

**EUROGROUP  
FOR  
ANIMALS**

# **ANIMALS IN DISASTERS**

The need for protection  
and coordination  
across Europe.



# CONTENTS

|  |   |                                     |    |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|----|
| 01. ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS                | 2 | 06. FURTHER PROPOSAL AND DISCUSSION | 10 |
| 02. SUMMARY                                      | 3 | 07. CONCLUSION                      | 16 |
| 03. INTRODUCTION                                 | 4 | 08. METHODOLOGY                     | 17 |
| 04. EMERGENCY MEASURES FOR UKRAINIAN ANIMALS     | 6 | 09. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS                | 17 |
| 05. ANIMALS IN DISASTERS IN EUROPE: SHORTCOMINGS | 8 | 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY                    | 18 |

01.

## ABBREVIATIONS & DEFINITIONS

| Abbreviation     | Explanation   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Animals</b>   | In this overview report we consider all non-human animals: companion pets, shelter animals, free-roaming animals, farm animals, livestock, domestic animals, wild animals in captivity and in the wild, animals in research facilities and any other animal enclosures. Some of our suggestions are made for specific types of animals, which will be duly specified.                                     |
| <b>DG AGRI</b>   | Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission  |
| <b>DG ECHO</b>   | Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the European Commission  |
| <b>DG ENVI</b>   | Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission  |
| <b>DG MARE</b>   | Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission   |
| <b>DG SANTE</b>  | Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission   |
| <b>Disaster</b>  | DG ECHO's definition of the term disaster <sup>1</sup> includes all events, as follows (1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural hazards such as earthquakes, cyclones/hurricanes, storms, tsunamis, floods and drought;</li> <li>• Conflict and violence;</li> <li>• Disease outbreaks and epidemics, such as Ebola or Covid-19;</li> <li>• Technological and industrial hazards.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Emergency</b> | Emergency is used interchangeably with a term of a disaster   |
| <b>EU</b>        | European Union  |
| <b>LEGS</b>      | Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards  |
| <b>NGOs</b>      | Non-governmental organisations  |
| <b>UCPM</b>      | Union Civil Protection Mechanism  |
| <b>UPAW</b>      | Ukrainian Pet Association Worldwide   |
| <b>US</b>        | United States of America  |
| <b>WOAH</b>      | World Organisation for Animal Health  |

<sup>1</sup> DG ECHO's definition of a disaster is used, meanwhile we recognise that there is growing literature that suggests not to distinguish between natural or man-made disasters, as they all are driven by human activity (45).

02.

# SUMMARY

**In this overview report we consider the response of the European Union, its Member States<sup>2</sup> and the non-governmental organisations to animals affected by Russia's war in Ukraine in 2022.**

The research problem is focused on the lack of inclusion of animals in the disaster management protocols and disaster response phase in Europe, which results in fragmented and uncoordinated aid provision and rescue efforts provided by different actors. There are a number of actions, which could be implemented at the EU and the EU Member States' levels in order to better address animals in disasters. The immediate solution lies in the legal inclusion of animals in the disaster law in the EU with the aim of including animal welfare actors into the development of disaster management plans and into a coordinated disaster response mechanism in the EU. The coordination should encompass all the actors involved in rescue of animals in disasters, in animal aid provision and in facilitating movement of refugees with animals. The idea is supported by EU's competence in helping its Member States address disasters according to the solidarity clause in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU; the EU Member States competence to deal and prevent the outbreak of diseases; as well as by people's willingness to save their animals in disasters.

<sup>2</sup> The EU Member States are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.



03.

# INTRODUCTION

**Russia's war brought unprecedented consequences not only to people of Ukraine, food security systems in Europe and worldwide, but also to the animals and environment. Disasters like this have devastating impacts, which today we are able to visually experience thanks to social media.**

Once the war hit the European continent, Eurogroup for Animals together with its members convened a TaskForce for Ukrainian companion animals. While being willing to help and having the resources at their disposal, the actions of the members were limited mainly because of the lack of information about the current needs of animals in Ukraine, logistical issues and a lack of partners on the ground.

Russia's war caused a myriad of challenges, but also provided opportunities to learn valuable lessons by pointing at the missing elements for animals in the disaster response frameworks in the EU and in its Member States. The objectives of this report are to summarise the shortcomings identified during the work of the TaskForce, as well as to open a discussion about what could be done by the EU and its Member States in order to improve the protection of animals in disasters.

This overview report also aims to support the inclusion of animal welfare actors into a coordinated emergency response mechanism in the EU and its Member States<sup>3</sup>. In our opinion, the lack of consideration of animals in an official disaster response mechanism substantially undermines the ability to provide timely and effective aid to animals. The imperative of protecting animals in disasters is broad and encompasses both animals and humans for a number of reasons.

<sup>3</sup> While this report is focused on the EU and EU Member States, we recognise that in the case of Ukraine the coordination with UA National Veterinary Health Authorities (among others) is necessary.

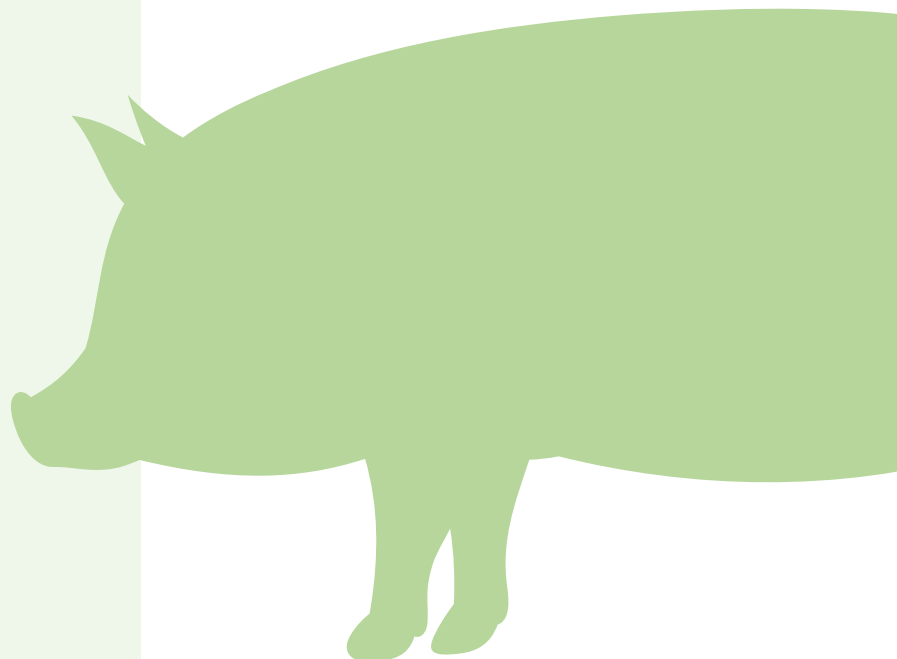
- First of all, human-animal bond is a major factor affecting animal owners in disasters (2). People may refuse to evacuate because they do not want to abandon their animals. As a result, public safety is compromised due to human risky behaviour during evacuation. Additionally, those animal carers who return after the evacuation and find their animals have died or disappeared, have more difficulty rebuilding their previous life compared to people who returned and found their animals alive (3).
- Secondly, people's mental health can be affected by additional stress provoked by the separation from their pets. Animals provide emotional support to people regardless of their age during and after disasters (3). This issue becomes especially acute when refugees escape the disaster with their pets just to find out that the pets are not allowed in refugee camps or social housing in a safer place. Indeed, unnecessary exposure of people to animals should be avoided, but it is equally important not to cause more pain to already traumatised people.
- Thirdly, there are economic reasons for protecting animals in disasters. For example, livestock animals play an essential role in the recovery capabilities of the region. Rescuing them is vital to the resilience of the local communities after a disaster and is also cost-effective. Namely, a loss of livestock for a farmer means loss of food security, lost wages of workers and reduced productivity among workers due to psychological trauma (4).
- Moreover, disasters may lead to increasing populations of freely-roaming animals due to abandonment and inability to evacuate them, and may pose a public health risk of rabies and other zoonoses. Furthermore, once a disaster has ended animals left without adequate food and water resources also may experience post-traumatic stress disorder (5), which may lead to conflicts at human-animal level.

**Lack of consideration of animals in an official disaster response mechanism substantially undermines the ability to provide timely and effective aid to animals.**

Considering the impact animals have on human lives, it is paramount to also pay attention to the increasing number of the disasters in the world. Union Civil Protection Mechanism is the main instrument in the EU for the provision of aid to countries in emergencies. In 2021, the number of the activations of the UCPM was six times as great as in 2007, increasing from 18 to 114 per year in due period. Only in 2021, 36 out of 114 activations were within the EU (6). At the time of writing in summer 2022, the wildfires are raging across Europe: spread from Portugal to the Balkans and the war in Europe does not see an end.

Finally, yet importantly the climate change and disasters are interlinked. Human (in-)activity induces climate change and disasters, which exacerbate direct impacts on animals. With rising temperatures (7) there is death from heat strokes (8) and reduced biodiversity of wild species, as well as further pressure on species kept on farms. The number of climate related disasters doubled in the last decade compared to the 1980th (9).

In this overview report we want to take stock of the EU's and its Member States' preparedness to address animals in disasters. Drawing from the lessons learnt from the Russia's war in Ukraine, we describe the emergency measures put in place for animals by the EU and the international NGOs in response to the war, we detail the shortcomings identified and outline the measures which could be put in place by the EU and its Member States in order to harmonise the emergency response provided to animals by actors involved in animal rescue and aid provision.



04.

# EMERGENCY MEASURES FOR UKRAINIAN ANIMALS

**The disasters and humanitarian crises have gradually become more protracted, unforeseeable and complex. In 2022, the activation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism by Ukraine as a result of Russia's invasion triggered the largest emergency challenge since the creation of the mechanism (10). Some good initiatives have taken place for ensuring the welfare of animals, such as:**

## **4.1. Alleviation of administrative criteria for non-commercial movement of companion animals (EU and the EU Member States)**

In the early months of the war, the animals brought to the EU by Ukrainian refugees prompted the European Commission to call upon the EU Member States to alleviate the administrative obstacles for the non-commercial movement of owned companion animals. The EU Member States showed an unprecedented unity by allowing the entrance of up to five pets per refugee without European pet passports, proof of anti-rabies vaccination, rabies antibody titration test and microchip (11). Additionally, several neighbouring countries to Ukraine eased the entry requirements for equines (12) (13). Recognising that it was not a systemic solution, it still helped facilitate the movement of refugees with companion animals.

Following this derogation from the movement procedure as early as on the 1st of March 2022, Germany and the World Organisation's for Animal Health designated Reference Laboratory for Rabies assessed that the probability of an unvaccinated dog or cat from Ukraine being in the incubation phase at the time of entering the EU is about 1:300,000 and much lower for vaccinated animals (14).





#### 4.2. Emergence of Ukrainian Pet Association Worldwide (NGOs)

The NGOs intervened and offered help to animals from the very beginning of the war, but faced a number of obstacles such as lack of information about the current needs of animals in Ukraine, logistical issues and lack of access to partners on the ground. In order to address these issues, several international NGOs supported the creation of a logistical platform: Ukrainian Pet Association Worldwide (15). It coordinates the efforts of 18 Ukrainian animal welfare organisations in distributing animal aid in Ukraine. With a warehouse in Lviv, UPAW redistributes animal assistance channelled by the international NGOs, using an online register system, where anyone in need can leave a request for aid. While creation of UPAW is a good example of international NGOs working with local communities partially solving the problem of reaching individuals in Ukraine, the issue of the lack of coordination between all the actors channelling aid remains unsolved.

#### 4.3. Creation of the Working Group for wild animals

A working group between NGOs, rescue centres, sanctuaries and zoos was launched to provide coordinated support to wild animals in captivity in Ukraine. This coordination successfully helped evacuate some animals and provide the supplies to others. The evacuation process was significantly facilitated by a developed connectivity within the wild animals' community, which allowed for cooperation and sharing of information about the animals they can help. However, they still encountered challenges such as the unwillingness of the owners to give up their animals and complex cross-border procedures for moving such animals into the EU.

**While creation of UPAW is a good example of international NGOs working with local communities partially solving the problem of reaching individuals in Ukraine, the issue of the lack of coordination between all the actors channelling aid remains unsolved.**



05.

# ANIMALS IN DISASTERS IN EUROPE: SHORTCOMINGS

**Acknowledging the efforts of the EU, its Member States and the NGOs to help Ukrainian animals, Russia's war showcased the lack of preparedness in the EU to protect animals during a disaster. The main shortcomings identified during the work of the Ukraine TaskForce at Eurogroup for Animals are described below.**

We recognise that these shortcomings are often intertwined and require joint actions from the EU, its Member States and a country in a disaster itself. This war highlights the need to introduce cooperation between all the actors in order to effectively address animals in disasters.

## 5.1. Uncoordinated provision of animal aid

All known assistance to animals in Ukraine is being channelled by various international NGOs (16) (17) (18) (19), without any official coordination between them. This may lead to duplication of efforts, while hampering aid to reach those most in need (20)<sup>4</sup>. In the case of Ukraine, the European Commission recognised the need to provide direct aid to animals on the ground (21), although did not suggest any coordination mechanism. Creation of UPAW partially helped address the issue of coordination, but not all the international NGOs involved in Ukraine are taking part in the platform.

## 5.2. Lack of consideration of animals in existing humanitarian aid

The DG ECHO is responsible for humanitarian assistance and civil protection in the European Union (22). The EU humanitarian aid regulation and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism do not cover however the provision of food and supplies to animals. The former is aimed exclusively at people (23), and the latter in practice does not ensure any direct aid to animals. The UCPM recognises in its recitals the need to 'reduce the vulnerability of animal welfare and wildlife' (24) as part of the disaster risk prevention and management, but it does not have to cover animals in terms of protection (25).

<sup>4</sup> In the video of Zelenskyy visiting Bucha, an elderly woman stands out of the crowd asking the President to assist with the provision of food for free-roaming abandoned animals.



### 5.3. Animals outside the scope of countries in need

The participating countries of the UCPM provide only the aid requested by a country in an emergency. For instance, Ukraine activated this mechanism, but requested only the provision of aid for the agriculture sector, which included veterinary drugs, pesticides, seeds and animal feed for animals in agriculture only (26). To this end, no provisions of pet food, as well as no aid to wild animals in captivity, were secured through this mechanism. While Ukrainian national authorities did not request aid for companion animals, the NGOs received more and more requests from individuals asking for pet food and veterinary medicines (27).

### 5.4. Lack of emergency and evacuation protocols

Emergency planning is key to coping with a disaster once it occurs (28), and it was sorely lacking in Ukraine. It is best developed locally and requires long-term thinking and investment, whereas the authorities on the ground are best informed of the potential disaster risks. The reasons for the absence of the emergency planning are associated with the lack of legal protection of animals in disasters, coupled with the lack of long-term funding and institutional support to animal facilities, for example, such as shelters. While emergency planning can substantially reduce the overwhelming nature of disasters on people and animals, the possibility of evacuation should still be considered, provided it is feasible from an animal health and welfare point of view. The evacuations of animals from Ukraine still occurred but on a very ad hoc basis often without using any specific criteria.

### 5.5. Lack of within country evacuation capacities

In early weeks of the war there was an acute lack of infrastructure and equipment necessary for the evacuation of animals from frontlines within Ukraine. In terms of the infrastructure capacities, shelters in the west of Ukraine (western part of the country is considered to be safer) are no longer capable of accepting in more animals from the east and south than they already did, which leaves people and animals at frontlines destined to stay under the heavy shelling. Overall, the evacuation options should be evaluated based on the actual risk analysis and available resources such as the infrastructure for displaced animals, as well as health and welfare of animals in question.

### 5.6. No facilitation of the cross-border movement for the CITES, sheltered and abandoned animals

The relaxation of cross-border entry requirements is of vital importance for enabling transboundary evacuation of animals. The EU did not suggest to its Member States to derogate from the procedure of the commercial movement of animals. The alleviation of the procedure was offered only to the owned pets (dogs, cat and ferrets), which were coming to the EU with refugees. The animals in shelters, zoos, rescue centres and other facilities still had to comply with a very demanding procedure of entrance into the EU (29), which has not changed since before war time.

### 5.7. Lack of appropriate infrastructure in Europe

Lack of appropriate facilities, such as pet-friendly refugee camps, places to quarantine animals and social housing allowing pets, promptly appeared in the EU Member States, once the influx of refugees began. In the first weeks of the war there were up to 600 pets crossing the Ukraine-Polish border daily and 12000 were vaccinated and microchipped only in Poland (5). However, refugee camps were not fit to safely accommodate people and animals; and there were no facilities ready to host animals for the quarantine period<sup>5</sup>, which also remained unharmonised at national and regional levels. The burden of finding pet-friendly accommodations for Ukrainian refugees tended to be pushed over to the private sector (30).

### 5.8. Lack of harmonisation between the EU Member States

The lack of harmonisation of rules between the EU Member States becomes vividly noticeable in crises such as the Ukrainian one. Different entry and quarantine rules for the animals in the EU Member States created extra difficulties and stress for the refugees moving to the EU with their pets. The consequences of the disasters have repeatedly crossed the borders of the countries and require transboundary cooperation, which is why the harmonisation of the rules for cross-border movement of animals within the EU and into the EU from the third countries at the time of crisis should be considered. The same applies to any new procedure or for any derogations from existing procedures. It is essential to have regulations and procedures in place well before these are required to be implemented.

<sup>5</sup> Some refugees were also reluctant to give up their animals to the quarantine facilities, where such were provided.

06.



# FURTHER PROPOSAL AND DISCUSSION

**Systemic issues identified earlier in this report could be addressed at the EU or the EU Member States' levels for optimal reaction to any upcoming crisis.**

## 6.1. The EU's role in addressing animals in disasters

The EU plays a central role in the management of disasters due to the solidarity clause in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU that states that the EU should provide assistance to an EU country in a disaster (31). The EU competence for animal protection during disasters is limited to public health, the internal market and consumer protection. There is a scope for the EU to better address animals in the future disasters. The suggested measures below are complementary to the EU Member States' capacities and should be put in place in parallel with the national actions and do not replace them.

### 6.1.1. Legally protect animals in disasters

The basis for addressing the identified shortcomings lies in the legal recognition of the needs of animals and their protection in disasters in the EU. The experience of Ukrainian refugees bringing their companion animals to the EU showcases that these animals are part of their families. Recognising the vital role these animals play in people's lives could be a legal ground for DG ECHO to extend its protection efforts to companion animals as part of the human family. The experience from other regions such as the United States of America already provides a number of insights. In 2006, after the Katrina Hurricane, the US Congress passed a law "Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006" or PETS Act requiring the states to account for the needs of the household pets in their disaster management plans.

Under this Act the states and local emergency preparedness plans are required to address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals (32), while the federal funding is made available for the response costs and for the preparedness activities in the US States (33).

Other categories of animals should also be protected in disasters. For example, farm animals play a crucial role in the lives of farmers for health and economic reasons, as well as in the capacities of the regions to recover after a disaster. The DG AGRI could establish a capacity for developing preparedness to disasters among farmers in the EU, such as requiring the construction of farms in areas, which are not exposed to disasters, and the development of emergency planning as part of their disaster risk analysis.

As for the animals in captivity, measures should also be put in place. For example, in the United States the "Providing Responsible Emergency Plans for Animals at Risk of Emerging Disasters" or PREPARED Act requires zoos, commercial animal dealers and research facilities to have contingency plans in place to safely evacuate and care for animals in an emergency or disaster situation (34) (35). The European Commission could require animal guardians to put in place emergency planning as part of their responsible ownership.

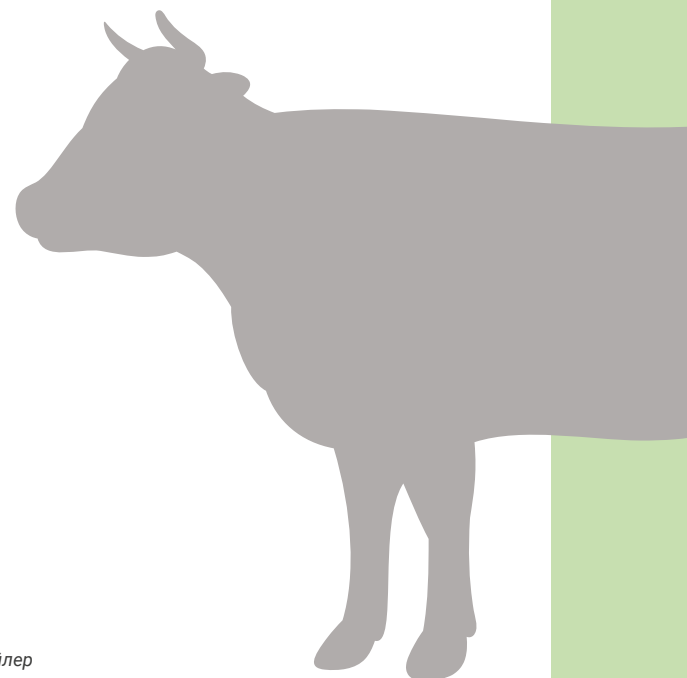
Moreover, in 2022, a new law "Planning for Animal Wellness Act" or the PAW Act was adopted. There are two crucial advancements of this law compared to the previous one.

First of all, it mandates the Federal Emergency Management Agency to bring all animal actors into a working group to develop inter-agency coordination, rather than requiring each government agency to work on their own animal management planning. Secondly, it includes all different types of animals, meaning that there is a need for different animal-related agencies to work together on disaster preparedness. This is a big step forward, which showcases that political guidance should be coordinated (36).

### 6.1.2. Incite coordination among actors

In order to address the lack of coordination between different animal welfare actors and the authorities, a better dialogue is necessary at the EU level. A joint coordinated capacity, which brings together rescue and veterinary teams, civil protection authorities, animal-related ministries, animal welfare NGOs and humanitarian NGOs, academia, parliamentarians and the EC's Directorate-Generals (DG AGRI, DG ECHO, DG ENVI, DG MARE, DG SANTE) needs to be established. There is a need for involvement of all of these actors in the development of the disaster management plans, as well as their coordinated involvement in the response phase of a disaster. Good cooperation with NGOs, veterinary professionals and rescue services in 'peace-time' provides a foundation for effective measures during disaster-time.

The parallel for such an initiative could be made with the existing efforts for people such as the European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre and rescEU. Recognising that such initiatives are already working well for people, the integration of animals should be done into the existing mechanisms, rather than creating a separate one.



### 6.1.3. Include animal-related provisions into humanitarian aid

There is a need for pet food and veterinary supplies to be provided to refugees and displaced people with pets during the humanitarian missions (37)<sup>6</sup>. The alignment of existing efforts for people in disasters with those for animals could provide the basis for a coherent and holistic approach to channelling assistance in disaster situations in order to reach those in need. In the 21st century, animals must not be excluded from humanitarian aid and disaster management protocols, as they are an integral part of people's lives.

Such provisions should be also made to all domestic animals and wild animals in captivity, not only for economic reasons, but also for the roles that such animals play in the recovery of regions discussed earlier and for the mental state of people in relation to human-animal bond.

It should be mentioned that the EU supported the development of the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS), which is an approved appendix to the Sphere humanitarian standards. The former provides practical guidance to people on the implementation of livestock interventions in crises. These standards could be better integrated into the Union's humanitarian efforts.

### 6.1.4. Induce cooperation between authorities in the EU Member States

Another route, which could be considered for better protection of animals in disasters is the inclusion of the National Veterinary Services of the EU Member States into the elaboration of the national disaster management plans. The EU could ask its Member States to work together with their Veterinary Services and relevant authorities on the emergency planning and the integration of animals into the disaster management plans. Today only five of the EU Member States elaborated specific disaster management plans for national Veterinary Services (38).

This proposal is also aligned with the WOAHA Guidelines on Disaster Management (39). The document outlines the role of Veterinary Services in reducing the negative impact of disasters, as well as stresses the need to integrate plans of Veterinary Services into the National Disaster Management plans.

### 6.1.5. Create entry requirements and evacuation protocols

Russia's war in Ukraine also showcased that disasters surpass clear borders of the countries. In order to address disasters efficiently there is a need for intersectoral and transboundary cooperation. To this end, the EU can put in place harmonised protocols outlining entry requirements for animals by each category in case of the need of evacuation. While evacuation is not a systemic or long-term solution, it still remains one of the tools in disaster management. If necessary, it should be performed by trained individuals, thus the coordination between all the actors involved plays a vital role for the evacuation's success. An EU guidance with best practices of animal evacuation, taking into account species-specific requirements, is required as it can significantly reduce the stress of rescue workers and animal owners during an emergency, minimise economic losses, enhance global health security, and safeguard human and animal lives.

### 6.1.6. Establish a list of the experts in disaster management

The EU can also establish a list of the experts with experience in intervening in disasters in each EU Member State. A lack of access to partners on the ground in Ukraine during the outbreak of the war hampered the ability of the NGOs to identify the actual and most acute needs of the animals. Additionally, the local community is always the first to respond to a disaster. Having a partner on the ground who also knows better the potential risks and needs is indispensable for an efficient response by the international NGOs.

### 6.1.7. Eliminate legal obstacles for veterinarians to intervene in a disaster in different EU countries

The EU should consider legal obstacles for veterinarians, veterinary technicians and nurses to intervene in disasters in different EU countries. The issue is twofold: on the one hand, the country in an emergency may not have enough veterinary staff to intervene in a disaster. Moreover, the country's veterinarians could be impacted in the same way as anyone else, thus they may prioritise their family and their own evacuation rather than be available to intervene in a coordinated rescue effort of animals. In this situation a mobilisation of veterinarians from another country could be needed. On the other hand, the expertise of the veterinarians from the affected country could be necessary in the neighbouring countries, where the people and the animals are fleeing. In the case of the Ukrainian crisis, millions of people were going into the EU neighbouring countries with their pets. It would have greatly facilitated their reception if Ukrainian speaking veterinarians could assist local teams at the receiving country's borders.

<sup>6</sup> The Red Cross Romania for the first time included animal food for pets to its humanitarian convoys. Raluca Morar, executive director of the Romanian Red Cross Sibiu County said that they realise that not only people, but also animals need help in times like this.

### 6.1.8. Introduce mandatory registration/licensing for all breeders

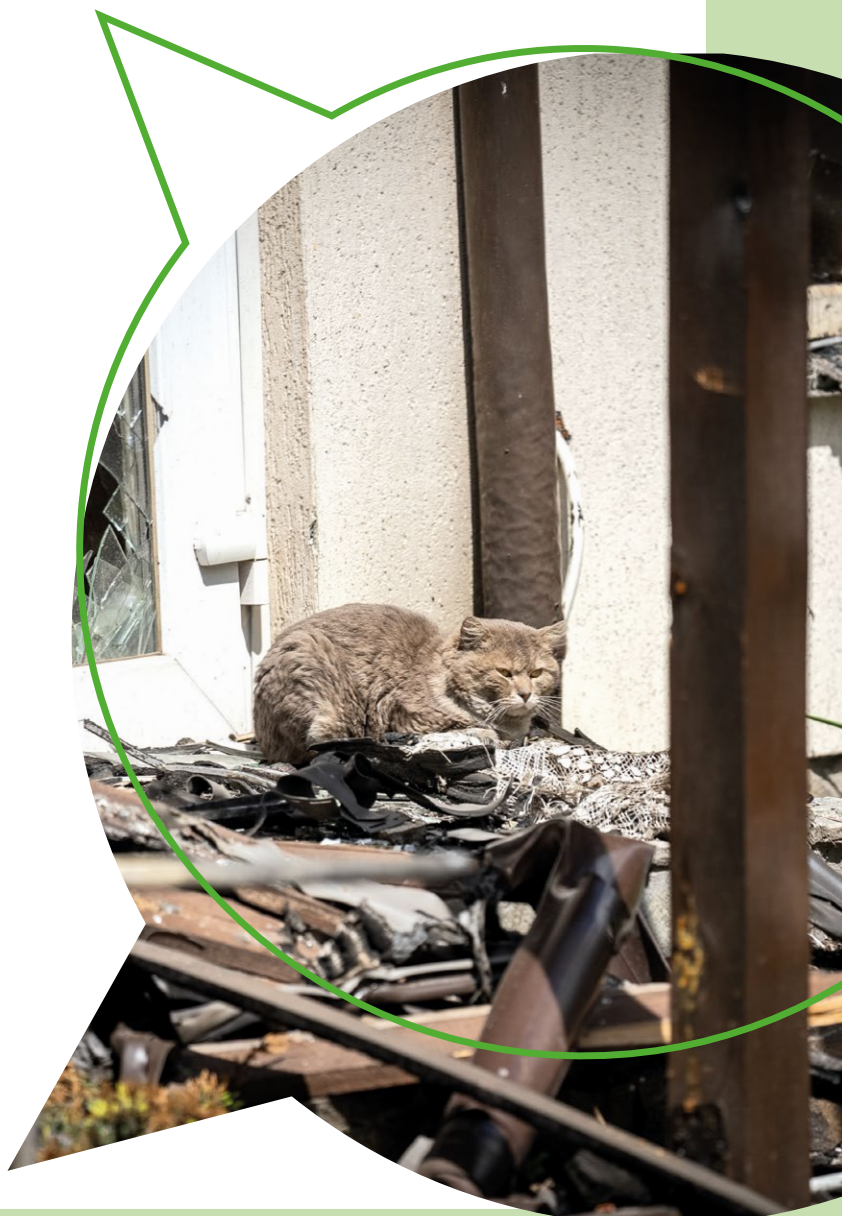
The war in Ukraine reconfirmed the need for at least mandatory registration of all companion animals' breeders in Ukraine. According to UPAW there are breeders, which take advantage of the animal aid provisions, but at the same time they continue breeding animals<sup>7</sup>. Lack of their registration makes it impossible to verify the welfare of such animals in the war-torn Ukraine, as well as breeders' abuse of the system. This can be prevented in the EU Member States, if the EU further clarifies the term 'commercial breeders' in the Animal Health Law and asks the EU Member States to take appropriate measures in order to ensure the registration of all the breeders in their countries. In the long-term scenario, licensing should be the ultimate goal.

### 6.1.9. Enforce compulsory identification and registration

Among lessons learnt from Ukraine is also the need for compulsory identification and registration of companion animals such as dogs and cats in the EU Member States. Many of free-roaming pets today in Ukraine used to have owners, but got lost during loud explosions and chaotic evacuations. In the early weeks of the war, responsible pet owners in Ukraine realised the need of microchipping, which triggered a higher demand for them and, unfortunately, sometimes resulting in their shortage. Because of the absence of identification and registration of many pet animals, it is often impossible to reunite them with their owners. This can be prevented in the EU, if the EU Member States enforce compulsory identification and registration of all the pets in order to avoid similar situations in disasters across the EU. Additionally, it is important to have a common registration database across the EU countries in order not to impede the reunification of animals with their owners.

**Russia's war in Ukraine also showcased that disasters surpass clear borders of the countries. In order to address disasters efficiently there is a need for intersectoral and transboundary cooperation.**

Copyright: FOUR PAWS | Maksym Havrylov



<sup>7</sup> There are the new-born puppies in the period between June and August 2022.



## 6.2.

## The EU Member States role

Emergency preparedness is a competence of the EU Member States (38). As a result, the UCPM is playing only a complementary role to the National Civil Protection Mechanisms of the EU Member States. The imperative to consider animals in disasters is not only driven by the need to protect animals, but it also lies in the protection of public health from zoonotic disease risk, as well as of the public safety. The disasters lead to the disruption of the veterinary health protocol (40), which is why abandonment or inability to responsibly evacuate animals can potentially increase the disease risks. The EU Member States have a direct interest in addressing animals in disasters based on the EU Member States' obligation to deal with the outbreaks of animal diseases. Additionally, in 2018 the EU Member States committed to the work on disaster risk reduction including the risks linked to animals in the Rome Declaration of Stakeholders (41).

### 6.2.1. Prepare national disaster management plans involving animal experts

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster local people react first, which is why the EU Member States should prepare national disaster management plans involving their National Veterinary Services, animal welfare NGOs, humanitarian NGOs, academia and private veterinarians, while local communities should be given a voice in developing such national preparedness and management plans. It could also be a good practice to extend such early-on planning to regional and municipal levels. Good cooperation between these actors is vital for the quick response, as well as for the recovery capabilities of the region. It can save time, facilitate decision-making and provide access to the necessary resources without delays. Early cooperation in 'peace-time' is an essential exercise to determine roles and responsibilities of each party involved.

### 6.2.2. Create a register system of the location of animals

The EU Member States could also create a register system with the number and type of animals and their location. For example, this information needs to be available for zoos, research facilities, shelters, stables and farms, as well as for the location of food and feed facilities for concerned animals. Good records about existing animals are essential for decision-making in a disaster. Using big data for mapping purposes would also significantly ease the rescue efforts and provide the information about the animal relocation possibility when needed. In Ukraine it is impossible to know the exact number of animals, which require aid today because there is no official tracking of animals. Additionally, the numbers in the shelters are changing daily, which makes it difficult to understand the capacities of shelters to host new animals.

Importantly, the creation of such a register system is not meant to take the responsibility away from the above-mentioned animal facilities. The guardians still should be accountable for rescuing their animals if a disaster strikes. The EU Member States can also include them in the development of the disaster management plans discussed earlier.

### 6.2.3. Create species-specific rescue training for responsible local authorities

The needs of animals in disasters are similar to those of people, which is water, food/feed, evacuation and shelter. Once a disaster strikes, the immediate rescue is usually a first step in a disaster cycle, with the further response to be based on the disaster assessment and needs analysis (28). Rescuing animals implies the use of very specific equipment and requires an understanding of animal behaviour. For example, for farm animals the necessary equipment could be emergency ramps, which allow loading animals

into the vehicles. The EU Member States can conduct training for communities, veterinarians and authorities responsible for rescuing (the responsibilities of the local experts should be identified earlier). Ideally, an assessment of disasters prone to the region has to be done in advance of the training. For this capacity building the exercises such as the visualisation of future scenarios could be conducted at a relatively low cost compared to what the disasters cost once they strike.

#### 6.2.4. Improve personal emergency training among animal owners

Even if the governments fully integrate animal protection in the national disaster plans and train the rescue teams and veterinarians, much of the responsibility for the animal well-being will continue to fall wholly on owners (28). Raising awareness among owners about their animals' needs in case of a disaster is vital to their prompt and coordinated reaction. In Ukraine many owners, who were fleeing the country, lacked some bare necessities such as leashes and pet carriers in order to be able to take their pets with them. Hence, raising awareness about responsible ownership such as keeping their animals' vaccinations up to date, as well as providing owners with some basic training of how to act in case of a disaster will urge them to take a stronger position on taking care of their animals in the face of a disaster.

#### 6.2.5. Envisage creation of pet-friendly refugee accommodation

In disasters when animal owners become displaced, they often prioritise their animals. When Ukrainian refugees were fleeing to the EU, one of the most persistent shortcomings among the EU Member States was a lack of the accommodation facilities allowing them to host refugees with pets safely. The idea behind excluding animals from refugee camps stems from the perception that animals in such environments increase public health risks. Often the idea is supported mainly by the lack of knowledge and lack of resources to provide veterinary support (42). There are known pet-friendly refugee camps, which can be replicated, and their presence can increase the likelihood of pet owners evacuating with their animals in a disaster (43). In the long term, policy makers should also look into the limitations of private rentals where animals are sometimes forbidden.

**The disasters lead to the disruption of the veterinary health protocol (40), which is why abandonment or inability to responsibly evacuate animals can potentially increase the disease risks.**





07.

## CONCLUSION

**Europe is experiencing an increasing number of disasters, the scale, duration and frequency of which will most likely continue to increase (44).**

Thanks to the enhanced capacities of social media, we are able to “live” through a disaster, even without being directly impacted by one. Such visibility of disasters provides us with thousands of pictures showing not only human and animal suffering, but also proving human willingness to save animals.

Animals play an important role in human lives and in rebuilding the community after a disaster, although there is still little acknowledgement of this by policy makers and humanitarian responders. While achieving a protection for all species in disasters remains a longer-term goal, the immediate solution lies in the legal inclusion of animals into the disaster law in the EU with the aim of including animal welfare actors into the development of disaster management plans and into a coordinated disaster response mechanism in the EU.

Additionally, disasters can be anticipated, hence prepared for. The focus should be on the early-on collaboration of the EU, EU Member States, Veterinary Authorities, NGOs and all animal-related agencies in order to promptly coordinate and share resources when a disaster strikes. In the case of Ukraine, this would mean the provision of more resources to its neighbouring countries.

Lastly, the culture of preparedness and risk reduction should be better championed among animal owners and guardians, making them accountable for their animals in disasters. The responsibility for taking care of animals should continue to wholly fall on the owners, whereas the EU could provide additional guidance and best practices of what could locally be done by owners in the EU Member States.

We believe there is a great potential for the EU, the EU Member States and NGOs to work together in order to be better prepared for the disasters in the long-term. Early planning, training of people, provision of the necessary equipment accompanied by the cooperation between the EU Member States and the EU will make it easier to cope with future disasters in Europe. The suggestions proposed in this report, once implemented, will make Europe better prepared, as well as will greatly reduce the burden on all the actors involved in dealing with the consequences of disasters.



08.

## METHODOLOGY

**The research methods chosen for this report include:** literature review about animal welfare in disasters; free in-depth interviews conducted with disaster management actors; as well as interviews with the animal welfare actors (Ukrainian Pet Association Worldwide, World Organisation for Animal Health, Deutscher Tierschutzbund, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Save the Dogs Romania, Soi Dog, Worldwide Vets, European Alliance of Rescue Centres and Sanctuaries, European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) and households on the ground in Ukraine (private individuals taking care of free-roaming animals, cats and dogs shelter managers and farmers from Donetsk, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhya, Kherson, Mykolayiv and Kyiv regions). The methodology applied is restrained by the number of the interviews conducted, but it remains an efficient approach to finding out the most up to date information about the impact of war on animals in Ukraine, as well as the existing shortcomings in the European system to effectively address animals in disasters.

09.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This overview report was prepared by the Ukraine TaskForce Members at the Eurogroup for Animals. The report was edited by Iwona Mertin and Valentyna Vozna. The report benefited from comments and guidance received from the members of the Ukraine TaskForce at Eurogroup for Animals and the external reviewers Dr. Dorien Braam, Steve Glassey, M.Sc. Gerardo Huertas, Pierre Sultana, Dr. Jackson T. Zee. We thank everyone for sharing their expertise and providing valuable inputs, support and feedback on this report.

### Disclaimer

This report and its contents are provided for informational purposes. Eurogroup for Animals makes every effort to ensure that the information provided is complete, correct, accurate and up-to-date. Despite these efforts, inaccuracies may occur in the information provided. If the information provided contains inaccuracies or if certain information on or via the site is unavailable, Eurogroup for Animals will make the greatest possible effort to rectify this as quickly as possible. The resources are referenced at the end of the report.

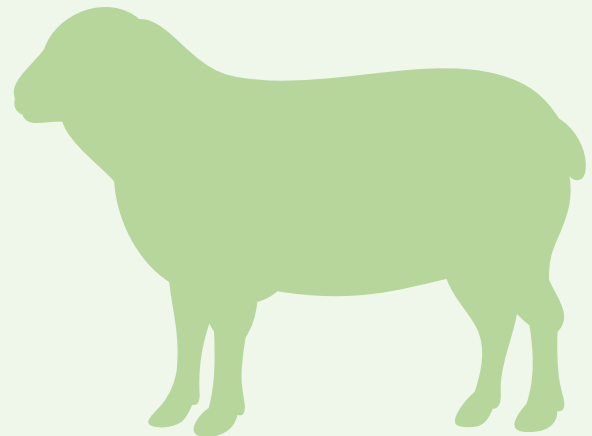


## 10.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (1) European Commission (2021) 'DG ECHO Guidance Note. Disaster Preparedness'. Available from: [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/dg\\_echo\\_guidance\\_note\\_-\\_disaster\\_preparedness\\_en.pdf](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/dg_echo_guidance_note_-_disaster_preparedness_en.pdf).
- (2) Federal Emergency Management Agency (1998) 'Animals in Disasters. Module A. Unit 2. Available from: [https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/downloads/is10\\_a-2.pdf](https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/downloads/is10_a-2.pdf).
- (3) Chadwin R. (2017) 'Evacuation of pets during disasters: A public health intervention to increase resilience'. *Am J Public Health*; 107(9):1413–7. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5551593/>.
- (4) Campbell R., Knowles T. (2011) 'The economic impacts of losing livestock in a disaster, a report for the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)', Economists at Large, Melbourne, Australia. Available from: [https://onlineasdma.assam.gov.in/kmp/pdf/1491459716livestock\\_disaster\\_economics.pdf](https://onlineasdma.assam.gov.in/kmp/pdf/1491459716livestock_disaster_economics.pdf).
- (5) International Fund for Animal Welfare (2022) 'Animals, People and War: The Impact of Conflict 2022'. Available from: <https://www.ifaw.org/resources/animals-people-war>.
- (6) Council of the EU and the European Council (2022) 'Infographic - The EU Civil Protection Mechanism in Numbers'. Available from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/civil-protection/#:~:text=The%20mechanism%20was%20activated%20in%2011,4,the%20history%20of%20the%20mechanism,> [accessed 29 August 2022].
- (7) United Nations Climate Change (2021) 'State of Climate in 2021: Extreme Events and Major Impacts'. Available from: <https://unfccc.int/news/state-of-climate-in-2021-extreme-events-and-major-impacts>, [accessed 7 October 2022].
- (8) Protopopova A., Ly LH., Eagan BH., Brown KM. (2021) 'Climate Change and Companion Animals: Identifying Links and Opportunities for Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies', *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, Volume 61, Issue 1, July 2021, Pages 166–181. Available from: <https://academic.oup.com/icb/article/61/1/166/6237491>.
- (9) OCHA, Global Humanitarian Review (2022) 'Humanitarian Action Must Adapt to Climate Change Realities'. Available from: <https://gho.unocha.org/trends/humanitarian-action-must-adapt-climate-change-realities>, [accessed 7 October 2022].
- (10) European Commission 'EU Civil Protection Mechanism Factsheet'. Available from: [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism\\_en](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en), [accessed 15 August 2022].
- (11) Fortuna G. (2022) 'EU relaxes entry paperwork for pets travelling with Ukrainian refugees', EUACTIV. Available from: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/health-consumers/news/eu-relaxes-entry-paperwork-for-pets-travelling-with-ukrainian-refugees/>, [accessed 15 September 2022].
- (12) ANSVSA (2022) 'A new derogation regarding the introduction into Romania of other species of animals from Ukraine, other than pets'. Press release. [cited 2022 Oct 26]. Available from: <http://www.ansvsa.ro/blog/noua-derogare-privind-introducerea-in-romania-si-altor-specii-de-animale-din-ucraina-altele-decat-animalele-de-companie/>, [accessed 7 October 2022].
- (13) Horsetalk.co.nz (2022) 'Borders slowly opening to evacuated Ukraine horses as feed supplies dwindle'. Available from: <https://www.horsetalk.co.nz/2022/03/07/borders-horses-evacuated-ukraine/>, [accessed 8 October 2022].
- (14) Stlko Vet (2022) 'Entry Restrictions for Pets - Ukraine Crisis'. Available from: <https://stlko-vet.fli.de/de/aktuelles/einzelansicht/ukraine-krise/>, [accessed 8 October 2022].
- (15) UPAW (2022) 'Ukrainian Pet Association Worldwide'. Available from: <https://upaw.org/en/about#/>, [accessed 8 October 2022].
- (16) Four Paws International (2022) 'Ukraine War: Situation and Support for Animals'. Available from: <https://www.four-paws.org/campaigns-topics/topics/support-ukraine#:~:text=FOUR%20PAWS%20is%20able%20to,out%20more%20about%20the%20mission,> [accessed 16 August 2022].
- (17) Deutscher Tierschutzbund (2022) 'Ukraine: Hilfe für Tiere in Not'. Available from: <https://www.tierschutzbund.de/spendenportal/spenden/spendenprojekte/strassentiere-ukraine/krieg-in-der-ukraine-hilfe-fuer-tiere-in-not/>, [accessed 16 August 2022].
- (18) Save the Dogs and other Animals (2022) 'The Ukraine Situation in Numbers'. Available from: <https://www.savethedogs.eu/en/the-ukraine-situation-in-numbers/>, [accessed 16 August 2022].
- (19) Fondation Brigitte Bardot (2022) 'La FBB se mobilise pour venir en aide aux animaux victimes de la guerre en Ukraine'. Available from: <https://www.fondationbrigittebardot.fr/la-fbb-se-mobilise-pour-venir-en-aide-aux-animaux-victimes-de-la-guerre-en-ukraine/>, [accessed 16 August 2022].
- (20) President Zelenskyy official Instagram page (2022) 'Video of visiting Bucha'. Available from: <https://www.instagram.com/tv/Cb8METHA6vI/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y%3D>, [accessed 17 August 2022].
- (21) European Commission's response for the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals letter from 31 March 2022 'Call for urgent EU guidance and support to address the situation of refugees and animals in and from Ukraine'.
- (22) European Parliament 'Humanitarian aid' prepared by Padurariu Amelia. Available from: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/164/humanitarian-aid>, [accessed 16 August 2022].
- (23) Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996. Available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31996R1257&from=EN>, [accessed 28 August 2022].
- (24) Decision (EU) 2019/420 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2019 amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, Article 8. Available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32019D0420&from=en>, [accessed 28 August 2022].

- (25) Regulation (EU) 2021/836 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU, Article 1, paragraph 2. Available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32021R0836&from=en#d1e582-1-1>, [accessed 28 August 2022].
- (26) Wax E. (2022) 'Ukraine sends EU farm material wish list'. POLITICO Pro Agriculture and Food, [accessed 28 August 2022].
- (27) UPAW (2022) 'Animal Aid Request Database'. Available from: <https://upaw.org/en/#/>, [accessed 27 August 2022].
- (28) Sawyer J., Huertas G. (2018) 'Animal Management and Welfare in Natural Disasters', pages 21, 175. London and New York: Routledge. Available from: <https://www.routledge.com/Animal-Management-and-Welfare-in-Natural-Disasters/Sawyer-Huertas/p/book/9781138190696>.
- (29) Deutscher Tierschutzbund (2022) 'Evakuierte Tiere aus Odessa erreichen Deutschland'. Available from: <https://www.tierschutzbund.de/news-storage/ausland/210422-evakuierte-tiere-aus-odessa-erreichen-deutschland/>, [accessed 16 August 2022].
- (30) TF1 INFO (2022) 'On restera toujours ensemble: ces Ukrainiens qui fuient avec leurs animaux'. Available from: <https://www.tf1info.fr/international/video-l-exode-des-refugies-avec-leurs-animaux-2214288.html>, [accessed 16 August 2022].
- (31) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 222. Available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12016E222&from=EN>, [accessed 28 August 2022].
- (32) US Congress (2005-2006) 'H.R.3858 - 109th Congress: Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006'. Available from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/house-bill/3858>, [accessed 8 October 2022].
- (33) Glassey S. (2019) 'No animal left behind: a report on animal inclusive emergency management law reform'. Available from: [https://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE39389576](https://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE39389576).
- (34) US Congress (2019-2020) 'H.R.1042 - PREPARED Act'. Available from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1042/text>, [accessed 8 October 2022].
- (35) Congresswoman Dina Titus (2022) 'Rep. Titus Introduces Planning for Animal Wellness (PAW) Act'. Available from: <https://titus.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=3237>, [accessed 8 October 2022].
- (36) US Congress (2021-2022) 'S.4205 - 117th Congress: PAW Act'. Available from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/4205/summary/00>, [accessed 8 October 2022].
- (37) Humane Society International (2022) 'The Red Cross and Humane Society International send pet food into Ukraine to alleviate animal welfare crisis'. Available from: <https://news.cision.com/humane-society-international--europe/r/the-red-cross-and-humane-society-international-send-pet-food-into-ukraine-to-alleviate-animal-welfar,c3525010>, [accessed 17 August 2022].
- (38) European Commission (2018) 'DG SANTE Overview report Veterinary Preparedness for Natural Disasters'. Available from: [https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/overview\\_reports/details.cfm?rep\\_id=124&rep\\_inspection\\_ref=xxx](https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/overview_reports/details.cfm?rep_id=124&rep_inspection_ref=xxx).
- (39) WOAHO/OIE (2021) 'Guidelines on Disaster Management and Risk Reduction in Relation to Animal Health and Welfare and Veterinary Public Health'. Available from: <https://www.woah.org/en/document/disastermanagement-ang/>.
- (40) Braam D.H. (2022) 'Excluding livestock livelihoods in refugee responses: A risk to public health', Journal of Refugee Studies, Volume 35, Issue 2, June 2022, Pages 910–928. Available from: <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/35/2/910/6525020>.
- (41) European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (2018) 'Rome Declaration of Stakeholders Securing Europe's Prosperity - Reducing Risk of Disasters'. Available from: [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/57664\\_romedeclaration2018.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/57664_romedeclaration2018.pdf).
- (42) University of Cambridge (2022) 'Protection of refugee animals is vital to support livelihoods and health' by Braam D.H. Available from: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/refugee-animals>, [accessed 15 August 2022].
- (43) US Department for Homeland Security (2007) 'Shelter Operations: Pet-Friendly Shelters'. Available from: <https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/FEMAPetShelteringbestpractices2007.pdf>.
- (44) United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction 'Our World at Risk Transforming Governance for a Resilient Future'. Available from: <https://www.undrr.org/gar2022-our-world-risk>, [accessed 26 October 2022].
- (45) No Natural Disasters Campaign. Available from: <https://www.nonaturaldisasters.com>, [accessed 8 October 2022].





[eurogroupforanimals.org](https://eurogroupforanimals.org)



[Act4AnimalsEU](https://twitter.com/Act4AnimalsEU)



[eurogroupforanimals](https://www.instagram.com/eurogroupforanimals)



[eurogroup-for-animals](https://www.linkedin.com/company/eurogroup-for-animals)



[eurogroupforanimals](https://www.facebook.com/eurogroupforanimals)

**Published by:** Eurogroup for Animals, January 2023

**Author:** Valentyna Vozna  
(Ukraine TaskForce Coordinator at Eurogroup for Animals)

**Contributors:** Members of the Ukraine TaskForce at Eurogroup for Animals & the external reviewers Dr. Dorien Braam, Steve Glassey, M.Sc. Gerardo Huertas, Pierre Sultana, Dr. Jackson T. Zee

**Editors:** Iwona Mertin (Companion Animals Programme Leader at Eurogroup for Animals) & Marie Cochet (Communications Officer at Eurogroup for Animals)

**Layout & Design:** [Blush Design Agency](#)

© Eurogroup for Animals 2023

*All pictures' copyrights belong to Eurogroup for Animals, are free of rights or accredited to their owner.*

**EUROGROUP  
FOR  
ANIMALS**