



HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

September 13, 2013

President Traian Băsescu
Bucharest, Romania

Dear President Băsescu:

I am writing on behalf of the millions of supporters of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and Humane Society International (HSI). We understand the Romanian government's reaction to the recent street dog attack and child's death; however, we are concerned that the measures you are taking in the wake of this tragic death are misconceived and misguided.

We would like to offer you our assistance and expertise, as we work with governments across the globe to humanely control street dog populations. HSI has been developing and supporting an approach to the management of community street dogs that produces excellent results: fewer dogs on the street; a reduction in the rate of dog attacks and substantial reduction in the number of dog bites requiring treatment; and an improved human-dog relationship that benefits both people and dogs. However, these results are achieved with a sustained commitment from a city or municipality.

For example, in Jaipur, India (a city of more than three million people), HSI has been supporting the sterilization campaign of an animal nongovernmental organization -- sterilizing approximately 2,500 dogs a year-- since the mid-1990s. The number of street dogs is now estimated at about 1 dog per 100 humans and the incidence of human rabies in the treatment area dropped to zero (whereas incidence of rabies has stayed the same in areas of the city where dogs have not been sterilized). More recently, our data show the number of dog bites being treated in Jaipur city hospitals has dropped by more than two thirds over the past fifteen years. We attribute this decline to a number of factors associated with the sterilization program.

HSI has also partnered with the Royal Government of Bhutan to sterilize about 80 percent of the street dogs in that country (the street dog population is estimated at 65,000). After four years, we are close to achieving that 80 percent target. In the meantime, the Royal Government of Bhutan has established a nationwide network of government veterinarians to continue to maintain this high rate of sterilization. A Bhutanese government official is currently engaged in assessing the impact of this program on both people and animals.

HSI is now discussing a similar project with the Government of Mauritius (our recent survey shows around 65,000 street dogs in the country), and we have received funds to conduct a citywide sterilization program in Jamshedpur, India. Each of these projects has provided an opportunity to evaluate impact and to refine the technologies that are used to catch and sterilize dogs.

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For the past fifteen years, we have followed your country's challenge with roaming packs of dogs on the streets of Bucharest. We also know that city authorities have not developed an effective strategy for dealing with these dogs and that various projects have been attempted but none have been sustained nor have committed sufficient resources to address the problems. While a massive dog cull may appear to be an appropriate response, we urge you to reconsider. A massive dog sterilization program will have far more impact, both in the short and the long term, and it will not elicit local and international condemnation.

As you can see, HSI and our affiliate, The HSUS, have considerable experience with humane animal management. In fact, The HSUS has produced several editions of a handbook on humane companion animal management for cities and municipalities that are distributed by the International City/County Management Association (please click [here](#) and [here](#) to view). HSI is also a member of the [International Companion Animal Management](#) coalition that provides resources on humane animal management.

Our HSI Asia Director organized a sterilization campaign in Ahmedabad, India, that resulted in 45,000 dogs sterilized over a ten-month period. HSI and our partner organizations in ICAM could develop a similar project for Bucharest that would be humane, create a more harmonious environment for both the people and the dogs of Bucharest, and show the world Romania's compassion and leadership on humane street dog management.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew N Rowan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andrew N Rowan, PhD
CEO

cc: Mayor Oprescu, Bucharest, Romania