



Council of Docked Breeds

PRESS RELEASE

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'Sleepy' Convention should not be pet priority says European sportsmens' leader

The head of Europe's federation of field sports associations has questioned whether pet protection is a sensible priority for European organisations currently wrestling with the intractable problems of human rights in the emerging democracies of the former Soviet bloc.

Dr Yves Lecocq, Secretary General of Brussels-based FACE, the Federation of Hunting Associations of the European Union, was in London last week at the invitation of the Council of Docked Breeds to discuss the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals. The controversial convention, which would ban tail docking and affect the breeding of many dog and cat breeds, has so far been signed by fourteen countries.

Dr Lecocq, a qualified veterinary surgeon, commented that the Council of Europe's present priority lies with issues such as democracy, human rights, culture, and education in the new democracies of Central and East Europe: "These countries have definitely many other priorities than the 'welfare' of dogs and cats, or the length of their tails," he said.

"One could question if this Convention, which seems fairly unsuccessful and 'sleepy', as the last ratification dates already from 1993, is still compatible with the Council of Europe's programme of activities," said Dr Lecocq.

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Speaking at the Farmers Club to Board members of the CDB, plus guests from the Kennel Club, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation and the British Field Sports Society, Dr Lecocq urged those concerned about the potential impact of the Convention on dog breeding to lobby the Government to avail itself of a reservation under Article 10.1.a, which allows member states to dissent from the tail docking provisions. FACE had been instrumental in obtaining the right for countries signing the Convention to make such a reservation.

Thanking Dr Lecocq for his presentation, Peter Squires, Chairman of the Council of Docked Breeds urged members to pay heed to the advice.

“We are extremely grateful that such a leading European figure has taken the trouble to visit us and give us the benefit of his advice and experience. Now it is up to us in the UK to convince the new Government that signing and ratifying this Convention is not in the best interests of animal welfare.

“It is important that everyone with an interest in pedigree dogs should work together and support those organisations, breed clubs, breeders and vets who actively defend tail docking,” said Peter Squires.

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