

21st September 2020

For the attention of the Honorable Prime Minister of Portugal
Dr Antonio Costa
Lisbon, Portugal

SAVE THE GREYHOUNDS AND GALGOS OF PORTUGAL

Dear Sir

We are writing to you on behalf of the largest greyhound and galgo protection groups in the world to appeal to you for your support and that of the Socialist Party (and through it, the other parliamentary groups) to pass the legislation required to ban dog racing in Portugal.

Across the globe, dog racing is a dying industry that is inherently cruel to dogs. When it first began - in the United States in the 1920s - it was impossible to foresee that thousands and thousands of dogs would suffer and die. For example in Ireland, a new RTÉ TV documentary has recently shown in grisly detail that 6,000 racing greyhounds and prospective pups are killed each year. In Australia, a recent government report established that 17,000 unwanted dogs are annually deemed as 'wastage' and destroyed in wanton fashion. In the United States, the industry does not track the fate of the more than 10,000 dogs registered for racing each cycle, nor can it account for the countless puppies who disappear from the record.

In Portugal, and despite Article 13 of the Treaty of Lisbon which states that non-human animals are sentient beings, the dog racing industry has been allowed to establish itself. There is clear evidence that racing is now a systematic activity with economic interests at its core. Greyhounds and galgos are being treated as 'things' for betting, used and abused and then discarded. They are routinely imported, bought and sold for thousands of euros each. In fact, there are more than twenty Portuguese racing kennels already in existence. At these facilities, gentle hounds are bred and trained in inhumane ways, denied medical care when injured and often destroyed when no longer useful.

Newly available information shows that dog racing activities in Portugal involve the use of doping and cruel training methods with electric collars and extreme physical exploitation to the point of death. Humane organizations are witnessing an increasing number of abandoned greyhounds and galgos, often found in appalling physical conditions.

Many cannot be saved despite the best efforts of vets. Additionally, since gambling is involved, it is important to note that new platforms for criminal activity are being created.

Clearly, general animal protection laws are not sufficient to prevent the myriad problems associated with dog racing. The commerce in innocent dogs must stop and specific legislation is needed.

Thankfully, the documented decline of greyhound racing has been ongoing for years, and media outlets have long reported the spiralling collapse of this cruel industry. Since 2001, the total amount gambled on American greyhound racing has declined by more than 70% and the activity is now per se illegal in forty-one of fifty US states. In the United Kingdom, all of the London dog tracks have now closed and been re-purposed for mixed housing and retail operations. Two Irish stadia have just announced their closure. Jamaica refused to legalize dog racing in 2009 and South Africa followed in 2010, citing both the poor economics and humane problems associated with the activity. In 2016 Argentina banned dog racing, Uruguay followed in 2018, and a similar law proposal is currently gaining support in Chile. The trend is definitely with the greyhounds and galgos and follows the respect and love for these dogs which truly transcends all cultures.

For the sake of these dogs and for the people, the authorisation of informal dog racing in Portugal or any attempt to introduce any regulated dog racing must be stopped. The idea of normalizing such cruelty should be rejected. This would represent a cultural and humanitarian setback and harm the long-established humane traditions of Portugal. Particularly, the use of greyhounds and galgos for gambling would contribute to the desensitisation of society to animal welfare. Witnessing the severe injuries and deaths that racing greyhounds frequently endure would condition viewers, including young children, to regard them as mere objects to be sacrificed in the name of entertainment.

For several years animal welfare organizations worked together to close the only legal dog track in China. In 2018 the Yat Yuen Canidrome which operated in Macau, a former Portuguese territory now administered by China, was closed. In the end, 647 surviving dogs were released for adoption, creating positive publicity for the Macau Government. Our network of more than one hundred refuges, adoption groups and associations found homes for these dogs around the world.

We have launched an international campaign calling for a total ban on dog racing in Portugal and to date we have around 35,000 signatures.

The support of a man of high values such as yourself is fundamental for the success of our cause. On the 10th March 2020 we appealed to all the Portuguese parliamentary groups - including of course the Socialist Party - for their support in helping to pass the appropriate legislation to ban dog racing, but so far we have not received a reply. We have also recently appealed to the President of Portugal for his support of our campaign.

Thanks in advance for your kind support.

Respectfully,

Maria do Céu Sampaio
President
LPDA

Albano Martins
Life Hon. President
Anima Macau

Stefania Traini
President and Co-Founder
Pet Levrieri

Christine A. Dorchak, Esq.
President and Co-Founder
GREY2K USA Worldwide

Apoiado por / Supported by:

	Organização / Organization	País / Country / place
1	Aanifeira - Associação de Animais da Feira	Portugal
2	ABPA-Associação Brigantina de Proteção aos Animais	Portugal
3	Agir pelos Animais	Portugal
4	Alea&Band	Italy
5	Amazing greys	Australia
6	Animal Liberation Queensland	Australia
7	Animals Australia	Australia
8	Animals Asia	China (Hong Kong, SAR)
9	Anti Racing Kent	UK
10	APAAE - Associação de Protecção e Apoio ao Animal Errante de Castelo Branco	Portugal
11	ASA-Associação Solidariedade Animal	Portugal
12	Associação dos Amigos dos Animais de Águeda	Portugal
13	Associação Maranimais	Portugal
14	Associação Saquetas de Rua	Portugal
15	CAWA (Capital Animal Welfare Association)	China, Beijing
16	Change For Animals Foundation	UK
17	Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds	Australia
18	Condeixa Pa'tudos - Associação De Protecção Animal De Condeixa	Portugal
19	DABS animal rescue	Australia
20	DCRS	Australia
21	Društvo S hrti za hrte Slovenija (With sighthounds for sighthounds Slovenia)	Slovenia
22	ENPA - ENTE NAZIONALE PROTEZIONE ANIMALI	Italy
23	ExpandCourage-Associação de Intervenção e Ajuda a Animais	Portugal
24	Faccia da Cane	Italy
25	Fast Friends Greyhound Adoption	USA
26	Finger Lakes Adopt a Greyhound	USA
27	Forever Hounds Trust	Australia
28	Friends of Greyhounds, Inc	USA, Florida
29	Friends of Hound Inc.	Australia
30	Greyhound Adoption Center	USA

31	Greyhound Adoptions of Florida	USA
32	Greyhound Adoptions WA Inc.	Australia
33	Greyhound Awareness Cork	Ireland
34	Greyhound Awareness League	Scotland
35	Greyhound Compassion	UK
36	Greyhound Friends for Life	USA
37	Greyhound Protection Int. e.V.	Germany
38	Greyhound Rehoming Cairns and Tablelands District	Australia
39	Greyhound Rescue and Adoptions of Tampa Bay	USA
40	Greyhound Rescue Austin	USA
41	Greyhound Rescue Inc.	Australia
42	Greyhound Welfare South Africa	South Africa
43	Greyhounds Many Nations, One Voice	UK
44	Greyt Exploitations	UK
45	Greyt Greys Incorporated	Australia
46	Greyt Greys Rescue	Australia
47	Gumtree Greys	Australia
48	Helen's Helping Hounds	Australia
49	Homeward Bound Hounds NSW	Australia
50	Instinto - Associação Protetora de Animais da Covilhã	Portugal
51	Irish Council Against Blood Sports (ICABS)	Ireland
52	Island Animal Welfare	China (Hong Kong, SAR)
53	Katefriends	Portugal
54	KC REGAP	USA
55	LED-Lévriers en Detresse	France
56	Limerick Animal Welfare	Ireland
57	Louzanimales	Portugal
58	Lynn Thurston Rescue	Australia
59	Masdaw	China (Macau, SAR)
60	Michican Greyhound Connection	USA
61	Minnesota Greyhound Rescue	USA
62	Monika's Doggie Rescue	Australia
63	Motorcity Greyhound Rescue	USA

64	National Greyhound Adoption Program - NGAP	USA
65	Nora's Foster Hounds	Australia
66	Operation Greyhound	USA
67	Projeto Estrelinha	Portugal
68	Proyecto Galgo Argentina	Argentina
69	Pound Patrol	Australia
70	Pounds Rescue	Australia
71	Rescued Greyhounds NSW Central Coast	Australia
72	Say No To Greyhound Racing In Scotland	UK (Scotland)
73	Scotland Against Greyhound Exploitation -SAGE	UK (Scotland)
74	Sentient - The Veterinary Institute for Animal Ethics	Australia, Sidney
75	Sociedade Protectora dos Animais de Guimarães	Portugal
76	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (HK)	China (Hong Kong, SAR)
77	The Sighthound Underground, Inc	USA
78	The Villages Greyhound Club	USA
79	Think Dog	ITALY
80	Udruga za udomljavanje hrtova Honey	Croazia
81	USA Defenders of Greyhounds	USA