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Request on Norway and the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals

Summer in Norway is high season for the dumping of pets, and this summer is no exception. On the contrary, animal welfare organisations across the country report that they do not have enough capacity to tackle the situation. Meanwhile, Norwegian authorities fail to implement the measures necessary to reduce the problem.

In 2001, a working group appointed by the Norwegian National Animal Health Authority pointed out that the extent of homeless pet animals in Norway triggered obligations under the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals, paragraph 12: "When a Party considers that the numbers of stray animals present it with a problem, it shall take the appropriate legislative and/or administrative measures necessary to reduce their numbers in a way which does not cause avoidable pain, suffering or distress."

The working group recommended a commitment to preventive measures, and suggested an allocation of 10 million Norwegian kroner for this purpose annually for a five-year period, and until the measures had full effect. The working group's final recommendations were not unanimous as submitted. A minority in the group consisting of Bodil Eikeset, leader of Norsk Huskattforening and Kari Mills, leader of Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge then submitted an official dissent on 03.12.2000, which was promptly ignored. The Norwegian authorities did not follow up on the recommendation.

By September 2009, we had reason to believe that this would change, when the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, issued proposed regulations through the Norwegian Food Safety Authority, including mandatory identification marking of cats. "The purpose of the requirement is to improve the welfare of cats by preventing that they are ownerless," said the minister.

In spite of positive feedback on the proposal for mandatory ID-tagging received during the public consultation, the ministry cited economic reasons to turn down their own proposal. The minister of Agriculture and Food, Lars Peder Brekk, has however chosen

to support campaigns encouraging ID-marking, referring to the dumping of pet animals. Brekk said: "Pet owners have a clear interest in tagging their beloved cats voluntarily. This will make it much easier to reunite lost pets with their owners. In the longer term, it may reduce problems with feral cats."

Nine years after a public committee pointed out that the numbers of homeless pet animals in Norway triggered obligations under the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals, the authorities acknowledge that there is a need to "reduce the problem concerning feral cats." This does mean that the responsible minister sees the number of stray animals as a problem, while choosing not to implement the legal and/or administrative measures necessary to reduce their numbers without causing avoidable pain or suffering. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food provides no direct support to animal welfare organisations.

We consider programs for castration/sterilisation, vaccination and mandatory ID-tagging of pets as a necessity. Furthermore, we believe that the government, in cooperation with local municipalities, should establish assistance centers for stray animals in Norwegian cities, as well as provide non-profit organisations with financial support for treatment and relocation.

On this background, we would like to request that the Council takes the matter up with the relevant Norwegian authorities, thus ensuring that Norway meets its obligations under the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals. We look forward to your reply, and hope that the proceedings will be to the benefit of the numerous stray animals.

Kind regards,

Liv Rose Walderhaug, Dyrenes Velferd (Animals' Welfare)

Bodil Eikeset, Norsk Huskattforening (Norwegian Association for Domestic Cats)

Kari Mills, Dyrebeskyttelsen Sør-Rogaland (Animal Protection)

Sondre Båtstrand, Miljøpartiet De Grønne (Green Party of Norway)



**Dyrebeskyttelsen
Sør-Rogaland**



miljøpartiet de grønne

Norsk Huskattforening



Norsk Huskattforening har jobbet i 28 år for alle katter!