as the most effective and sustainable methods for controlling the number of stray dogs. Creating shelters, providing adequate conditions for these animals, and educating the public about responsibility toward animals are also measures that should be implemented instead of extreme methods that lack legal and ethical grounds.

Our Requests:

- 1. Immediate cancellation of the tender that foresees the euthanasia of 800 dogs, and the cessation of any actions that may lead to mass execution of animals.**
- 2. Implementation of a sustainable and humane plan for managing stray dogs, including shelters, castration/sterilization, and public education on animal responsibility.**
- 3. Support and commitment from state institutions to ensure the implementation of international standards for animal treatment.**

Public Engagement and Appeal for Quick Intervention:

We call on the Municipality of Vushtrri to engage in an open consultative process with citizens and animal protection NGOs to discuss and determine more humane and effective solutions for managing stray dogs. This step would contribute to building a more conscientious society responsible for animal welfare.

Urgent Appeal for Intervention:

Finally, we request prompt and decisive intervention from state institutions to immediately halt the implementation of the tender procedure that foresees the euthanasia of stray dogs and allow the adoption of humane and sustainable alternatives. Euthanasia is not a solution and should not be allowed as a final measure without a proper, evidence-based assessment.

We are ready to offer support and collaborate with local authorities and citizens to develop a sustainable, collaborative plan for managing animals and improving their living conditions.

In accordance with the Animal Protection Law (No. 04/L-058) and Administrative Instruction No. 01/2012 on Animal Care and Shelters, we request the Municipality of Vushtrri to cease mass euthanasia of stray dogs and invest in more humane and sustainable solutions.

According to these legal acts, local authorities are obligated to create opportunities for the shelter and care of stray animals, including neutering and sterilizing, as well as ensuring proper and humane treatment of the animals. The implementation of these measures is in line with international standards and ensures that the management of the animal population is carried out in accordance with the rights and welfare of the animals.

For this reason, we request that the Municipality of Vushtrri immediately halt the implementation of the tender procedure titled "Re-tendering for the treatment of stray dogs" with procurement number VU644-24-9513-2-1-1 and internal number VU644-24-050-211, and invest in and apply more sustainable and humane solutions for the treatment of stray animals.

Request for Immediate Action and Possible Legal Measures:

Given the significance of this issue and the potential consequences that the tender may have on animals and the community, we urge the Municipality of Vushtrri to immediately halt the tender procedure and adopt humane, sustainable options like CNVR.

Should the Municipality of Vushtrri fail to take swift and necessary action, we will be compelled to seek legal measures, including through the courts and prosecution, to ensure the protection of animal rights and compliance with environmental and animal welfare laws.

Sincerely,

Helen Wormser
