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Kopenhagen, 18 October 2016

Dear Mr. Böhnisch, dear Mr. Faltýnek,

I am writing you on behalf of the Fur Free Alliance, an international coalition of 39 animal protection organisations representing millions of supporters worldwide.

An increasing number of European countries are legislating against fur farming. The ethical concerns of a large majority of the European citizens and the inherent cruelty of fur farming have led more and more countries to close down fur farms in recent years. We are very pleased to see the Czech Republic is considering similar steps to become part of the forefront of a Europe that respects animal welfare.

In 2000 the UK was the first country in Europe to ban fur farming on the ground of public morality. Since then other European countries that decided to ban fur farming are Austria, The Netherlands, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Republic of Macedonia and Slovenia. Furthermore, parliamentary debates on fur farming bans are currently in progress in Norway, Luxembourg, Germany and Belgium.

**As the Fur Free Alliance we urge the Czech Republic to commit itself to a Europe that values animal welfare and make an end to fur farming.**

Fur is a non-essential luxury item. An increasing majority of the population finds it unjustifiable to subject animals to prolonged suffering for trivial ends, such as fur coats or fashion accessories. In a democratic society, the public's long-standing opposition to fur farming and our changed ethical perception of animals should be properly reflected by law.

Closing down fur farms is widely supported by the Czech Republic population. A large majority of 70 percent of the Czech Republic citizens thinks the breeding of animals for fur should not be allowed, regardless the circumstances. Besides that, opinion polls show that 85 % of the Czech population is not willing to buy fur items.

**A fur farming ban is in line with scientific research, the public interest and political and legislative developments worldwide.**



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### **Legislation on the ground of public morality is becoming widespread.**

There is an overwhelming case for the abolition of fur farming based on ethical grounds. The public awareness that there must be legal constraints on the uses to which animals can be put is growing worldwide.

In 2000 the (then) Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Elliot Morley, gave the following account of the Government's position when deciding for a fur farming ban in the UK:

'Fur farming is not consistent with a proper value and respect for animal life. Animal life should not be destroyed in the absence of a sufficient justification in terms of public benefit. Nor should animals be bred for such destruction in the absence of sufficient justification.'

A statement of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs on fur farming in 2016 shows that the public opinion against fur farming is reflected by law in more and more countries:

'Causing suffering and taking the life of an animal for a non-essential and even trivial reason cannot be morally justified. It contravenes public morality in the Netherlands.'

### **Mink and foxes kept on fur farms are undomesticated animals and fundamentally unsuitable for farming.**

The grave animal welfare issues that result from keeping of what are essentially wild animals in barren enclosures are confirmed by numerous, extensive scientific research studies. The confinement of non-domesticated predators in small cages without a possibility to perform species-specific behaviour inevitably causes suffering.

Serious welfare problems are inherent to fur production and animals on all fur farms have been found to exhibit severe health issues and stress-related symptoms as infected wounds, self-mutilation, infanticide, cannibalism and stereotypical behavior.

### **Fur bans are the only legitimate solution to the serious animal welfare problems on fur farms.**

Opponents of fur farming bans have argued that a ban will cause fur production to move to countries with lower animal welfare standards such as China. This argument can not be considered ethically valid, for the same reason that it is not morally justified to make child labor legal because of poorer conditions elsewhere. Furthermore, while various European countries have banned fur farming, it has not been possible to see that farms are moving to other countries. Fur farmers are usually local farmers, that will simply switch to another business in their home country. The number of fur farms in China has been fluctuating wildly in the last decade, as the demand for fur is generally unstable and unpredictable.



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More importantly, there is simply not a single fur farm in the world with rules or standards strong enough to make it an ethical practice: severe, tragic animal welfare abuses have been scientifically proven to be the standard on fur farms in Norway, China, Czech Republic and everywhere else.

Contrarily to what opponents have argued, illegal fur farming practices have not been reported to emerge as a result of a fur farming ban in any country. The argument that fur farming bans would force fur farms into illegality is therefore most unsubstantiated and should not be considered.

The world continues to look at the Czech Republic to fulfill its commitment to end fur farming particularly as actions are increasingly being taken around the world to legislate against fur farming.

**We urge lawmakers of the Chamber of deputies of the Parliament of The Czech Republic to take a strong stance and ban the cruel practice of fur farming.**

We look forward to your reply and providing you assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Joh Vinding  
Chairman of the Fur Free Alliance



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The Fur Free Alliance represents 39 organisations and millions of supporters worldwide:



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