

Anti-Dog Politics

You may not know this but Greek strays are protected with admirable care and attention by the [Greek] State, that is, of course, if they manage to survive poisoning or death under the wheels of passing cars. I found this out when I read the recent circular from Mr Kiltidis (Deputy Minister Rural Development). His press release may be written in somewhat faltering Greek, but nevertheless, it manages to tell us what it wants to say.

With reference to a Law 3170/2003, it informs us that each Greek citizen has the right to own, at the most, two companion animals. So if your dog or cat has puppies/kittens, watch out, you are in breach of the law. Unless, of course, you wrap the kittens or puppies up nicely and send them to the dog catcher Deputy Minister. Luckily, Mr Kiltidis didn't carry on to tell us how many children we are allowed to have. If he had based himself on the current Chinese model, he'd have allowed us just one. But we are humanitarians and democrats. So we can have two kittens or doggies.

Naturally, the relevant law that was being distorted by Mr. Undersecretary was made in order to actually provide animal loving citizens with the possibility to have up to two living four-legged beings inside their flats, since, previously, this was forbidden. But, Mr Kiltidis took the reverse angle of viewing this particular law. Even if you are the owner of a whole kingdom, you are not allowed to have more than two pets. Therefore, you can only travel with two pets maximum.

“*You can*” is, of course, a mere figure of speech, as it is far too expensive for most people to travel, but that is another topic. So no Europe for companion animals! Their owner should have all relevant documents certifying ownership, which is correct in our view (collective ownership [by animal welfare organisations e.g]) is, however, forbidden) and on leaving the country, the owner must sign a document that he will bring the animals back – something like the Cubans used to do to their athletes. What if the owner wishes to entrust his pets to some friend who lives abroad? Well, then he is in trouble. And all this because ***Mr Kiltidis wants to protect Greek strays from evil foreigners who, aided and abetted by people with hateful, ulterior motives, who merely pretend to be animal lovers, direct a flow of Greek strays abroad to the laboratories of pharmaceutical companies and research centres.*** In other words, a variation on the theme of Macedonia – only with dogs. (a reference to the intense nationalistic feelings of Greece towards the area of Greece known as Macedonia and the conflict over the use of the name Macedonia by the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia).

Going through the Kiltidis' press release, I realised that the authorities who screw up most things have tracked down on paper a huge, meticulously organised, export of strays by undisclosed people who direct this outflow of dogs to their death under the pretense of adoption. Well, there may be such a type of commercial activity, **but no arrest of any cat/dog smuggler has ever come to light.** What has come to light are the unsubstantiated claims by some that this is happening. And usually these claims are made against animal welfare societies and individuals who are trying to save the strays, with adoptions abroad and who offer proof of their actions, not to mention that many members of these societies belong to the upper class, and well known Greek families who may at times drink the blood of the people (metaphorically), but definitely not the blood of our four-legged friends.

In the past, another “animal-loving” minister from the same Ministry but a different party (PASOK) prepared a presidential decree whereby if the dog catcher was to face any resistance from his dog-victim, he was allowed to shoot the dog right there on the spot. The only thing I can suggest is that anti-dog activities of the politicians continues ??