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The Netherlands

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Amsterdam, 25 April 2017

Dear member of the House of Peoples,

I am writing you on behalf of the Fur Free Alliance, an international coalition of 40 animal protection organisations representing millions of supporters worldwide.

An increasing number of countries around the world are legislating against fur farming. The ethical concerns of a large majority of the population 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 that Bosnia and Herzegovina has been part of the forefront of a Europe that respects animal welfare by banning the cruel practice of fur farming. The more alarmed we were when notified about the unusual and unjustified urgent procedure that undermines the Animal Protection and Welfare Act as voted for in 2009.

The Fur Free Alliance urges the Bosnian government to stay committed to a Europe that values animal welfare – by upholding the Bosnian 2009 Animal Protection and Welfare Act and make an end to the widely-condemned practice of fur farming in 2018.

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.

Fur farming is an increasingly instable industry - both economically and politically – and, as such, a risky investment.



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Worldwide countries are legislating against fur farming

Opinion polls in European countries have consistently demonstrated that the majority of citizens considers breeding and killing animals for fur unacceptable. In the last decades eight European countries have decided to adopt legislation that brings an end to fur farming. Five more countries are currently having parliamentary debates to ban the practice of fur farming.

Fur farming is a politically unsustainable industry that contravenes public morality.

In 2000, the UK was the first country in Europe to ban fur farming on the grounds of public morality. Other European countries that have since decided to ban fur farming are Austria, The Netherlands, Croatia, Switzerland, the Republic of Macedonia and Slovenia.

Fur farming bans are high upon the current political agenda in a number of countries. In the past years, we saw several countries taking significant steps towards legislation against fur farming:

- A bill to ban fur farming in Estonia was proposed by 17 Members of Parliament in March 2017.
- A bill to ban fur farming in 2019 in Czech Republic has been passed in the first reading in November 2016.
- In May 2016, the Minister of Agriculture in Luxembourg proposed a law that will prohibit fur farming.
- In Belgium, the Government of Walloon and Brussels outright banned fur farming in 2015 and the Government of Flanders is currently discussing the conditions of a fur farming ban.
- In Germany, legislative drafts to ban fur farming have been proposed by the German government and the Bundesrat in 2015 to be voted on by the Bundestag.



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The ethical case against fur farming

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. These developments are widely supported as being conducive to a civilized society.

Legislation on the ground of public morality is becoming widespread.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Elliot Morley in 2000, 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.”

In 2013, a law was passed in The Netherlands that prohibits fur farming including an 11-year phase-out period. The law is based on the ethical notion that it is unacceptable to breed and kill animals solely for the purpose of fur production. The Netherlands is the fourth largest fur farming country in the world after China, Denmark and Poland. Nearly 6 million mink are killed annually on Dutch fur farms. In 2015, a verdict by the National Court of Appeals in The Hague that justifies the mink farming ban reads:

“The mink farmers had to take into consideration that there would come a time when their activities would be prohibited. (...) This motion did not concern animal welfare as such, but the notion that it is ethically not acceptable to keep animals for the production of fur.”



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Fur production is associated with high environmental costs

Far from being natural, sustainable resources, fur production is an intensely polluting and energy-consuming process. Animal skin, once removed, will rot, unless it is treated with toxic chemicals. Even then, it must be kept cool and guarded against insects. It takes at least four times more energy to produce a real fur coat than to produce a synthetic fur coat, mostly due to animal feed and emissions of manure.

Hazardous chemicals in fur are posing serious health risks to consumers

Recent scientific studies in Italy, The Netherlands, Germany and the Czech Republic have detected significant harmful amounts of toxic substances in fur trims on fashion wear by common brands as D&G, Woolrich, Canada Goose and Nickelson. Toxics in fur are absorbed through air or skin and can remain in the body for over twenty years, causing chronic health effects. Most fur trims that were tested contained hazardous levels of chemicals as formaldehyde and ethoxylates, which can cause allergies, cancer and hormonal imbalance. The toxic fur studies recently resulted in a Rapex procedure of the European Commission to withdraw fur jackets from the European market due to health risks.

A fur farming ban is in line with scientific research, the public interest, environmental protection and political developments around the world.

In the last eight years, fur farmers in Bosnia and Herzegovina were given the opportunity to transition to a more sustainable industry. Prolonging the phase-out period would be unjustifiable to farmers that have respected the law. Besides, it would weaken the reliability of legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, given the unjustified, urgent procedure used by the House of Representatives to annul legislation that was voted upon by the Bosnian government eight years ago in 2009.

The world continues to look at the Bosnian government to fulfil its commitment to end fur farming in 2018. We look forward to your reply and providing assistance to your government in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Joh Vinding
Chairman of the Fur Free Alliance



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The Fur Free Alliance is an international coalition of 40 animal protection organisations representing millions of supporters worldwide:



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Anima
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CROATIA



Animal Rights Center
JAPAN



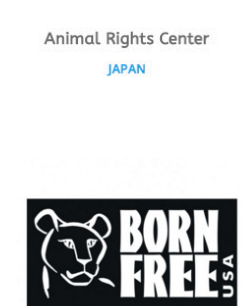
Animalia
FINLAND



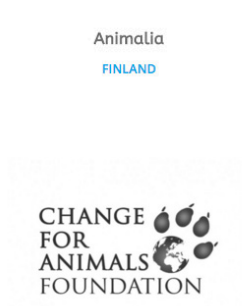
Animal
PORTUGAL



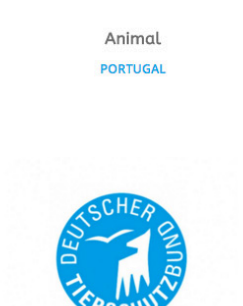
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SOUTH AFRICA



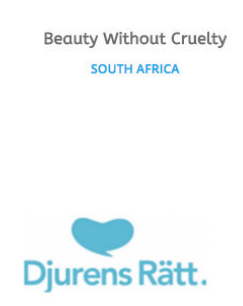
Born Free USA
USA



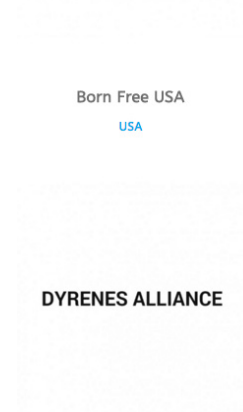
Change for Animals
SINGAPORE



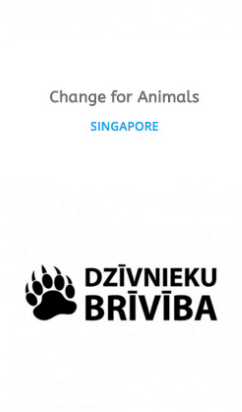
Deutscher Tierschutzbund
GERMANY



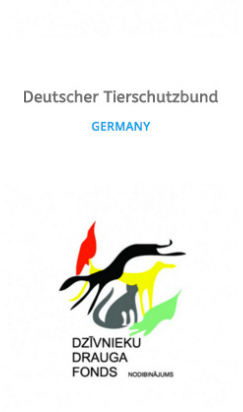
Djurens Rätt
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Four Paws
GERMANY



Freedom for Animals
CZECH REPUBLIC



Fur for Animals
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RSPCA
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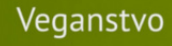


SWISS ANIMAL PROTECTION SAP

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