

**THE REFORM OF ANIMAL WELFARE ACT**

# **STATEMENT**

# **NUMBER 2**

**AGAINST THE PROPOSED BAN OF ZOOPHILIA**

**10.11.2015**

**ADDRESSED TO**

The working committee for reforming the Animal Welfare Act (247/1996)  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

**FROM**

Suomen Eläintenystävien Foorumi (SEF; 'Forum of Finnish animal friends')  
(multiple writers)

**[TRANSLATION OF THE ORIGINAL FINNISH VERSION]**

(not word by word, but the general meaning)

## INTRODUCTION

This is the second statement by Suomen Eläinystävien Foorumi (SEF) against the proposed ban of zoophilia. SEF has previously sent a similar statement<sup>1</sup>, but with different contents. The intent of this statement is to complement the previous one with new facts and quotes from public discussions.

As in our previous statement, we oppose the ban of zoophilia. We're basing our statement on scientific sources.

## BACKGROUND

In Europe (e.g. Germany) and Scandinavia (e.g. Denmark, Sweden) zoophilia has recently been banned. The introduction of a zoophilia ban has been a result of strong lobbying by local animal rights organizations towards authorities. Based on investigating the backgrounds of the pro ban claims, they've been found misleading and even untruthful.

The reasoning for legislation changes must withstand critical evaluation. Based on studies zoophilia should not be presented as a necessary animal welfare matter.

## DISCUSSIONS ON ZOOPHILIA IN FINNISH MEDIA AND ABROAD

### 1) A RADIO PROGRAMME ABOUT ZOOPHILIA (YLE)

**Perttu Häkkinen** and **Panu Hietaneva**, radio journalists of YLE, in their programme<sup>2</sup> on 6.10.2015 interviewed **Tommi Paalanen**, the executive manager of Sexpo Foundation, the historian **Teemu Keskisarja** and a Finnish zoophile "**Jenna**" (name altered).

Attached are a few quotation from the programme:

**Paalanen:** *"In some countries, like Germany and Denmark, that are mainstream countries of bestiality, there has been this kind of political panic around this topic - maybe because of a one-off case. There have been some unbelievable, but unverified allegations about animal brothels for example. There's been some of this so-called ad-hoc lawmaking, meaning the topic has popped up and then they've had to rush in and do something. There are no particularly strong grounds for this kind of criminalization. Except some kind of disgust and anxiety regarding the topic, but I don't think that it is a valid justification for criminalization. We don't need legislation, designed to undermine an already marginalized group, to satisfy people's own anxiety and disgust."*

**Paalanen:** *"This [zoophilia] is a topic full of myths and conceptions and should be dealt with calm analytical thinking. -- In urban societies it has been noted that young and even a bit older women are those who fool around with pets. And it's usually accompanied by sort of a generally warmhearted relationship with the pet."*

**Keskisarja:** *"Even in the 18th century the authorities and courts noticed that severe public punishments didn't help in rooting out the sin -- but on the*

*contrary only stirred up the interest of the common people. So maybe we too should avoid waking the slumbering beast --."*

**Jenna:** *"It [zoophilia] is about intense caring, intimacy, and affection. Yes, also about the physical side, but hurting anyone involved is not part of it. -- It [banning zoophilia] isn't going to affect anything. Nobody can ever know for sure what happens within the walls of someone else's apartment."*

**Based on the information presented in the programme, banning zoophilia can't be thought of as necessary in any way.** There is no basis for it, nor would it have the desired effect. According to the words of the zoophile "Jenna", the claims of the aforementioned experts are correct. According to the executive manager of Sexpo foundation, the discussion on zoophilia is colored by false notions, isolated cases and sometimes untruthful claims.

## **2) MISLEADING ARGUMENTS IN A MAGAZINE (SAVON SANOMAT)**

The executive manager of Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto ry (SEY, 'The Union for Animal Protection Societies in Finland') **Maria Lindqvist** commented the executive manager of Sexpo Foundation **Tommi Paalanen's** views on zoophilia in an article<sup>3</sup> in Savon Sanomat on 15.10.2015. Tommi Paalanen has previously commented upon the reform of Animal Welfare act and the proposed ban on zoophilia in his blog<sup>4</sup> and in a radio programme<sup>2</sup> by YLE (see also point 1).

**A) According to Lindqvist** *"sex should always be an act between two consenting adults. An animal cannot give consent to the act."*

In reality an animal can clearly show its willingness or lack thereof to many matters, including sex<sup>5,6</sup> (see also point 3). In modern society humans make the decisions on behalf of animals in terms of eating, cutting claws, being alone and so forth. Zoophiles don't want to cause any suffering to animals, instead they base their relationship on pursuing common good, whilst respecting both parties<sup>1,2</sup>.

**B) Lindqvist says that** *"17 percent of Danish vets estimate to treating sexually abused animals."*

Lindqvist is misleadingly referencing a study made in Denmark in 2011<sup>7</sup>. According to the study, in reality only 7 percent had actually treated such animals during their entire career and on an annual level there are only single isolated cases across Denmark. According to another Danish study<sup>8</sup> vets only encounter one case of a possible abuse during their entire career. **The vets in the study didn't even see the ban necessary.**

**C) Lindqvist continues her arguments for banning zoophilia in Finland with the fact, that it has been banned in Europe.**

According to the Legal Affairs Committee of the Ministry of Justice, the law should always be based on a legal good ['oikeushyve'] that needs protection and strong evidence. As such, mimicking others, personal opinion or general disgust are not valid criteria. Besides, the ban has had mostly negative effects in Europe (see point 4).

### 3) NON-FICTION BOOK AWARDED WITH "ACHIEVEMENT FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION 2015"

Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto ry (SEY, 'The Union for Animal Protection Societies in Finland') has awarded<sup>9</sup> non-fiction author and biologist **Helena Telkänranta** with "Achievement for Animal Protection" -award on 2.10.2015. In her book "Millaista on olla eläin?" ('What is it like to be an animal?') Telkänranta describes animal sexuality as follows:

*"Probably all mammals have sexual emotions. We now know they are true emotions and not just automated reactions, like we've assumed in the past. It's likely, that **animals experience sexual desire as strongly as hunger or thirst**. Sexual pleasure is also presumed to be a powerful experience, as the sexual satisfaction in mammals is related to highly active opioid excretion. -- Like with other emotions, sexual experiences can be expected to include things both familiar and unknown to us. The difference in human sexuality is, that it's tied expectations and associations to our growth environment, culture and life experiences, which add their own layers to it."*

Animals enjoy sexual intercourse just like humans and take the initiative to sate the desire. Unlike other animals, we humans make the matter more complicated. It's cruel to keep an animal starved and thirsty and that applies to sexual deprivation. In modern society we consider mutilation as a solution. A simpler solution would be to enable a natural behaviour, that is both pleasurable and increases the well-being. An animal enjoys sexual experiences, even with members of other species or general objects<sup>2,5</sup>.

### 4) SITUATION IN EUROPE AFTER BAN

According to newspapers, elsewhere in Europe the law hasn't been enforced<sup>10</sup>, nor has it had any actual effect on zoophiles<sup>11</sup>. In Europe the legislation was driven<sup>12</sup> by false arguments and populist aspirations. As such, the ban has had mainly negative effects, like false reports leading to unnecessary burdening of the legal system and general moral law thinking. At the same time actual animal welfare problems may have been ignored. **Banning zoophilia elsewhere in Europe has had mainly negative effects.**

### 5) ISSUES IN COMMUNICATION

Against common conception of open legislation, Maria Lindqvist/SEY have declined from open communication, despite SEY having a representative in the working committee. SEY is advocating for banning zoophilia, yet demands us zoophiles to reveal our identities before any constructive conversation can even be considered<sup>13</sup>. We've already proven our existence to several reporters and our prior statements have been noted by the working committee - for some reason this isn't enough for SEY.

As of yet, we haven't been given a chance to read SEY's arguments/sources, on which they're actually basing their demands for the ban. We have, however, proven wrong all public claims in this and our previous<sup>1</sup> statement.

Members of Parliament openly pushing for banning zoophilia, like **Leena Meri** (ps.) and **Nina From** (ps.) have reacted negatively to deeper discussion<sup>14</sup>. Based on email conversations, it seems the reformation is being pushed to relieve feelings of personal disgust rather than to out of a genuine

need (see point 1).

We aim to create and maintain contact between the different parties. Our letter to the editor has been sent to over ten Finnish media. Through us reporters have organized live interviews with willing Finnish zoophiles. We've tried to rectify misinformation in the public (e.g. animal brothels), but usually our pleas fall on deaf ears. It also appears the threshold for publishing our editorial letters is very high. Nevertheless, we always strive for factual and proper argumentation.

Even though there is still ways to go before we have impartial news coverage, there has been a change for the better. We all must be able to discuss about difficult subjects without fanaticism and stay critical towards our own biases.

## EPILOGUE

Our email correspondence with the working committee for reforming the Animal Welfare Act has worked well in itself<sup>15</sup>. Although our prior statement has been noted in the preparation process<sup>1</sup>, the working committee is still going to propose banning zoophilia as a part of the large legislative package<sup>15</sup>.

In our previous statement<sup>1</sup> we've already disproved the pivotal arguments in favor of the ban. With this statement we'll hopefully disprove the rest. **How much more evidence of the false arguments, the ban's general uselessness and the actual harmfulness of the ban we still have to present?**

Banning zoophilia would be a moral prohibition, that wouldn't have any effect on peoples behaviour or the welfare of animals. The law couldn't even be monitored. Scientific studies don't support the ban.

**Banning zoophilia should rebuffed and shouldn't be proposed as a part of the reforming of the Animal Welfare Act.**

With kind regards,

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

- SEF** = Suomen Eläintenystävien Foorumi (SEF, 'Forum of Finnish animal friends'). A forum for Finnish zoophiles in the internet.
- SEXPO** = Sexpo Foundation has been working to promote sexual well being in Finland since 1969.
- SEY** = Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto ry (The Union for Animal Protection Societies in Finland). Lobbies for banning the zoophilia.
- ZOOPHILIA** = A love towards animals, which also includes the sexual part either in practice or fantasy.

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