

The Prime Minister of Spain
Senor J L R Zapatero
Palacio de la Moncloa
Edf. Semillas 28071
MADRID
Spain

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you to voice my concerns about the severe maltreatment of galgos in Spain.

As you are aware, galgos are used in hunting hares. Hunting hares with galgos has been banned in the rest of Europe. Spain is the only remaining country which practises such a thing. For many years now, the people of Spain have been against this, and their opinion has been ignored.

In other countries galgos are pets, the noblest of noble, with their gentle and loving natures. In Spain, galgos are regarded as the lowest of dogs, unless they are used in the hunting or racing world.

In Spain, the galgo is totally misunderstood, only thought of as a hunting dog, one that 'wants to hunt and run'. This is a fallacy, quite untrue. These dogs are obliged to hunt because most are starved into being hungry enough to chase. In the hands of a hunter, a galgo is kept in cold sheds, or outdoors in all weathers, chained to the same wall they have been chained to all their life and, on completion of the hunt season, considered too time consuming to keep, so abandoned without care. Thrown away like a cigarette end.

Not that they were ever looked after in the first place, stale crumbs of bread at the weekend, or when someone remembers, is no way to keep a dog. Their owners take out many of their frustrations on the dogs in beatings, and then hangings! They are hung from trees, dropped into wells, burnt alive, and the list goes on. This I know you are aware of by the many campaigns and the many letters which are sent to you.

My question is this – why have you ignored such abuse?

Some 50,000 galgos are left abandoned at the end of the hunting season, not to mention the numbers which aren't able to be rescued, because they've been hidden so they can meet their horrendous deaths alone. This is a staggering amount of abuse. Alongside that, the council-run shelters often take in 30 or so galgos at a time from hunters, and these dogs face ending their lives in cold shelters without care or chance of adoption. So the local councils erase the truth, that if they did not take these dogs, they would be answerable as to why there are galgos being abandoned or hung. This way, it's clean and tidy and no-one will know. WRONG, it makes them as bad as the hunters.

It is a sad fact that many Spanish people are ashamed to be Spanish because of the abuse of animals, lack of animal welfare and the massive lack of a campaign for welfare awareness in Spain. An educational campaign should be run, as happens in neighbouring European

countries, to teach everyone in Spain, young and old, to respect and look after ALL animals. Spain needs a national law to protect its animals and to stop hunting with galgos. It would be better for Spain to be known for this, rather than deplored for the abuse to animals, which is its current reputation.

It is time Spain joined 2008 in this respect, there is no need to allow such abuse, nor to ignore it. It is time Spain woke up to the damage it is doing to its animals. Animals should have rights, they are not entertainment toys. The people of Spain do not want galgos to be abused any longer.

Unless this happens, Spain is going to lose out, people will stop visiting.

Please listen to the public of Spain and the rest of the world, not the minority who like to hunt. Create a law to stop hunting with galgos. Ensure the law in Spain forbidding the maltreatment of animals is enforced, and enforce also the consequences of breaking these laws.

Yours