



PROPOSALS FOR A NATIONAL NEUTER, VACCINATE AND RETURN PROGRAMME FOR ROMANIA JANUARY 2014.

“COLLECT, SHELTER, REHOME” = CATCH & KILL ? OR NEUTER, VACCINATE & RETURN ?

Romania has a serious dog problem. There is a huge excess of dogs in and around the streets – and not enough responsible owners willing to look after and neuter these dogs.

Since Romania became a democracy in 1990 politicians have been unwilling to get to grips with the root cause of the problem. They have failed to understand where these unwanted dogs come from. They have failed to study dog ecology.

They have embarked on sporadic and expensive dog extermination campaigns which invariably fail.

Where neutering campaigns have been tried they have usually not been financed or managed properly, nor have they concentrated on the source of the problem – owned or semi-owned dogs.

The current USL government has perpetuated this failure to act effectively by passing a slightly amended version of Law No. 227 from 2002. This misguided law has for the past 11 years conspicuously failed to reduce Romania's unwanted dog population at all and has resulted in continuing misery and death for both dogs and citizens.

NEUTER & RETURN in ORADEA – A SUCCESS STORY.

In **2004** (when SOS Dogs started) there were at least **4200** unsupervised dogs in Oradea, a density of **70 unsupervised dogs per square km.**

By **23.09.2006** SOS Dogs Oradea had reduced the number of unsupervised dogs to about **1224**, a density of **20.4 dogs per sq.km.**

By **30.04.2010** we had further reduced the number of unsupervised dogs in Oradea to **10.5 dogs per sq.km.**, making a total unsupervised population of **630 dogs.**

In June 2011 the Oradea community police did a survey and estimated only 350 unsupervised dogs on the streets of the city.

Additionally there are at least another 20 owned dogs per sq.km which are properly supervised.

Methodology and definitions.

We count all dogs not in totally secure premises or not on the lead as being a potential problem to the municipality and the community and as being able to reproduce unless neutered. These are “unsupervised dogs” or “inadequately supervised dogs”. Supervised, owned dogs are not a social problem, especially if they are vaccinated and neutered.

We use a “circuitous transect” method to count dogs, driving at 10-15 k.p.h. from one side of the conurbation to the opposite side, avoiding main roads, and covering as many different streets, industrial areas and blocks of flats as possible without ever doubling back. Routes cross in the city centre. We assume that on average we can see all unsupervised dogs 50 metres either side of the vehicle. At

intersections and where there is open ground we can see further than 50m. On walled or built-up streets we can not see beyond the edge of the road but we assume that enclosed buildings or yards cover on average 25 metres either side of the route and that any dogs present are not able to escape onto the streets. By measuring the distance travelled in km and dividing by 10 we arrive at the number of square kms covered.

We do dog counts in temperate weather (16-22 degrees C), on a dry but cloudy day, usually in the late afternoon or early evening. Many dog owners in cities encourage their dogs to go out onto the streets at certain times of day and there are indications that more dogs are on the streets in the evenings and at weekends,

On 23.9.06 we counted 102 dogs over a distance of 50 km.

On 30.4.10 and 9.5.10 we counted 108 dogs over a distance of 103 km.

THE NEW LAW: CATCH AND KILL – a waste of money and doomed to failure.

Although the USL Government is pretending that their new law will result in dogs being removed from the streets and adopted, in practice 99% of the dogs collected will have to be killed, because of the many bureaucratic obstacles invented by local officials to restrict adoption and because there are simply not enough citizens with the necessary resources to adopt hundreds of thousands of new dogs. Needless to say, because of ignorance and the need to save money, most dogs will be killed cruelly and illegally behind closed doors, without supervision by animal welfare organisations or compassionate vets.

Many cities in Romania have attempted over the last 20 years to solve their dog problem by collecting dogs from the streets and killing them – usually in barbaric ways.

Many animal lovers have attempted to persuade the authorities not to kill these dogs but to accommodate them in shelters. This is an impractical, unaffordable and often cruel policy, because municipal shelters invariably become “canine Auschwitzes”.

Why does Catch & Kill always fail ?

Because it is aimed at the wrong target.

The source of the street dog problem is not feral dogs foraging for food. The most reproductively successful dogs are those with owners, or feeders or protectors. Very few puppies from feral dogs survive. Many puppies from well-fed dogs at petrol stations, factories, blocks of flats, car parks etc. do survive, at least initially to breeding age.

When municipal dog catchers come to collect and kill these well-fed “semi-owned” dogs, obviously the people tolerating those dogs protect them. Some even bribe dog catchers to leave their dogs alone.

Therefore the problem is not the dogs themselves. We need to enlist the help of the citizens feeding and protecting dogs to have all fertile dogs sterilised.

We estimate that only 5% of the dog population in Romania lives inside homes and is properly supervised. About 5% of the dog population is feral, living without any or much human contact, though dependent on human beings for food (e.g. rubbish). The remaining 90% of dogs are kept and fed but not supervised adequately. These include

dogs in gardens and yards with holes in fences/open gates through to community dogs which hang around factories or blocks of flats and are deliberately fed.

THE ONLY MEDIUM-TERM SOLUTION – NEUTER & RETURN.

As we have shown in Bihor dog owners or keepers will co-operate with Neuter & Return programmes providing these are implemented by credible, humane and efficient animal welfare organisations. Some dog keepers such as gypsy communities or factory personnel soon overcome their initial mistrust when they see their dogs being returned to them after a few days vaccinated, neutered and healthy.

This programme cannot however be implemented successfully by poorly motivated and uneducated municipal workers – and certainly not by the same people who were previously catching, poisoning and killing dogs.

COST OF NEUTER AND RETURN Versus CATCH AND KILL.

Based on an average dog of 20 kg.

To catch and kill as per the law costs: Tranquillising Euros 3.81 per dog.

Feeding (14 days) € 5,- per dog
Anaesthetic € 1,01 per dog
Euthanasia solution € 3.47 per dog.
Incineration of body € 10,- per dog.

TOTAL excl. TVA : € 23,29 per dog.

To neuter and return costs: Collecting/catching by hand by NGO: nil

Anaesthetic : € 1,01 per dog
Sutures, analgesic : € 4,17 per dog
Feeding (5 days) : € 1,77 per dog

TOTAL excl. TVA : € 6,95 per dog.

This comparison assumes that vets' salaries, personnel and fuel costs and general overheads are the same whether the dog management service operates a Catch & Kill or Neuter & Return policy.

As Law No. 227 specifies that shelters must be to EU standards and dogs vaccinated, dewormed and treated for parasites, even these costs are the same. Dogfood costs would be the same during recuperation or while awaiting slaughter.

COST OVER 10 YEARS – Neuter & Return Vs Catch & Kill.

The cost of Neuter & Return implemented nationally is just over Euro 1,- per citizen in Year 1*, falling to € 0,75 in year 2, then €0,60 in years 3 and 4, € 0,50 in year 5, €0,40 in year 6, €0,30 in years 7 & 8, then €0,20 for a dog warden and rehoming service in years 9 & 10, assuming that there is no dog dumping from surrounding areas.

So in a town of 200,000 people with 8,000 dogs the cost over 10 years will be about : **Euros 995.000,-.**

The cost of Catch & Kill, assuming that the dog catchers collect and kill 25% of the dog population each year, will be € 225.000,- in the first year*, then Euros 175.000,- per year for ever afterwards, with no long term reduction in the unsupervised dog population achieved. So over 10 years the cost would be **Euros 1.8 million** and there would still be 6000 dogs or more in our typical town (human population 200,000).

* Cost in first year higher because of purchase of equipment, vehicles etc.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL SURPLUS DOG MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME FOR ROMANIA JANUARY 2014.

1. Catch & Kill is an expensive, never-ending failure.
2. A national, centrally financed and supervised N&R programme is required, based on a **public-private partnership**. Piecemeal N&R in some municipalities can only partially, never totally, succeed.
3. Neuter females first, working outwards from centres of conurbations. **Door-to-door canvassing**. Kept dogs (i.e. owned or business/car park/petrol station) bitches are the priority as they are the most reproductively successful.
4. Municipalities must be forced to work with NGOs experienced in N&R. Recalcitrant mayors must be barred from public office if they fail to co-operate (fines are ineffective).
5. Where more than 1 NGO applies for a project the Dog Management Board should split the job or choose the best equipped NGO. Where no NGO is available a private contractor should be employed under the supervision of a NGO or of the Dog Management Board.
6. **Municipal employees should never touch another dog**, unless trained and managed by NGOs.
7. **Shelters = expensive Auschwitzes** for dogs. Build neutering clinics with small holding areas and heated recuperation rooms, not prison camps.
8. Defuse town centre complaints by moving non-returnable dogs to **open shelters** managed by NGOs (after neutering and vaccination of course) but remove dogs from their territory only as a last resort.
9. Use mobile clinics and/or field hospitals for rural areas.
10. Project akin to a **military campaign**. All neutering to be **free of charge**.
11. Enlist private, commercial vets with voucher scheme (RON 75,- per dog ?)
12. **Dog Management Board**: CEO an EU appointee such as an apolitical respected figure experienced in large logistical operations, i.e. ex-Army General. ANSVSA. Veterinary Association. DSV. Association of Municipalities. Active, practical NGOs. Possibly someone from veterinary faculty and from Ministry of Health.
13. **Role of Dog Management Board**: Supervision, statistics, purchasing, PR, removing bureaucratic obstruction, cajoling recalcitrant municipalities, financial control, deflecting accusations of corruption from NGOs, national database. Recruiting **national sponsors** including vehicle provider.
14. **Role of Municipalities**: fielding and passing on complaints. Local PR. Providing clinics, recuperation rooms and land for open shelters. Seconding junior employees such as guards and drivers to the local NGO. Help with school education project. Providing additional vehicles.

15. **Role of NGOs:** collecting, door-to-door canvassing, neutering, rehoming, euthanasia, education, open shelters, microchipping, registering dogs anonymously with satellite coordinates (unless keeper volunteers to be identified) in national database.
16. Human population 22.5m. Of these 11.5 million live in towns with 10000 people or more. 11 million live in small towns, villages and rural areas. Taking 4 dogs per 100 people in large cities increasing gradually to 8 dogs per 100 people in small towns of over 25000 people, 10 dogs per 100 people in smaller towns from 15000 to 25000 people, 12 dogs per 100 people in towns from 10,000 to 15000 people and 14 dogs per 100 people in villages and rural areas the dog population of Romania is **3.1 million dogs**. It is reasonable to assume that at least 2.8 million of these dogs are inadequately supervised and if not neutered can reproduce.
17. **Cost of National project** in Year 1 Euros 25 million excl. costs of Dog Management Board and microchipping for database. Cost in year 2 ca.Euros 17 million. Cost in subsequent years diminishing almost to zero. ***Rabies and other zoonoses, traffic accidents, harmonisation, integration, psychological damage to human health, all justify EU intervention and funding.***
18. **Clinic capacity** 500 dogs per month or 3000 dogs per 6 month breeding season. All 136 towns with 15,000 people or more to have a fixed neutering clinic. So including multiple clinics in large cities this will mean 150 fixed clinics and 80 mobile neutering teams = 230 **neutering teams**. 2 vehicles per clinic + municipal vehicles to help.
19. **Target:** 4000 dogs per neutering team in Year 1 so that min. 920,000 dogs, of which 80% females, neutered in Year 1. 460,000 females in year 2.
20. Dog dumping by municipalities or corporate bodies to be a criminal offence resulting in offenders being barred from public office.
21. After 5 years publicly owned neutering clinics can be sold or rented to commercial vets on condition the owner/tenant operates the voucher scheme and neuters dogs on behalf of NGOs free of charge or for the cost of materials only.
22. Local dog warden scheme. Employ homeless/disadvantaged people as dog wardens (do not remunerate in cash unless appropriate).





România
Județul Bihor
Municipiul Oradea
Poliția Locală Oradea

Piața Unirii, nr. 1
410 100, Oradea
Tel. +40 0259-408 839
Fax. +40 0259-408 839
E-mail: politia.locala@oradea.ro
Cod operator: 11747

HR. 3175 din 14.06.2011

INFORMARE

pentru Fundația pentru protecția câinilor comunitari „ SOS Dogs”

În urma constatărilor în teren făcute de către polițișii locali din cadrul Poliției Locale Oradea, cu privire la situația câinilor fără stăpân existenți pe raza municipiului, vă comunicăm următoarele:

- Câini fără stăpân – aproximativ 350 capete, aflate preponderent în zonele limitrofe ale orașului și zona de centură.

Persoana de contact din cadrul Poliției Locale este dl. Cheregi Ioan – tel. 0735208288.

Director Executiv

Kover Ladislau Paul

