

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

May 12, 2021

His Excellency Andrej Plenković
Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of CroatiaThe Honorable Marija Vučković
Minister of Agriculture, Republic of CroatiaVia e-mail: gradjani@vlada.hr; predsjednik@vlada.hr; kabinet@mps.hr

Your Excellency and Madam Minister:

I hope this message finds you safe and well. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the world's largest animal protection organization, with more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide, including more than 3,500 in Croatia. **PETA and our international affiliates—including PETA France, PETA Germany, PETA Netherlands, and PETA U.K.—strongly support a ban on keeping dogs on chains in Croatia, as proposed by Animal Friends Croatia, the Shelter Friends of Čakovec, and the Victory Association.**

Kept “out of sight, out of mind” outdoors, chained dogs are often deprived of adequate food, water, and veterinary care—and their emotional and social needs are completely ignored. Many are denied proper shelter and have nothing but an overturned trash bin, a flimsy makeshift structure, or a metal or wooden barrel—or nothing at all—to protect them from the weather. When chains become tangled, dogs often can't reach food, water, shelter, or shade—a situation that quickly becomes deadly. Animal Friends Croatia frequently finds dogs with collars or chains that have become painfully embedded into their necks and must be surgically removed. Volunteers working to help victims of the December 2020 earthquakes found dogs chained and abandoned to die among the rubble.

Dogs are social pack animals who experience psychological consequences when they're isolated. Lack of opportunities to satisfy their basic needs for socialization and stimulation often leads to aggressive behavior. The indisputable connection between continuous chaining and canine aggression is recognized by agencies such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) as well as by

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renowned animal behaviorists. Please consider the following information:

- A study coauthored by two CDC physicians found that “[b]iting dogs were significantly more likely ... to be chained.” According to the study, *chained dogs are 2.8 times more likely to attack* than those who aren’t tethered.
- Research coauthored by CDC officials found that nearly 30% of the 38 children (from ages 1 to 9) killed by dogs in the U.S. between 1989 and 1994 died after “wandering too close to a chained dog.”
- The AVMA gives the following advice to guardians: “Never tether or chain your dog, because this can contribute to aggressive behavior.”
- Tufts University Professor Dr. Nicholas H. Dodman says, “Chaining dogs makes them more aggressive—the shorter the chain, the greater the aggression.”
- Dr. Elizabeth Shull, former president of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, states, “In addition to frustration, the constant physical restraint promotes excessive territoriality, which may be manifested as aggression. These attacks are unnecessary as they are easily preventable by using a secure fence for containment.”

Hundreds of towns, cities, and counties across the United States as well as countries including [Austria](#), [Germany](#), [Hungary](#), and [Malta](#) recognize the dangerous consequences of chaining dogs and have passed commonsense laws to mitigate these risks. Additionally, 25 countries have signed the [European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals](#), which promotes animal welfare and ensures minimum standards for their treatment and protection, providing that nobody shall cause an animal unnecessary pain, suffering, or distress—therefore precluding chaining. Many areas that address chaining directly have found that the simplest, most enforceable legislation is a ban on unattended chaining. **We respectfully urge Croatia to join these communities and countries by implementing a total ban on chaining.**

Thank you for your time, your compassion, and all that you do to keep Croatia safe and humane for all its residents.

With great respect,



Daphna Nachminovitch
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