



**Recommendation 860 (1979)<sup>1</sup>**

## **Dangers of over-population of domestic animals for the health and hygiene of man, and on humane methods of limiting such dangers**

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Aware that overpopulation of domestic animals, particularly dogs and cats, constitutes a problem in several member countries, contributing, for example, to the pollution of the urban environment ;
2. Concerned particularly at the health risk for human beings resulting from the existence of a large number of stray animals, which can act as carriers for dangerous infectious diseases including rabies ;
3. Recalling the continuous activity of the Council of Europe in favour of humane treatment of domesticated animals, and particularly the drawing up of European Conventions for the Protection of Animals during International Transport (1968) and for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes (1976) ;
4. Conscious of the need to attack the human ignorance which is the root cause of animal overpopulation through school education and information campaigns in the mass media, centred on the life of the animals, their needs, their requirements and the resulting obligations for man, and also the risks of disease ;
5. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers instruct the appropriate intergovernmental expert committee to draw up a European convention which should aim, in particular :
  - 5.1. to control the trade in animals :
    - a. by imposing strict standards of hygiene and welfare for animal rearing and sale ;
    - b. by imposing a ban on the import of exotic animals ill-suited to European climatic conditions ;
    - c. by encouraging the trade to organise itself into national or international associations, with a view to drawing up an enforceable code of conduct ;
  - 5.2. to control animal populations :
    - a. by making registration and marking of dogs compulsory and possibly by imposing a special tax on all dog-owners living in built-up areas, exempting pensioners, the blind and owners of watchdogs ;
    - b. by introducing free or subsidised sterilisation of dogs and cats ;
    - c. by ensuring that when it is necessary for reasons of public health and hygiene to destroy stray animals the operation is carried out by qualified personnel, using humane and up-to-date scientific methods.

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1. Assembly debate on 8 May 1979 (3rd Sitting) (see [Doc. 4309](#), report of the Committee on Agriculture). Text adopted by the Assembly on 8 May 1979 (3rd Sitting).

