



Respectfully,

To The Speaker of The House of Representatives of Japan

Your Honor,

We are a group of animal lovers and activists from Romania. Please don't think of our approach as foreign interference in the internal affairs of Japan. In this letter we refer to the Japanese policy that allows thousands of dogs and cats to be murdered every year. We refer here to animals as international living beings and not necessarily nationals of a certain country. The ruthless killing of dogs takes place in other countries of the world as well, but our attention was drawn to the particularly cruel situation in Japan by a book published in Romania about the life story of Takeshi Koizumi. Mr. Koizumi's dog, Chiro, was abducted by the dog catchers and killed in a Public Health Protection Center – *Hokenjo* – while Mr. Koizumi was only a child, back in 1974. Chiro was wearing a dog collar and the family went to take him back from the Center the day he was caught, but they were told that Chiro had been moved to a Center in another city and, as it was a Friday, the Center would be closed until Monday. When Mr. Koizumi's father went on Monday to the Center in Iwakuni, Yamaguchi Prefecture, they told him that Chiro had already been put to death! The child suffered immensely and, from that day on, he decided to take revenge for his best friend. The boy became an adult and his decision grew even stronger. In 2008 he intended to kill several former administrative vice-ministers of the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry, but he managed to kill only one of them, Mr. Yamaguchi, together with his wife. Mr. Koizumi is now in jail, sentenced to death by the Tokyo High Court of Justice. It goes without saying that we intend to ask for him to be granted a pardon if the Supreme Court of Justice also sentences him to death. This is because we very much take into account his trauma at having lost his dog. We can understand his anger with the system that makes possible such brutal acts, which continue to this day, and are taking a heavy toll among dogs and cats.

We are foreigners and our knowledge of Japan is not perfect, but as far as we understand the local legislation, your country has its own regulation in this respect, the Law of Love and Protection of the Animals – *Dobutsu Aigoho*. It includes very nice provisions, and according to chapter 6 article 44, punishments are provided for those who kill or mistreat animals "aimlessly", *midari ni*. The Japanese state and local administrations make an arbitrary interpretation of *midari ni* and maybe also according to further Japanese government ordinances, in the so-called *Hokenjo*, they proceed to the cruel execution of cats and dogs with no owner or who are lost. The policy of the Health Protection Centers is established by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the very reason why Mr. Koizumi decided to kill its top administrators.

We therefore kindly ask you to revise the Japanese law by showing mercy to our companion and to all former companion animals imprisoned in these extermination facilities called Public Health Centers and Animal Protection Centers across your country. These

companion animals are living beings and have a dignity of their own. Japan is the world's third largest economy and can afford to keep all unwanted or lost animals in decent shelters until they are adopted by a family or even until their natural demise. In our opinion, the shelters should not fall under the supervision of Health Protection Centers, linked to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare because the temptation to channel them towards scientific experiments would be too strong. We know this is already frequently the case in Japan, and that animals undergo tremendous suffering and painful deaths. Furthermore, the Health Protection Centers are notorious for animal abuse. We were horrified to find out that animals are not even killed through euthanasia, but, in most cases, in gas chambers, the survivors being thrown together with those already dead and set on fire still alive! All this has to stop, yet most of the Japanese public seem unaware of the fate of their pets. Meanwhile, initiatives such as the letter concerning the revision of Japanese law regarding animals, sent to Your Honor by Animals Network Japan, are being disregarded altogether.

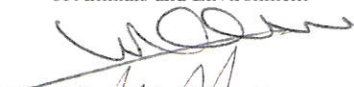
Even Romania, a country not as rich as Japan, has enforced, since 2008, a law that forbids the killing and mistreatment of dogs and cats, with a 3.5 year prison sentence for those who break it. The senator who drafted the law at that time, Mr. Marius Marinescu, is among the signatories of this letter. Of course, Romania is not an economical power, but rather a country facing economic difficulties. Consequently, not all animal shelters are in good condition here. The law is still relatively new and police resources are stretched, so there are cases when dogs face cruelty from their owners who still go unpunished. Therefore, Romania is not to be taken as an example. What we would recommend is looking at Germany as an example for companion animals legislation and treatment.

So, please, your Honor, whatever you do, think about the pointlessness of cruelty, especially to animals, creatures that are weak and need protection and love, and about making Japan look like a sympathetic country with regard to the above mentioned issue.

Respectfully,

Marius Marinescu

President of Honor of the
Federation for the Protection
of Animals and Environment



Gheorghe Zamfir
Executive Vice President of the
Federation for the Protection
of Animals and Environment



Paula Iacob

Senior Executive Vice President of the
Federation for the Protection
of Animals and Environment



Mircea Șerbănoiu

President of the
Federation for the Protection
of Animals and Environment



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