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Mr. Milan Štěch
President of Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
Valdštejnské náměstí 17/4
118 01 PRAHA 1

Amsterdam, 9 July 2017

Dear Milan Štěch,

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

Legislation to prohibit fur farming is becoming increasingly widespread in Europe. The inherent cruelty of fur farming and the ethical concerns of a vast majority of the population have led many countries to close down fur farms in recent years. We are very pleased that the Czech Republic is at the forefront of that movement in Europe, as it considers prohibiting the cruel practice of fur farming.

The Fur Free Alliance urges the Czech Parliament to commit itself to a Europe that values animal welfare by supporting legislation to prohibit the widely-condemned practice of fur farming

There are plenty of cruelty-free alternatives to real animal fur. Causing suffering and killing animals for such a non-essential and even trivial reason as fashion contravenes public morality. 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.

An increasing number of countries are adopting legislation to end fur farming on the grounds of public morality

Opinion polls consistently demonstrate that the majority of European citizens consider breeding and killing animals for fur unacceptable. Recent surveys conducted in Europe show that for example 74% of the population in the United Kingdom, 73% in Croatia, 81% in Austria and 83% in The Netherlands consider fur farming unethical.

83% of Czech Republic citizens are in favor of legislation to prohibit fur farming and 85% of the population does not buy fur products

Recently, nearly 46 000 Czech citizens signed a petition - and an extra 20 000 signed an electronic appeal - to express their support for a fur farming ban in the Czech Republic.



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Worldwide countries are legislating against fur farming

In the last two decades eight countries in Europe have decided to adopt legislation that brings an end to fur farming. Five more countries are currently holding parliamentary debates to prohibit fur farming.

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, Serbia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. **Partial bans** have been adopted by Denmark – where fox farming now is prohibited – and by Hungary – where it is not allowed to farm mink and foxes for fur.

Due to **stricter regulations** Sweden has phased out fox and chinchilla farming completely and in Spain the building of new fur farms to breed American mink is no longer allowed. Welfare regulations will likewise cause German fur farms to close their doors by 2022.

Fur farming bans are currently high upon the political agenda in a number of countries

- In recent months, a fur farming ban has been widely debated in Poland and is expected to be proposed 2017.
- A proposal that will end fur farming in Belgium is expected in 2017. The Belgian regions of Walloon and Brussels banned fur farming outright in 2015 and the remaining region of Flanders is expected to present a bill to ban fur farming by the end of 2017.¹
- In May 2017, German leaders voted in favour of legislation that will end fur farming in Germany. Fur farming will no longer be economically viable due to stricter welfare regulations.² A fur farming ban is still being negotiated.
- In May 2016, the Minister of Agriculture in Luxembourg proposed a law that will prohibit fur farming.³
- In February 2017, a bill was proposed that will ban the sales of fur and fur products in Israel.⁴

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

¹ <http://www.flanderstoday.eu/current-affairs/animal-welfare-minister-wants-ban-fur-farming-end-year>

² <http://www.furfreealliance.com/victory-germany-ends-fur-farming/>

³ <http://www.gouvernement.lu/5967296/06-securite-animaux>

⁴ <http://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/520486/fur-ban-bill-expected-to-pass-shtreimals-excluded.html>

Legislation against fur farming is becoming increasingly widespread in Europe





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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 recognised as being conducive to a civilized society.

Legislation on the ground of public morality is becoming widespread

The UK Ministry of Agriculture gave the following account of the Government's position in 2000 on introducing 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 prohibited fur farming with a 11-year transitional 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. Annually nearly 6 million mink are killed on Dutch fur farms. In 2016, after the law was repeatedly challenged in court, the Dutch Supreme Court rejected all of the claims made by the fur industry and ruled that the mink farming ban was justified on ethical grounds. In 2016, the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs stated:

“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.”



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Serious welfare problems are inherent to the battery cage system on fur farms

Mink and fox are unlike any other livestock. They are predatory carnivores, territorial and, in the case of mink, solitary by nature. They are also still wild animals. Fear of humans in undomesticated animals makes them fundamentally unsuitable for farming and causes serious stress-related welfare problems as self-mutilation, infected wounds, cannibalism and stereotypical behavior.

WelFur is not able to address the severe animal welfare issues inherent to the battery cage environment

WelFur, a project initiated and funded by the fur industry, claims to ensure a high level of animal welfare on fur farms. However, mink and foxes kept on fur farms are undomesticated animals and fundamentally unsuitable to be kept in battery cages. Numerous scientific reports demonstrate that WelFur is not able to address the serious animal welfare problems inherent in fur production.⁵

Fur farming 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. However, fur farmers are usually local farmers, that will simply switch to another business in their home country. Furthermore, 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 Europe, China and everywhere else.⁶ More importantly, when legislation is based on ethical grounds, context does not apply. Instead of allowing China to set the norm, Europe should remain frontrunner and elevate the standard in terms of animal ethics.

⁵ Pickett, H. and Harris, S. (2015), The Case Against Fur Factory Farming: A Scientific Review of Animal Welfare Standards and WelFur.

⁶ Tuomivaara, S. and Martinsen, S. (2015), Case Saga Furs – Nordic Fur Trade – marketed as responsible business.



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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. Besides that, due to animal feed and emissions of manure the carbon footprint of fur is significantly higher than any other garment material: it takes at least four times more energy to produce a real fur coat than to produce a synthetic fur coat.⁷

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

Compassionate people around the world continue to look to the Czech Republic to fulfil its commitment to end fur farming. We, the international membership of the Fur Free Alliance, strongly encourage you to do the right thing for animal welfare, to implement a ban on fur farming at your earliest opportunity.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joh Vinding". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Joh Vinding
Chairman of the Fur Free Alliance

⁷ Bijleveld, M. (CE Delft, 2013) Natural mink fur and faux fur products, an environmental comparison, p. 7.



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



ACTAsia
CHINA



Anima
DENMARK



Anima Mundi
MACEDONIA



Animal Friends Croatia
CROATIA



Animal Rights Center
JAPAN



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Born Free USA
USA



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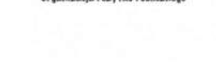
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