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PRESS RELEASE

**Ministerial document provokes conflict between [Greek] citizens
and the authorities**

THE PAN-HELLENIC ANIMAL WELFARE FEDERATION

and

THE COALITION IN DEFENCE OF ANIMALS IN GREECE (CIDAG) :

inform [Greek] citizens that the Ministry of Rural Growth published a document on 24 June 2008 (protocol number 258864) that distorts and misinterprets [Greek] Law 3170/2003, the relevant Ministerial Decisions and European legislation on companion animals.

The document declares all citizens who have adopted their dog or cat from the street, or who are owners of more than two domestic animals, in breach of the law, thus causing confusion among citizens and also in the Public Services to which the document is addressed. The particular document puts the responsible controlling authorities in a position where they devalue and offend animal welfare workers. As a result we are obliged to inform citizens that:

- Law 3170/2003 does not define how many animals each one of us can have in our possession. It states that you have the right to maintain two animals in an urban residence.
- It is not necessary to have permission from a [Greek] Municipality to adopt an animal from the street. If the animal in question bears a label identifying it with a particular Municipality, simply inform them of your action.
- When you travel abroad with your animals, there is no obligation to sign a responsible declaration that you will bring them back to Greece, just as there is no need to sign a statement that you yourself will return.
- No authority has the right to retain your animal because they do not like something in your documents or your appearance.
- When your animal travels unaccompanied (CARGO) within the EU, it does not constitute commercial transport if no financial transaction is involved.
- [Greece] has not taken "pioneering measures for the protection of stray animals" It is, however, "pioneering" in the war it wages against those who save unprotected, sick and injured strays. Rather than supporting work that, to a large extent, compensates for legislative voids, lack of infrastructure and the non-existence of an animal welfare conscience, the Greek state undermines it.

The time has come for the [Greek] government to revise its attitude towards the animal welfare organisations and [Greek] citizens who care for animals. It must, at last, recognise our contribution to society and initiate a productive dialogue so that jointly we can solve a problem that every day puts our country [Greece] to shame.

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