

KORINA

Friends of Dogs



Prijatelji Pasa



Animal Welfare Challenges and Opportunities in Montenegro

**REPORT ONE: A REVIEW OF COMMUNITY DOG
AND CAT CONTROL, POLICY AND PRACTICE**

**Association Korina – Friends of Dogs Montenegro – Network for Animals
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ANIMAL WELFARE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MONTENEGRO
REPORT 1 – A REVIEW OF COMMUNITY DOG AND CAT CONTROL, POLICY AND PRACTICE

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Executive Summary

This first report in our series on animal welfare issues in Montenegro explores stray dog and cat control policies and practice at local municipality level. The research aimed to identify common problems and challenges related to community animal welfare, and raise awareness of and opportunities for stronger joint working between civil society, the NGO and statutory sectors. It is complemented by our second report which examines the extent to which municipal animal shelters in Montenegro meet the legal standards and regulations prescribed in law.

The research did not aim to replicate the role of statutory authorities in monitoring or inspection, but to take a wider overview of what is currently being undertaken, planned or funded in different municipalities, and what barriers are preventing more strategic animal welfare action.

The methodology involved developing a questionnaire based on the law on animal welfare and associated guidance and legislation¹. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was sent to all municipalities with an explanatory letter, and the request followed up by telephone calls. Surveys were emailed back for collation and analysis. Overall 60% (14 of 23) municipalities replied, with the highest response rate from the Northern region.

What is most glaringly obvious from this study is the over-reliance on the provision of dog shelters as a solution to the issue of abandoned animals, uncontrolled breeding, animal cruelty and irresponsible pet ownership. Furthermore, attention to the welfare and control of community cats is almost entirely absent despite uncontrolled breeding by stray cats being a significant problem in many areas. Animal shelters alone will never solve the problem of stray and abandoned dogs and cats, and it is essential for every local municipality to develop a detailed strategy and programme for controlling the dog and cat population at local level in partnership with local communities.

Key findings include:

- Only 28% (4 out of 14) reported an active strategy for dog population control in place.
- The most commonly stated action was provision or planned provision of a dog shelter, with few reported actions aimed at preventing the abandonment or uncontrolled breeding of dogs or cats.
- Only two municipalities officially support or provide trap-neuter-release programmes for dogs, and none for cats. However, ten municipalities indicated that they would be interested to further explore this option, especially if support, guidance and funds were available.

¹ Law on the Protection of the Animal Welfare Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro, No. 014/08, 040/11, 047/15), Ordinance on conditions to be fulfilled for pensions and shelter for abandoned animals - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (29/5/2015).

- Reasons given for having no strategy in place included a lack of clarity in the law – for example relating to trap-neuter-release programmes - indicating a need for strategic guidance.
- There is a lack of data on numbers of street dogs and cats, and the lack of a national microchip database or ownership register hinders effective planning and control.
- Reported amounts spent on community dog and cat control in 2017 varied from under 1000 euros to 72 000 euros.
- Only one area reported that funding was planned for NGOs to work on animal welfare projects, which suggests a limited recognition of the NGO role and an opportunity to stimulate better partnership working with NGOs in this field.
- The majority of municipalities have adopted local laws on animal welfare and the conditions and manner of keeping pets, but the extent of application and enforcement of these local laws remains unclear.
- Half of the respondent municipalities had experienced incidents of dog or cat poisoning in the street, although they did not all have regulations or procedures in place to deal with them.
- Few areas support or deliver outreach education programmes related to responsible pet ownership and animal welfare, and only 2 had active community-based education programmes in partnership with NGOs in place.
- The commonest public complaints about animals relate to dog bites, poisoning and poor pet ownership. Bites from both stray and owned dogs do not occur in all areas but are of significant concern in some, with two areas reporting 30 to 40 such events. In addition to the human health cost, total compensation reportedly paid by respondents in 2016-17 was over 112000 euros.
- Few areas had considered alternatives to large municipal shelters as a way of dealing with abandoned dogs, for example by supporting smaller community-based foster placements.
- The majority of municipalities were willing to consider co-financing projects with regional or national reach.
- There was an unexpectedly low number of reported cases of cruelty to animals or violations of the animal welfare law, considering the high numbers of cases witnessed by animal welfare NGOs. It is thus unclear if the low reported incidence is due to a true lack of cases, or a lack of cases being widely reported or recorded.
- The main stated barriers to fully implementing animal welfare laws and programmes were lack of finance, infrastructure (perceived to mean shelters), and a lack of knowledge or expertise and a lack of public support.

Specific recommendations are summarised at the end of the report and should be considered by the State Animal Welfare Council, the Veterinary Administration, NGOs and municipalities themselves to inform future work plans.

We strongly recommend the following priority actions:

1. All municipalities should identify a lead person at cabinet level with animal welfare oversight as a designated part of their job, and set up a multi-disciplinary local animal welfare council to meet at least twice a year to oversee the improvements/construction of the shelters or foster homes, implement relevant national strategies and develop local strategies for better control of abandoned animals, with clear lines of accountability.
2. Local governments that have not yet established shelters should develop them only alongside population control and responsible ownership programmes, because significant ongoing financial commitment and managerial support is needed to ensure animal welfare standards are met within shelters.
3. There is scope to strengthen partnerships between civil society, NGOs and statutory bodies, especially with regard to outreach, education, volunteering in shelters, and promoting responsible pet ownership and animal welfare and care.
4. Different models of care for stray and abandoned animals should be considered and provided for in legal guidance, including community based foster care for small groups of animals, shared shelters between municipalities, private shelters, and community trap-neuter-release programmes in areas where community dogs and cats are tolerated and cared for.
5. Regarding animal cruelty, only a detailed analysis of actual police complaints and outcomes will tell us more about how such issues are reported and dealt with, and this may be worthy of a separate study in the future.

1. Background and purpose of the project

Network for Animals (NFA), an International animal welfare NGO, funded this project, which was carried out by Korina Animals and Friends of Dogs NGOs. The aim was to undertake a structured assessment of stray dog and cat control and related welfare issues in Montenegro, in order to:

- Try and identify common problems municipalities face in complying with animal welfare legislation, to help NFA to prioritise future donations and support work in the region
- Identify common concerns and barriers to progress and ways we can work together to solve them
- Enable NFA and partner NGOs to participate usefully and knowledgably in discussions with the vet administration as animal welfare laws and strategies are updated
- Highlight instances where municipalities are unable to comply with the current laws, and incidences of animal cruelty, to inform lobbying and reform
- Share good practice.

Our aim is not to focus on or inspect individual problems, but rather to take a snapshot view and try to identify and collate common issues to inform our future work.

2. Methodology

Our project was undertaken in two phases:

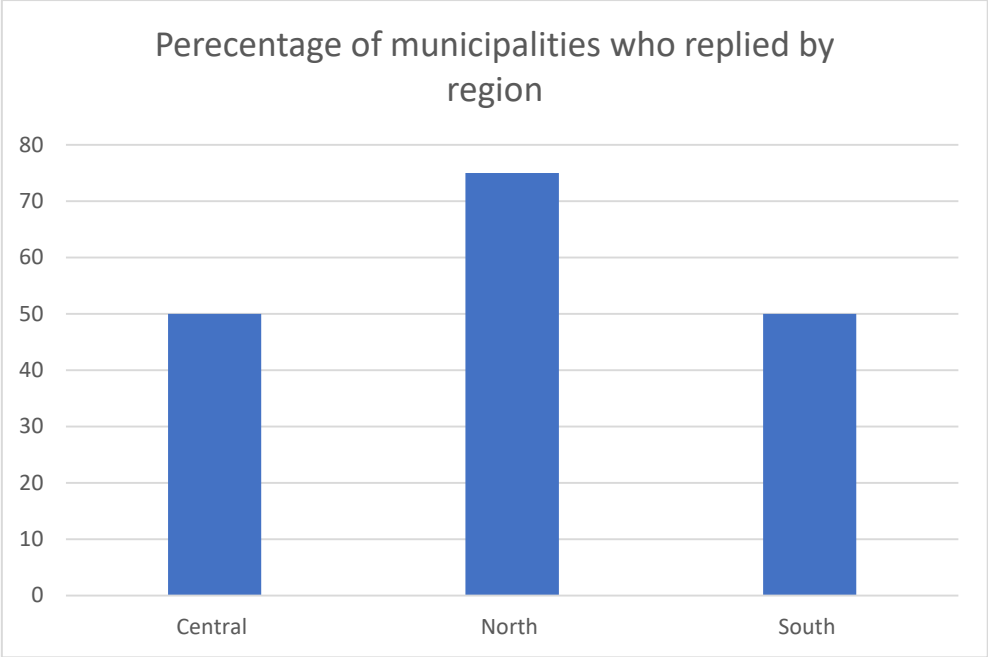
1. A questionnaire (appendix 1) was sent to all municipalities with an explanatory letter, and the request followed up by telephone calls. Surveys were emailed back for collation and analysis.

2. All municipal dog shelters were visited to gather information about how the shelters are run and funded, what problems they face, and what sort of support from NGOs like NFA might be most helpful to them. The shelter facilities were compared against the standards enshrined in law, using a standardised checklist.

All of the assessments and questions were based on the law on animal welfare and associated guidance and legislation. Report one this series summarises the results of the questionnaire survey with associated recommendations, and report two the municipal shelter visits and recommendations. The reports will be distributed to mayors/ lead people in each municipality in hard copies, key municipal stakeholders, the Vet administration and NGOs and soft copies widely distributed. We will be happy to come and present the findings to interested groups.

3. Survey results and key issues

Overall 14 out of 23 municipalities replied, i.e. 60%, but a significant number provided scant information. It interesting to note that the highest percentage response rate was from the Northern region, which also has the highest number of municipalities, and so results may be particularly representative of these areas. It is also interesting to note that only 4 of the 8 municipalities who do actually have a municipal dog shelter replied to the survey. This is possibly due to a weakness of the research method, in that busy people cannot always find time to respond to surveys, or that the correct person to complete the questionnaire was not identified and contacted.



However, all non-respondents were telephoned at least twice, and it also points to a lack of coordination or joined up working within municipalities, with different departments responsible for different aspects of animal welfare (e.g. Communal police and services, cabinet, environmental control). **Having an identified lead person at cabinet level in each municipality with stray animal and animal welfare oversight as a designated part of their job may be a useful way to improve this.** The low response rate may also highlight the lack of priority that animal welfare issues are given in general. It should also be noted that the second element of this research involved visiting and collecting information about each municipal shelter so the experience of all municipalities with shelters is captured, albeit in a different way, in report two of the series.

The following is a summary of answers and key issues identified.

3.1 Strategies for solving the problem of stray dogs and cats



Only 28% (4 out of 14) reported an active strategy in place. All those with a strategy or planned strategy indicated that it is provision of a dog shelter. Two municipalities reported they had plans to build a shelter that were not yet fulfilled, although reasons for this were not provided. One area is planning to contract with another area to use their shelter facilities. No municipality mentioned any strategies or funding related to cats, although this was included in the questionnaire. Three areas that do not have a shelter of their own contract with neighbouring municipalities to use their

shelter space, although in some areas where this has been attempted it is not possible due to overcapacity in neighbouring shelters.

“Because of having problems with abandoned dogs and not having a shelter during 2017 we contracted shelters in adjacent municipalities, in order to take care of a certain number of abandoned dogs... But, because their capacity was full they could not help us, we could not sign the agreement/contract on cooperation.”

“In our opinion, the basis to adopt strategic documents on local level must be given as an obligation in the Law for that sector (Law on protection of welfare of animals), which would clearly define the content of local strategy in order to unify the content of that planning document in all units of local self-government on territory of Montenegro, in a way that would be mutually comparable”.

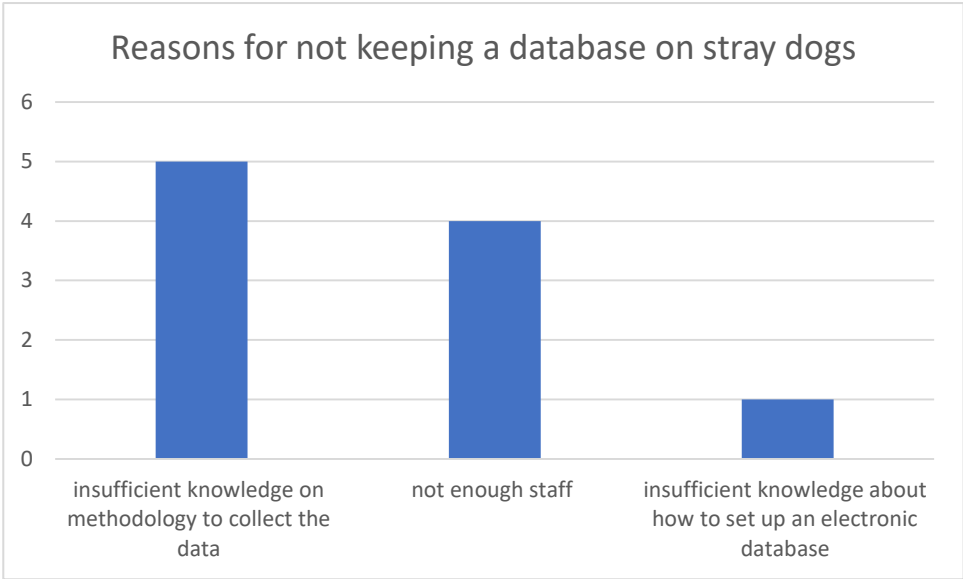
“...state level strategy is required.”

Only one municipality reported an active control strategy that includes keeping dogs at the shelter for 30 days, vaccinating and sterilising them and releasing them back to the street if not claimed within 30 days to control and reduce numbers in the shelter. **Reasons given for having no**

strategy in place included a lack of clarity in the law, indicating a need for strategic guidance.

3.2 Register of stray dogs

Each area is required by law to keep a register of animal accommodation facilities, and every municipality with a shelter must keep a register of all animals found, which is open to the public.



The estimated numbers of stray dogs per municipality that indicated a number were from virtually none to 100. One municipality mentioned that there is also no state level register for stray or owned dogs. Only 2 municipalities stated that they kept a register of stray dogs, although this may be due to the person completing the questionnaire not having full information available. One municipality with a shelter reported that they keep no register.

Those with a register stated that it was available openly to the public, but no information was provided by any municipality about whether their registers were kept in electronic or written format. The reasons provided for not keeping a database are shown above, and clearly indicate a need for practical knowledge and support in how to estimate the numbers and how to set up a working database.

“There is no proper register on how many dogs are there in Azil, how many went through Azil and how many got eutanized.”

“Municipality has no register of abandoned animals on the street. Employees in the Shelter for abandoned animals register only received animals which are caught in the street or when citizens bring them

Reasons given include difficulties in identifying stray dogs in rural municipalities (with some areas over 90 rural) where most dogs are “owned” but left to roam free, the lack of a shelter with central responsibility to collate the data, a lack of clarity in the law, and a need to link to vet practices in the area to collect data, as shown in the quotes in the text box .

It is interesting to note that the existence of a shelter is seen by many as a key prerequisite to collecting the data on the numbers of stray dogs, but in fact the number of stray dogs is required to be kept regardless of

whether a shelter is provided. In fact, evidence of need (the number of stray dogs) should inform whether a shelter is indicated at all, or whether a different strategy would be more appropriate and cost effective. It is also impossible to monitor the progress of any strategy over time without collecting baseline data. **Thus the work to support municipalities to properly assess need and collect data about the local dog population should be seen as a key priority.**

“ also sub-laws are not in accordance in right way (to put obligation on this subject)”

“database.....should be connected with registers of the vet ambulances”

“After fulfilling of the mentioned pre-condition (to have a shelter), staff should be employed which would be trained for collection and forming the database and which would have skills about the methodology of collection and data processing”

“lack of knowledge about forming the electronic database and lack of equipment (computers) for forming the electronic database could be solved via donations from IPA funds and other sources of financing”

“Every beginning includes required knowledge in the field but so far no work is being done on that”.

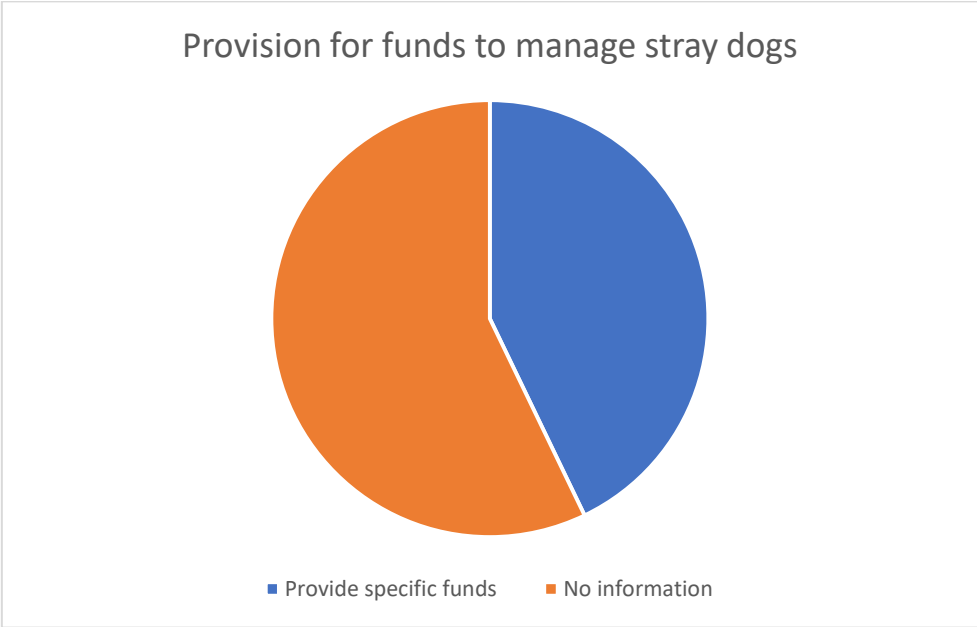
3.3 Register of stray cats

No municipalities keep a register for stray cat numbers, and none have a dedicated facility to deal with stray cats. The number of stray cats estimated by one municipality was 50, no others gave a figure. Some areas reported no visible stray cat problem, and **only one area stated they are considering opening a shelter for stray cats.**

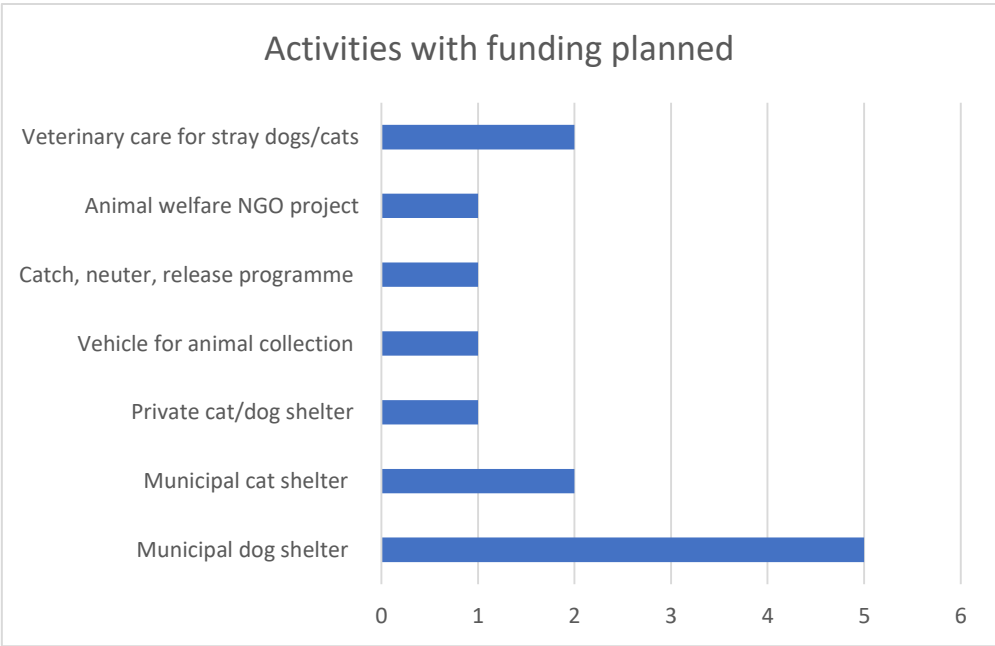
3.4 Municipal funding

Six municipalities indicated that they have specific funds identified or agreed to manage stray dogs, while 8 did not. The majority were to fund municipal shelters, as previously indicated. Two funded staff and vehicles to collect stray dogs, and two funded veterinary care for dogs in their shelters. One municipality funds an NGO to provide veterinary care to street dogs.

Seven municipalities reported future plans to fund new activities, for example with 150 000 euros earmarked in the budget in one municipality to build a shelter for abandoned pets. Five state that they have plans to provide funding for municipal shelters, and two of those state plans for a range of support activities including provision of vehicles, and veterinary care. **However, it is unclear whether these plans are aspirational rather than concrete, with only one area specifying an already earmarked amount.**



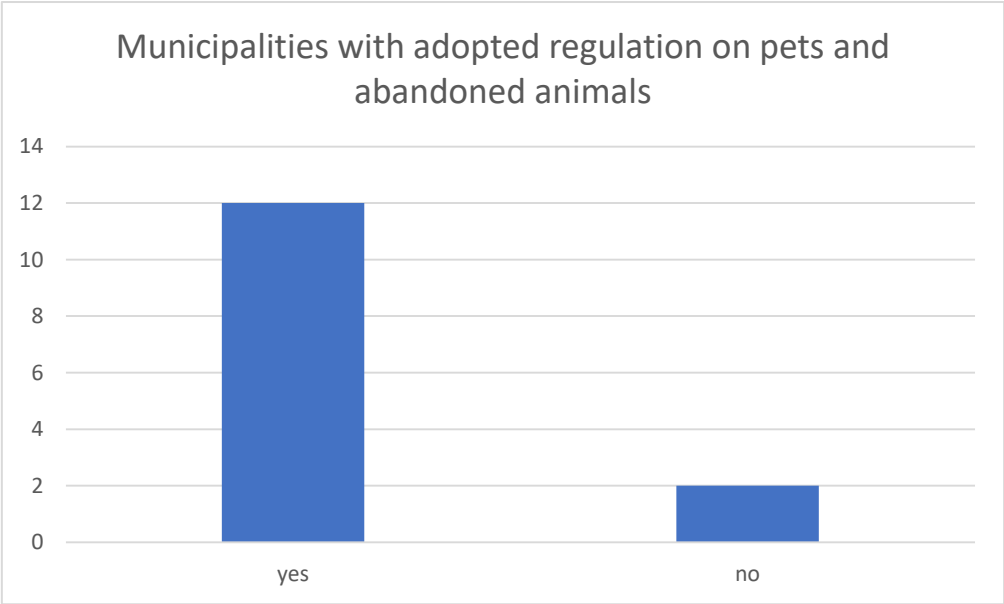
However, only one area reported that funding was planned for NGOs to work on animal welfare projects, which suggests a **limited recognition of the NGO role and an opportunity to stimulate better partnership working with NGOs in this field.** It is an area where much expertise exists and there is potential for closer working between municipalities and NGOs, especially if the opportunities for civil sector funding increase.



Furthermore, there were **no reported funding plans for control of illegal kennels or programmes to reduce the stray dog population**, both of which are key issues for long term management of the stray animal population. This indicates an **urgent need for longer term strategic planning, and high-level leadership and legislation, because shelters alone will not solve the stray dog problem.**

3.5 Locally adopted laws and regulations

The majority of municipalities have adopted local laws on animal welfare and the conditions and manner of keeping pets, mainly reported to be based on state legislation. Most also provided copies of references to the appropriate Gazette. It is reassuring to note that those who do not have locally adopted laws have plans in place to adopt them. **The extent of application and enforcement of these local laws needs further investigation in order to better assess their effectiveness. This issue should be considered as part of the wider review on the Animal Welfare Law taking place in 2019.**

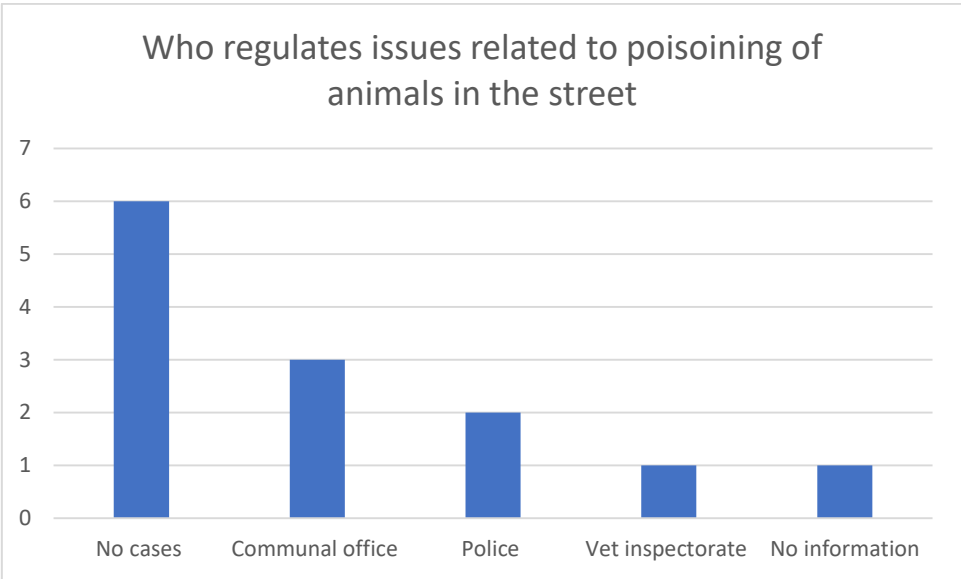


3.6 Poisonous substances

Respondents were asked to clarify what regulatory systems were in place and who had responsibility for clearing poisonous substances from communal areas in cases where dog / cat poisoning had been reported.

Six municipalities reported that they had had no reports of any such incidents, and four reported there were no regulations related to this issue. One notably reported that there had been no cases in the years since the shelter was opened. One area noted that poisonings reported tended to be related to owned cats and dogs. With no information provided by one area, this shows that half of the municipalities had faced such incidents, although they did not all have regulations or procedures in place to deal with them. **This is of**

significant concern with regard to both animal and human health and welfare. Those that had experienced poison in public areas indicated a range of responses and responsible agencies, including police, communal services and the vet inspectorate.



This does indicate a lack of a standardised response to the issue, weakness in local regulatory structures, alongside a need to strengthen the state law on this issue and related penalties, as indicated in the quotes below. **Ideally there should be a standardised response system to such incidents, including assertive police action and investigation.**

“...changes of the Law on protection of welfare of animals is needed, because in our opinion, there is a "legal vacuum" on that issue, we should have norms about how we are obliged to act in the described situation, and in our opinion, there should also be a norm regulating the procedure, and who has the right qualifications and technical equipment for removal of dangerous substances in accordance with the appropriate regulation.”

“Irregular and non-qualified removal of dangerous substances by non-qualified people who are not in charge, beside the harmful influence on animals, could also create negative effects on health of people and environment. Additions and changes to current mentioned Law should also prescribe stronger penalties for perpetrators of such events.”

3.7 Animal welfare education programmes

Only 2 municipalities were aware of any specific school-based animal welfare educational programmes, although there was acknowledgement that some such education does take place within the curriculum. Two areas were aware of education programmes delivered in

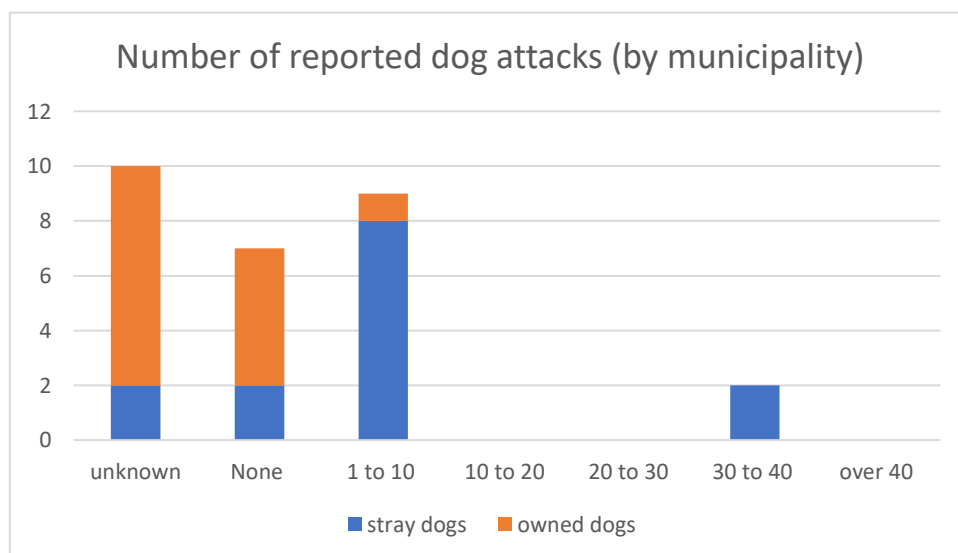
“It is important for education to start with the youngest children. Our opinion is that educative programs/projects of this kind would have more effect where there are existing shelters, where children could on the spot have practical examples, and in that way get better education about how to treat abandoned animals. This in our opinion would have more effect than pure theory about the problem.

partnership with NGOs, and two further indicated that they would be prepared to consider such options if funding were available. Two areas suggested such programmes could usefully be developed in partnerships between municipalities, NGOs and schools, recognising the

usefulness of NGOs who are able to talk about their experiences on the ground. Creating opportunities for children in visiting shelters to see the reality of the problem was also suggested.

3.8 Reported dog attacks

Respondents were asked about the numbers of reported attacks by both stray and owned dogs. While 2 areas could not provide information on numbers of reported attacks by stray dogs, and two stated there were no reported incidents, ten areas provided information from their records of reported cases. In most areas (8) there were less than 10 such incidents, but alarmingly two areas reported between 30 and 40 reported attacks, indicating an issue of some concern. These were municipalities with significant sized towns, but also areas with shelters which should indicate fewer strays on the street. It may be that having a recognised strategy and lead person for stray dog issues facilitates reporting.



It should be noted that no information was collected on the validity or outcomes of the reports. Most areas reported that they either did not have information about attacks by owned dogs, or that there were none reported, with only one reporting that there were

between 1 and 10 such reports. Thus, reported attacks by owned dogs are perceived as less of an issue. However, one area did state clearly that many of the incidents reported as stray dog attacks were likely to be actually from owned dogs that were not controlled by their owners in the street, as in the quote shown. In areas where many dogs roam free even if they are “owned”, and in the absence of a national microchip registration scheme, it is almost impossible to know the true status of a dog.

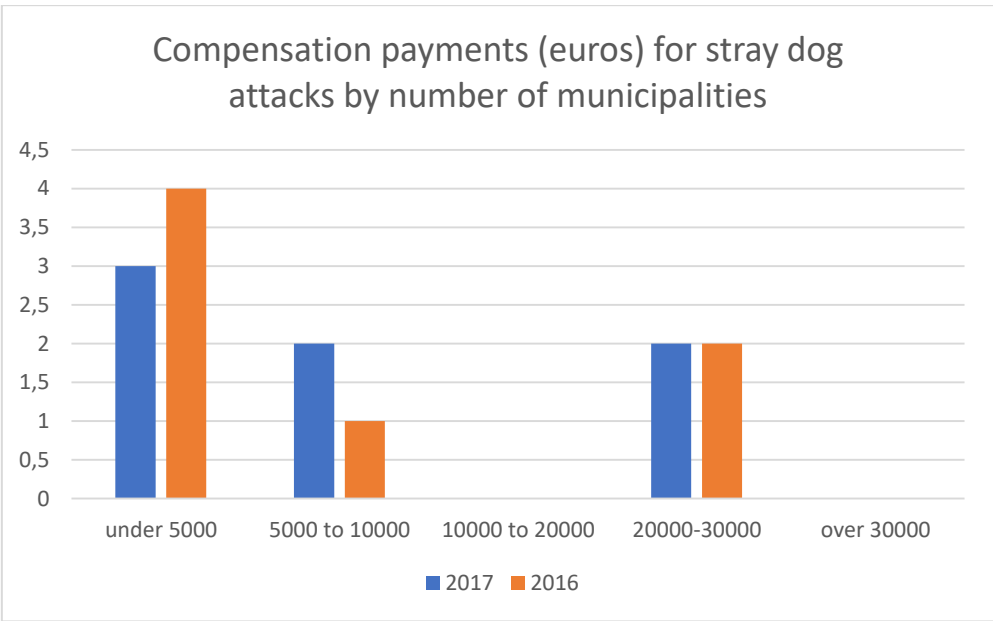
As for the attacks by the owned dogs, we don't have that information but we are 100% convinced that at least half of the reported cases of attacks by stray dogs were actually attacks by owned dogs which are free on the street, but there is no register of owned dogs and that is why it is impossible to prove that. As the register of pets is managed by the Ministry of agriculture and vet institution, we think that it is necessary to as soon as possible solve this problem within the Law, because stray dogs and cats on city streets are actually coming from irresponsible owners

Evidence does suggest that owned dogs are often more territorial than strays, which can be an issue in provoking attack. It is also possible that most cases are assumed to be from stray dogs, particularly if a full investigation is not followed. The data indicates between 68 to 160 bites reported per year in these 14 municipalities, clearly an area needing further investigation.

The amount of compensation and court costs paid for attacks from stray dogs varied, with 7 municipalities reporting no payments made, and the others in total paying **112,733.00 euros** in 2016-2017. This is a significant sum, but there was large variation in the amount paid, with most areas total payments being less than 10 000 euros, but two areas paying over 30 000 euros per year.

An effective dog population control strategy and registration scheme could clearly enable significant

cost savings in the long term.



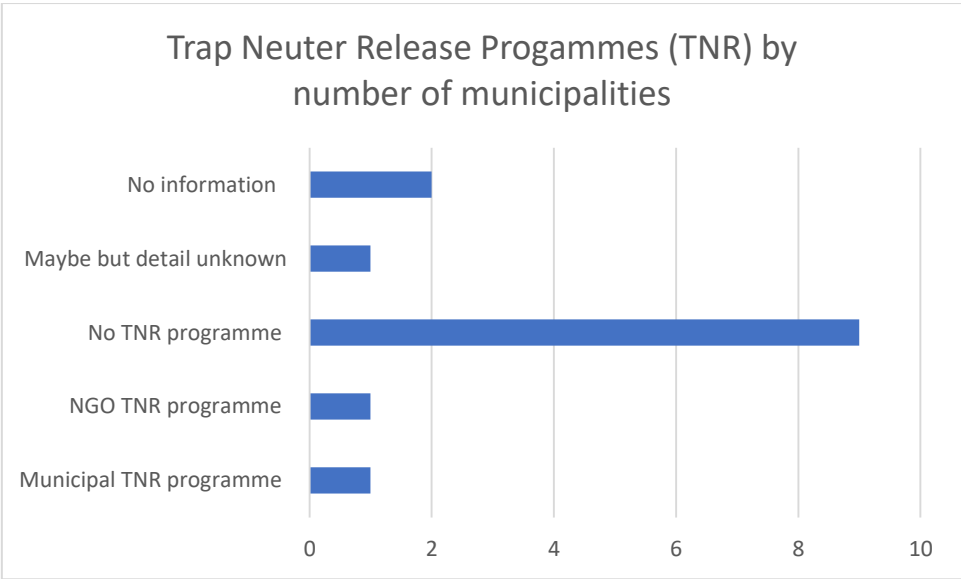
3.9 Foster care

Municipalities without a shelter or plan for a shelter were asked if they had considered funding for dogs to stay in “foster” homes instead. **This may be a more sensible, flexible and sustainable solution than building and staffing a large central shelter, especially for smaller municipalities.** It is also likely to provide better welfare conditions, for example if a maximum of 6 dogs were placed with any one foster placement. Six out of the seven municipalities in this position indicated that they would consider this, with one who did not know, suggesting it is a model worth developing, costing and discussing further. **It may be useful, and possible, for example to pilot this approach one area, although suitable supervisory structures would need to be in place.**

3.10 Trap-neuter-release programmes

A specific question was asked about whether any trap neuter release programmes were being undertaken, and if so by whom. In the majority of municipalities there was no officially endorsed programme, with only two areas having this type of programme for dog control, one led by NGO, one by municipality.

This suggests there is scope to explore the untapped potential for well-structured and well-plan TNR programmes. There is particular potential for this approach where there is a shelter with veterinary facilities already available. Ten municipalities indicated that they would be interested to further explore this option, especially if support, guidance and funds were available, as illustrated by the quotes shown.



“According to the design within the Shelter it was planned to build object for Vet ambulance which would do sterilization of abandoned dogs and cats, so we are very interested if there are any funds which would co-finance building the shelter so we can apply to build ambulance and after that start the program of sterilization.”

“Municipality would have to do this in cooperation with vet institution who works in municipality and some NGOs who are dealing with protection and welfare of animals We had no such initiatives until now but we are thinking about it and this variant if the conditions were met in terms of financing and staff (executors, participants in this activity).”

TNR programmes may not be suitable or successful for all areas, especially if only undertaken on an ad hoc basis or poorly planned. However, if they are based on a proper count of street dogs and properly managed such programmes can reduce the number of unwanted dogs, and may be particularly appropriate in areas where roaming dogs are generally tolerated. A “how to” guide outlining best practice and practical methodology of stray dog control may be useful for all municipalities, and could be produced by statutory authorities or a suitably qualified NGO.

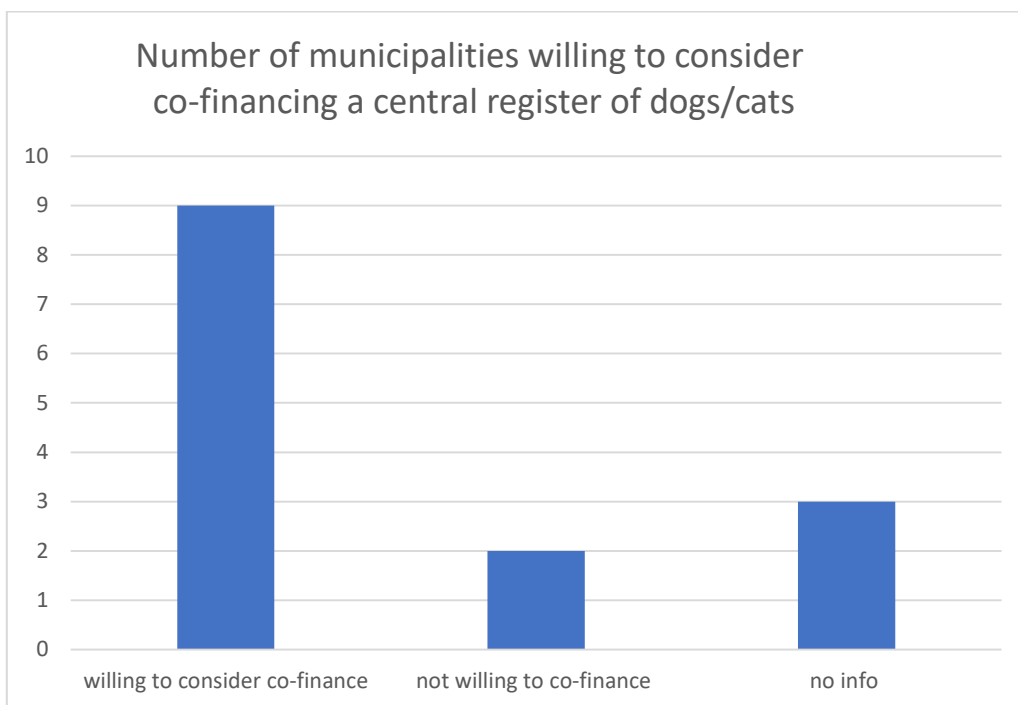
“If it is possible to use some concrete program we would be happy if someone presents it....the municipality would definitely show interest , understanding and will for improvement in this field.”

“We would certainly consider possibility of creating such program.”

“Having in mind the lack of experience of the bodies of local self-government in creating the mentioned program, we could cooperate with an NGO with experience in the field of animal protection. If the program with mentioned

3.11 Sharing costs of a central register of pets

We asked if municipalities would be willing to consider unified central register of dogs and cats, in order to help identification of abandoned pets and stray animals, so that movements of animals could be followed and sanctions of all breach of laws could be easier. We were interested in this question specifically as a method to help fund the development of a central database, so that microchips could be made mandatory for pet and shelter owners, as a tool to help to deal with non-responsible owners. While it should be noted that the situation has changed since the questionnaire development, in that the Ministry of Agriculture has now tendered to develop such a database with central funding, it is interesting to note the high level of potential support for co-financing projects that are seen to be useful to local areas. Two municipalities specified amount that could be available, from 1000 to 3000 euros. **It is worth exploring such possibilities going forward, especially where budgets for specific projects with value to all are considered, but need an initially large capital sum.**



3.12 Dealing with cruelty to animals

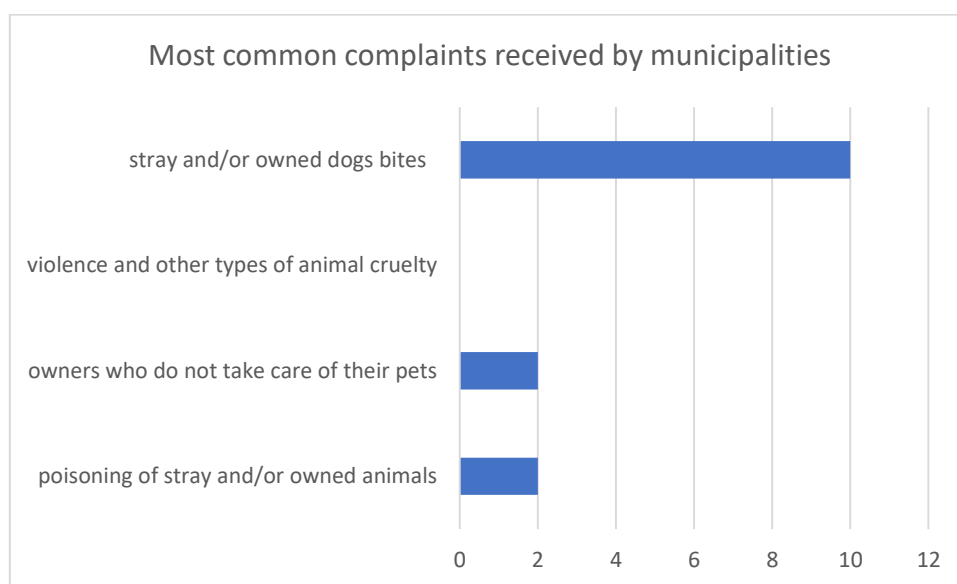
All municipalities except one reported that they have good co-operation with the police to deal with cases of reported violence against animals, or reported situations where animals were kept in inhumane conditions. However, it should also be noted that five areas reported that they had never had such cases, and across all areas except one only 9 such cases were mentioned as being reported between 2015 and 2017. Only one area suggested a higher number of incidents, with 43 cases investigated in total in the same period, but only 8 (18% of cases) resulting in misdemeanour warrants being issued. Not all of these cases resulted in sanctions, and some were referred solely to the vet inspectorate for action.

From this survey we cannot tell if the low reported incidence overall is due to a true lack of cases, or a lack of cases being widely reported or recorded. In the face of quite widespread anecdotal and actual evidence of cruelty against both dogs and cats submitted to most NGOs working in the field on a regular basis, this is an area that is worth exploring further, for example by asking in citizens surveys if they have witnessed cruelty or know where or how to report it if they do. Only an analysis of actual police complaints and outcomes will tell us more about how such issues are reported and dealt with, and this may be worthy of a separate study.

3.13 Public complaints

The vast majority of municipalities reported that the commonest complaints they received about animals related to dog bites. Poisoning and poor pet ownership were other areas of common complaints, as illustrated by the quote and graph below.

“the most common complaints refer to dog owners letting their dogs go free in the streets and parks.....Dogs are running away from owners and frighten people first of all children who don’t know if the dog is dangerous or not. For this issue we often have cases of arguments on the spot, and citizens complaining about the behaviour of dog owners”

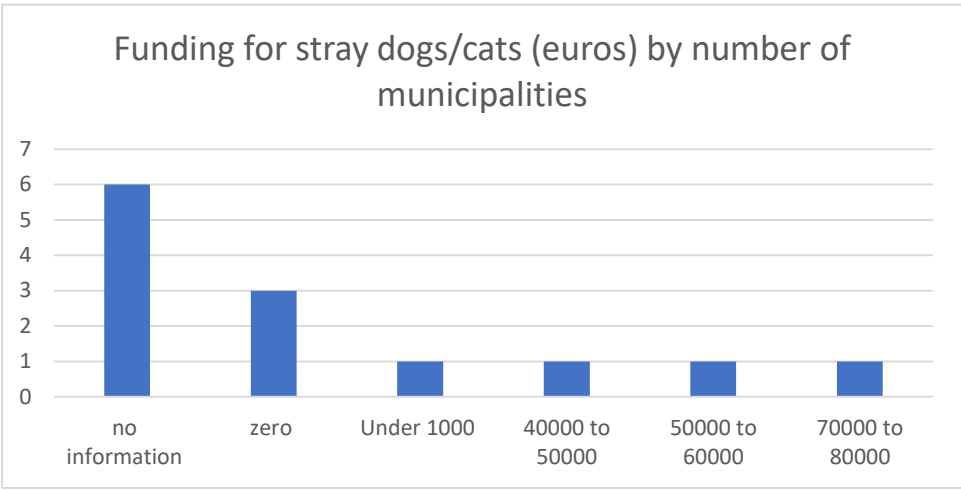


3.14 Funding for stray dog and cat control

Six municipalities were unable to provide data about the amount of funds spent from the local budget in 2017 for stray dog and cat control and care, and three had spent no money. Of those that did provide information there was huge variation, from under 1000 euros (for a sterilization programme) to 72,000 euros. There was no apparent correlation between the size of municipality or relative economic wealth, but where significant funds were spent they were all for dog shelters.

It is clearly unlikely that the stray dog cat situation will change significantly in areas where no funds are spent on control and care, but it is unclear whether this is related to a lack of perceived need, or simply too much competition from other budget areas. This reiterates the need to undertake a proper assessment of the country wide situation regarding stray dog/cat numbers, to identify areas where lobbying for more spending should be focused. **The data also highlights very differing amount spent on animal shelters, suggesting some**

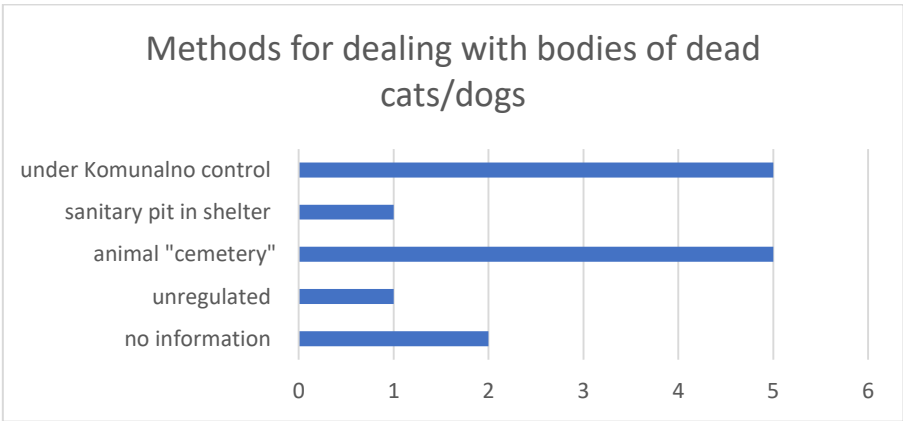
potential for sharing of good practice, cost control ideas, best value initiatives and management support. The second section of our report which analyses standards in shelters also highlights a variety of staffing ratios and job roles.



Furthermore, running a dog shelter clearly entails a significant ongoing spending commitment, and not just a large initial capital sum. Other problems identified in the process of constructing shelters (further discussed in report 2) included difficulty finding suitable sites, with public objections a key issue to overcome. Once a shelter is opened it is also likely to quickly reach capacity, leaving strays still on the street if no control is undertaken (e.g. TNR/responsible pet ownership programmes) or resulting in overcrowded and inhumane conditions. **This reinforces the need to look at alternative models such as funding TNR programmes and foster places for dogs /cats, which can allow more flexibility in spend as the population in need fluctuates.**

3.15 Dealing with bodies of dead cats/dogs

Respondents were asked about how they deal with the bodies of dead animals in their municipalities. Most reported that they are buried in communal pits (so-called “cemeteries”) according to regulations.

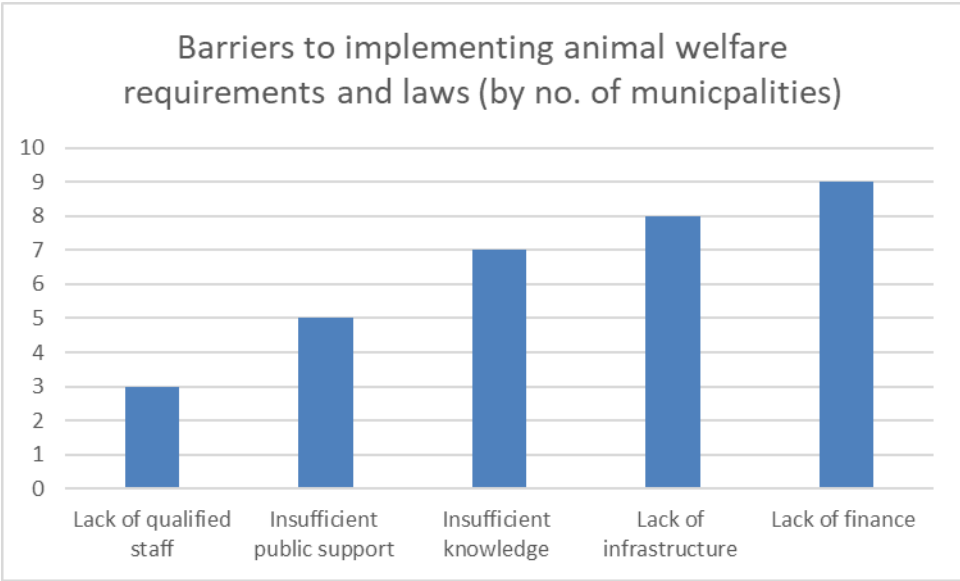


Where actual procedures were not specified, it was mainly stated that the issue is under the control of Public communal company local regulations and dealt with accordingly.

3.16 Barriers to implementing animal welfare and shelter laws

Respondents were asked to identify the main barriers they face in fully implementing laws and by-laws related to animal protection and shelter. They identified a range of issues, the commonest being lack of finance, infrastructure (perceived to mean shelters), and a lack of knowledge or expertise in the area, also reflected as a lack of qualified staff. Five indicated that lack of public support was also a barrier.

The lack of finance is a problem that is clearly of paramount importance, but it must also be considered in the context of the perceived solutions to the problem, in that 8 areas also identified a lack of infrastructure (shelter) as a problem. Indeed, finding capital funds to build a shelter is not an easy task, or a problem that is likely to be overcome easily. **This suggests there is scope for reassessing the potential solutions that municipalities can consider, taking a holistic and preventative view of animal welfare issues rather than focusing on shelters as a solution. Shelters alone cannot solve the problem of animal welfare and related issues.**



The fact that many municipalities also indicated a lack of knowledge and expertise in this area suggests a need to provide them with a clear range of other affordable measures, support better partnership working with other agencies (including state bodies, the police, and NGOs) who often do have the expertise needed, and to consider different models of care. Such a range of options could stimulate more dedicated action and interest if seen as more achievable than building a shelter, and **we strongly urge the Animal Welfare Council to provide municipalities with guidance on a range of other concrete options that they can implement.** The lack of expertise identified could also be addressed by developing and running some practical courses for better management of animal shelters and animal behaviour control.

3.17 NGO support and partnerships

Areas were asked what type of support they would like to get from the NGO sector in order to improve care and control of population of stray animals, and a range of suggestions were provided, including:

- Support work in shelters - for example by helping to re-home dogs and cats and providing advice to identify and acquire specialist technical equipment needed.
- Public education on responsible pet ownership/animal welfare, including in schools.
- Financial support, both via charitable donations and by providing training/assistance/partnerships/shared workshops on potential funding sources, for example through EU based projects or organizations. It is interesting to note this symbiotic relationship – with NGOs often requesting funds from statutory bodies, and statutory bodies expecting NGO help to access funds. It does indicate support and potential for more joint working and partnership bids for external funds.
- Lobbying for central microchip / registration database.
- Direct provision of projects (e.g. vaccination/sterilisation/temporary homing).

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Despite the questionnaire being completed by only 60% of municipalities, it provides a useful snapshot of key issues and helps to focus priorities for work and funding support for animal welfare. Recommendations are relevant to and should be considered by the State Animal Welfare Council, the Veterinary Administration, NGOs and municipalities themselves to inform future work plans. The general tone of replies and detail in the answers provided shows a high level of commitment and support at local level to improve the situation regarding animal welfare.

Key issues and recommendations to consider include:

Stray cats are largely invisible and neglected, despite being a significant problem in many towns. This is an issue that should be specifically addressed in the state animal welfare strategy.

The scope of the stray dog problem is not well defined, with most areas unable to clarify even the scale of the issue in terms of numbers of stray dogs. It is welcomed that the Vet Administration is currently leading an EU project in this area of expertise, and we recommend that all municipalities are supported to better quantify the problem in their areas to enable efficient and effective planning and use of funds in the future. Proper counts and assessments of stray dogs should be undertaken in all municipalities on a regular basis for both planning and monitoring purposes.

The fact that most municipalities do not have strategies in place or planned that address the root causes of the problem of stray animals (e.g. roaming dogs, unsterilized dogs, education of pet owners, control of illegal breeding kennels) suggests a clear need for better strategic guidance, training and support, which they identified themselves as priority issues.

Promoting animal welfare and positive attitudes in society is an important issue that will also provide a stronger mandate for action. National and local education and media campaigns should be developed and evaluated as a matter of urgency.

There was a stated willingness to consider TNR as part of a control strategy, but a lack of knowledge and expertise in this methodology. A “how to” guide outlining best practice and practical methodology of stray dog control may be useful for all municipalities, and could be produced by statutory authorities or a suitably qualified NGO.

The focus on shelters (or lack of them) is very narrow, especially in light of the fact that lack of funds is identified as a key barrier to action. Alternative models of caring for stray and abandoned dogs, such as paid foster care in private homes should be investigated and piloted.

There is a clear potential for closer working between municipalities and NGOs, and an expressed willingness to do this in many areas. In particular there is scope to develop more joint proposals for partnership funds which are a preferred model by many agencies and institutions supporting such civil sector developments. Joint workshops looking at current and future funding opportunities should be facilitated at national and/or local level.

In light of the continued reports of animals poisoning, stronger investigation, control and enforcement of the law must be established, and public anti-cruelty campaigns developed. ?

Significant funds are being spent annually on compensation for dog bites, although not all cases are fully investigated. Bites and dog attacks are perceived to be from both owned and stray dogs. The establishment of a central register of owners and mandatory microchipping will help to disentangle this issue, but enforcement of laws regarding pet ownership at local level must also be strengthened. Improving the health and welfare of community dogs, for example by vaccinating and trap-neuter-release programmes, will also reduce aggression and territorial fighting that can lead to bite incidents.

Educational programmes to promote responsible pet ownership and modern dog training skills should be considered, provided in partnership with NGOs or other experts.

There is scope to improve methods and processes for sharing good practice regarding strategy development and shelter staffing and management. Standardised competency based training for lead people at local level and shelter staff who are seen as local experts should be developed. For example, the Vet Administration in partnership with NGOs could develop and pilot practical courses for better management of animal shelters and animal behaviour control.

Outreach education in schools, with links to local NGOs and shelters can be valuable, but education departments should also be encouraged to take the lead regarding stronger consideration of animal welfare issues and responsible pet ownership throughout the school curriculum. Local municipalities should also consider local grants to support NGO provision of external and outreach educational programs, including pet ownership, wider animal welfare and safety around stray dogs. All education programmes must be evaluated.

Further research or work exploring public attitudes and knowledge is indicated to explore the disconnect between levels of anecdotal and witnessed animal abuse (e.g. via NGOs and social media) and the low levels of reported abuse via legal and regulatory systems. NGOs could work together to create a central data base of reported incidents, for example, to highlight this issue to relevant bodies. They could also act as advocates by encouraging, supporting and facilitating everyone who reports an issue to them to report it via an official route also. Only an analysis of actual police complaints and outcomes will tell us more about how such issues are reported and dealt with, and this may be worthy of a separate study.

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

Part I – All municipalities

1) Does your Municipality has a Strategy and/or plan for solving the problems of stray dogs and cats?

If yes, can you tell us something more about it?

If no, do you and when you are planning to adopt those?

2) Does your Municipality have a register of data on stray dogs in your municipality?

We are referring on evaluation of number of dogs who live on the street, no matter of dogs settled in shelter, private accommodation and pets.

3) Does your Municipality have a register of data on stray cats in your Municipality?

We are referring on evaluation of number of cats who live on the street, no matter of dogs settled in shelter, private accommodation and pets.

4) If yes, is your register:

a) in electronic form,

b) written form,

c) both?

5) If not, is it the reason for that:

a) not enough employees who would collect and prepare the data;

b) insufficient knowledge about the methodology of collecting of these data;

c) missing of knowledge on forming the electronic database;

d) missing of the computer for forming the electronic database;

e) other – please explain:

6) Is the access available to these data to the public if they exist?

7) Does your Municipality finance any of the mentioned :

a) municipal shelter for abandoned dogs,

b) municipal shelter for abandoned cats,

c) private shelter for abandoned dogs (owned by physical entity or NGO),

d) private shelter for abandoned cats (owned by physical entity or NGO),

e) vehicle /staff who is collecting and taking dogs and cats away from the street,

f) program for control of the illegal kennels,

- g) program for control of the population of stray dogs (catch, sterilize, let free program),
- h) projects of NGO in area of protection of welfare of animals,
- i) veterinary services for stray dogs,
- j) veterinary services for stray cats?

8) If it doesn't exist, do you plan financing any of the mentioned:

- a) municipal shelter for abandoned dogs,
- b) municipal shelter for abandoned cats,
- c) private shelter for abandoned dogs (owned by physical entity or NGO),
- d) private shelter for abandoned cats (owned by physical entity or NGO),
- e) vehicle/staff who is collecting and taking dogs and cats away from the street,
- f) program for control of the illegal kennels,
- g) program for control of the population of stray dogs (catch, sterilize, let free program),
- h) projects of NGO in area of protection of welfare of animals,
- i) veterinary services for stray dogs,
- j) veterinary services for stray cats?

9) Did your Municipality adopt regulation that regulates manner of keeping the pets and treatment of abandoned animals?

If yes, can you address us on it? We would be thankful if you sent us regulation attached with the fulfilled questionnaire.

If no, are you and when are you planning its adoption?

10) In what way is regulated the system of removal of the dangerous liquids and substances from the public surfaces which are potentially set to harm animals on the street (herbicides and pesticides and similar) in your municipality?

Explanation: Last year this time in the main park in Niksic it was noticed that there was a large amount of yellow substance that was many times before that noticed in cases of poisoning of dogs (type of forbidden pesticide kreozan). Volunteers of one association for protection of animals contacted all relevant bodies in town from representatives of Municipality to communal police, police to office for protection and saving and Public Communal Office, but nobody claimed in charge for such situation. Police officers made a report and took forensic sample, did not remove the substance but the citizens removed it on its own responsibility.

11) Do you know if there are educative school programs or projects from the field of protection of welfare of animals in your municipality?

12) How many cases of attack of stray dogs on people were recorded in 2017?

- a) unknown
- b) 0

- c) 1-10
- d) 11-20
- e) 21-30
- f) 31-40
- g) over 40

h) exact number (if you have it):

*not referred to owned dogs

13) How many cases of attack of owned dogs on people was recorded in 2017?

- a) unknown
- b) 0
- c) 1-10
- d) 11-20
- e) 21-30
- f) 31-40
- g) over 40

h) exact number (if you have it):

14) How much money did your Municipality give for paying the damage to people because of attack by stray dogs*:

- a) in 2017:
- b) in 2016:
- c) in 2015?

*not referred to owned dogs

15) If your Municipality did not found shelter for abandoned dogs, do you have contract on cooperation with some other municipality regarding the taking care of stray dogs?

If yes, which municipality and since when?

16) If your Municipality did not found the shelter for abandoned animals and got no finance to do so in near future, have you thought about possibility of financing the fostering homes for stray dogs or cats instead of building one big shelter?

17) Are there programs for controlling the population of stray dogs "catch, sterilize and let free" existing in your municipality which include collecting stray dogs, their sterilization, vaccination and bringing back to the location where citizens or volunteers are taking care of them?

- a) Yes, and our Municipality takes active participation in it,
- b) Yes, but our Municipality takes no participation in it,
- c) Doesn't exist,
- d) Maybe exists, but we are not informed,
- e) Other – please explain:

18) If it doesn't exist, would you consider creating such a programme?

19) If your Municipality was offered to co-finance creating unified central register of dogs and cats which would ease identification of abandoned pets and treated stray animals, so that inflow of new animals could be followed and sanctions of all breach of laws could be easier coming from non-responsible owners, would you be prepared to participate in such project?

If yes, what would be amount of contribution to the project from your municipality? (You can give approximate value.)

20) Do you have cooperation with police regarding the issues of violence over the animals and other types of breach of laws from this field?

21) How many cases of cruelty over the animals, inadequate keeping of animals and similar was reported to communal police in your municipality:

a) in 2017:

b) in 2016:

c) in 2015?

22) In how many of those cases did communal police issue the misdemeanour warrant?

23) What are the most common complaints which your municipality receives and refer to the following issues:

- a) poisoning of stray and/or owned animals,
- b) owners who take no care of their pets,
- c) violence and other types of cruelty over the animals,
- d) stray and/or owned dogs bites,
- d) other – please explain what

24) What is the total amount of money that your local self-government spent on control of population of stray dogs and cats last year? (This can be given in percentage comparing to the total budget of municipality.)

25) How is regulated the system of taking care of bodies of dead, killed by accident or put down stray animals in your municipality?

26. What are the main impediments in full implementation of the laws and by laws from the field of protection and keeping the animals in your municipality:

- a) insufficient support by the public,
- b) missing qualified staff from this field,
- c) insufficient knowledge about this fields,
- d) missing the required infrastructure,
- e) finance missing,
- f) that is not an important issue for us ,
- g) other – please explain what

27) What type of the support would you like to get from the NGO sector in order to improve care and control of population of stray animals?

Part II - Municipalities that established shelters for abandoned animals

28) When did the works on building of your shelter started and when got finished?

What were the biggest problems and impediments you have had in this period?

29) When did the shelter started with work and when it got permanent permit for work?

If shelter got no permanent work permit but only a temporal one or it is out of date, please note that here.

30) Does your shelter accept both types of animals: dogs and cats?

If no, do you plan to adapt your shelter or establish a new one for the type of animals which are not permitted now to stay at the shelter?

31) Does your shelter take a register of found animals and their care or putting down?

If yes, is this register in written or/and electronic form?

32) Do you have policy on killing animals which are in your shelter?

33) Have you had cases of killing healthy animals in your shelter last year?

If yes, how many and what were the reasons for such decision?

34) Have you had cases of killing ill animals in your shelter last year?

If yes, how many and what were the most common diseases?

35) How is the system of storing the bodies of deceased or put down animals regulated in your shelter?

36) How many employees are in your shelter and what is their structure? (Referring to types of works they do.)

Not referring to vet staff.

37. Does your shelter currently have signed agreement with some vet ambulance who does vet services for shelter or there is employed vet staff in shelter?

In the case of first option, which vet ambulance is it?

In the case of second option, how many permanently and temporally employed vet staff is there in your shelter?