

Embassy of the Republic of Estonia  
Ambassador P. Jahilo  
Zeestraat 92  
2518 AD Den Haag  
Nederland

April 10 2017, Amsterdam

Dear Honorable Ambassador Sir Jahilo,

I'm writing on behalf of Bont voor Dieren to draw your attention to the process of banning fur farming in Estonia. Riikogu/Estonian Parliament is going to vote on the amendment of the Animal Protection Act during this spring and we would like to show wide international support to this modern animal-and environmentally friendly process.

Countries such as the UK, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and the Netherlands have fully banned the breeding of fur bearing animals while many others, such as Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Germany and Czech Republic are in the process of doing so. The European Union has also banned the trade in dog and cat fur as well as most recently the placing on the market of seal products. Some of the most prominent retailers and fashion designers such as Hugo Boss and Armani have shunned fur and implemented fur free policies. The majority of European citizens recently polled in ten countries, including countries with substantial fur production, is opposed to the farming of animals for fur in cages.

The grounds for these bans have been both ethical and animal welfare. Upon reviewing all scientific literature for the European Commission, SCAHAW concluded in its report "The Welfare of Animals Kept for Fur" that "... current husbandry systems cause serious problems for all species of animals reared for fur ...".

The welfare problems are numerous ranging from stereotypes caused by being under stimulated to infanticide, cannibalism and bite wounds. All problems have a common root: the animals kept for fur production are still essentially wild and not suited to be kept in captivity. Switzerland has regulated in the industry tightly with the result that all fur farms have closed. Such is the inherent incompatibility between a high standard of animal welfare and fur farming.

Not only does fur farming cause considerable suffering for animals but fur is also environmentally unfriendly. A 2011 study of mink farms by the independent organization CE Delft investigated farms in the Netherlands and Belgium to determine the impact of fur production on the environment. It found that with regard to different environmental issues, such as climate change and land and water use fur is much more harmful than textiles. Furthermore, the damage caused by American mink to Estonian ecosystem is a problem that can only be solved by introducing a ban.

In Estonia there are four mink and fox farms and about 27 chinchilla farms. A total of 200.000 animals are killed annually. According to the latest survey by Kantar Emor, 69% of the Estonian people do not support raising and killing animals on farms for fur. In comparison to the survey conducted a couple of years ago, the number of people who disapprove of fur farms has grown by 11%.

To stop the needless suffering of minks, foxes and chinchillas for frivolous luxury products would be a further step forward in the effort to protect animals. It would also mean that Estonia joins the ranks of those pioneering countries that have already taken this step or plan to do so in the near future. As we strive to develop a more civilized and humane world, doing away with the worst forms of preventable suffering of animals confirms our own humanity and helps us grow as a society.

Yours sincerely,



Nicole van Gemert  
Director

Bont voor Dieren, Animal Welfare Organisation