



National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia
Trg Nikole Pašića 13
11000 Belgrade
Republic of Serbia

Amsterdam, 16 March 2018

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Fur Free Alliance, an international coalition of 43 animal protection organisations, I am writing with regard to the Serbian ban on fur farming that is to take effect on January 1st 2019.

We were alarmed to find that the Serbian legislation to end fur farming was discussed during a regular meeting of the Sector for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the National Assembly of Serbia, held on 20 February 2018.

In accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2009, the Serbian ban on the widely-condemned practice of fur farming is due to become effective in 2019. In the last nine years Serbian fur farmers have thus been given the opportunity to transition to a more economically stable and sustainable industry. With less than one year left before the transitional period runs out, any change to the previously agreed upon legislation would raise serious questions regarding the Serbian legislative process.

As a coalition of organisations working extensively on animal protection issues all around the world, we strongly value the importance of exact and reliable information, particularly when legislative detail is under discussion. It is therefore of most concern to find that disinformation was spread, regarding chinchilla fur farming and legislation in the EU, during the recent meeting.

The fact is that, in the last two decades, 16 European countries have voted for legislation to end or limit fur farming, most recently the Czech Republic and Germany. Due to the significant ethical concerns and serious animal welfare problems associated with fur farming, legislation to ban the cruel practice entirely has been passed in the United Kingdom, Austria, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Croatia, the Republic of Macedonia, Czech Republic and in the Walloon and Brussels regions of Belgium.

Even in Norway and in Denmark - the heartlands of the fur farming industry - legislators have taken steps, to either ban the industry entirely (Norway) or partially (fox farming is banned in Denmark), on the grounds of animal welfare. Hungary is another country where a partial ban on fur farming is in place.



Due to stricter welfare regulations, fur farming has been entirely phased out in Switzerland and partially phased out in Sweden, where neither foxes nor chinchillas can be bred for fur. Recently the German government voted for stricter regulations that will see fur farms in Germany close their doors by 2022. Furthermore, debates on fur farming bans are currently ongoing in Poland, Luxembourg and Belgium.

Public opinion polls consistently show that fur farming is considered unacceptable by the majority of citizens in countries across Europe. There is an increasing awareness on animal welfare issues and ethical concerns on the uses to which animals are put in society. It is therefore of utmost importance that political discussions on chinchilla farming are factually correct and supported by science.

Chinchillas are rodents and are native to the Andes Mountains of northern Chile. Although often kept as pets, chinchillas were nearly driven to extinction because of the demand for their fur. To breed chinchillas for fur, the animals were taken from their natural habitat in such large numbers chinchillas are now an endangered species. Since 1975, the sale and trade of wild chinchillas is restricted in line with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. However, thousands of chinchillas are still bred commercially for their fur.

Both the short-tailed chinchilla and the long-tailed chinchilla are listed as critically endangered species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources List of Threatened Species. Short-tailed chinchillas are considered to be extinct in Bolivia and Peru, but are suspected to be recovering in other areas. In 1996, there were only 42 colonies of long-tailed chinchillas left, and the population has declined ever since.

The fur industry's claim that breeding chinchillas for fur benefits the conservation of the species is incorrect, indeed it is the fur trade itself that is responsible for the depletion of the species.

Given the fact that chinchillas are the only animals kept for fur in Serbia, it is important that scientific facts on chinchilla farming are taken into consideration when fur farming legislation is at stake. A large number of veterinarians and animal welfare experts agree that it is impossible to ensure the welfare of chinchillas in factory farms. Keeping chinchillas in small cages prevents them from running and jumping (a species-specific behavior of chinchillas), and from engaging in social behavior that would satisfy their natural needs. Although chinchillas in nature are monogamous, under fur farming conditions they are forced to mate with multiple males, by wearing a polygamous necklace that restrains them from moving. Furthermore, the unnatural conditions in which chinchillas are kept and bred causes stress-related abnormal stereotypical behavior, fear, reproductive disorders and offspring mortality.

The natural life expectancy of chinchillas is between 10 and 20 years, but chinchillas bred for fur live 8 months on average. To prevent damaging their pelts, chinchillas are electrocuted on Serbian fur farms, a killing method that is widely condemned as inhumane.



Animal fur is a non-essential fashion product which cannot be produced in an ethical way. Animals bred for fur are kept in tiny wire mesh cages for their entire lives and killed by inhumane, painful methods. In today's society, modern consumers are increasingly aware of the animal welfare problems on fur farms and are not willing to buy products of extreme animal cruelty. Consequently, an increasing number of international fashion houses are making commitments to drop animal fur from their collections.

Our recent "Make Fur History" exhibition, held in European Parliament in February, highlighted the widespread ethical and social concerns related to fur farming, and promoted a fur-free future in a Europe that values high animal welfare and shuns cruelty to sentient creatures.

We urge you to stay true to your legislative commitment to ban the farming of animals for fur, saving sentient creatures from a cruel life and death. We ask that you uphold the wishes of the public and the politicians who voted in favour of the Animal Welfare Act 2009 and end this internationally condemned industry from operating in your country, as previously agreed, by January 1st 2019.

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



THE FUR FREE ALLIANCE IS AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF 40 ANIMAL PROTECTION ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTING MILLIONS OF SUPPORTERS WORLDWIDE:



