

## CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS IN ANIMAL PROTECTION

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*"The greatness and moral values of a nation can be truly reflected by the way it treats animals."*

Mahatma Gandhi

### I. The beginning of animal protection<sup>1</sup>

Since animals started serving mankind it has been an unseparable part of man's culture to respect and protect them. In spite of this fact though, it has never really drawn much of public attention during the history of Europe.

Animal protection is a long known and complex definition of our culture. Even the *Old Testament* refers in its many parts to the relationship between man and animals and their lot.

1809 is an important date in the history of animal protection. *Arthur Broome* tried to establish a society for the protection of animals in Liverpool. Since then the legally registered association called "*Society for cruelty against animals*" contracted a 300 Pound dept. The office was closed, the inspector of animal protection was discharged and the group had to go back to meeting at pubs.

15 years after the Battle of Waterloo (1815) the *House of Representatives* in England accepted a statute on the protection of domestic animals. This was after they discovered the poor and revolting state of the slaughterhouses, the unpunished skinning of cats and how coachmen overloaded their horses. However the law did not change the situation. Nobody cared to enforce it.

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In 1824 the previously mentioned Arthur Broome who was a priest, invited some of his friends and the Irish *Richard Martin* who originally had the idea of this law to the Old Slaughter's cafe located near Picadilly circus to discuss how to have the law enforced. Among the invited there were a few representatives and there was *Willam Wilberforce* a nobleman with excellent social feelings. All of them at then present, according to the records, decided to encourage by all means the protection of the defenceless animals. They established a committee of which duty was to enforce and controll the law and its regulations. *Broome* was elected honorary secretary, after which he spent all his time serving the matter but ended up in prison for dept.

Cruelty to animals arouses compassion or disgust in people. Acknowledging this came the first successfully active association for animals in *Great Britain* in 1824, followed by several others all over the world.

Liverpool was also the place where the first "Act of Cruelty to Animals" became effective in the last century. Thanks to these organizations the first ligal regulations concerning animal protection appeared. Two specified organizations have been looking after the matter all over the world, these are the non-governmental organizations and the governmental organization.

The first statute for animal protection and the first association for animal rights were established in London.

Unfortunately one of the problems created was by the local authorities which would not take the regulations seriously. In 1835 *Victoria* (then still a princess) accepted patronage. When she was crowned Queen of England the association could get the title, Royal.

After the first World War many started to criticize the current regulations in use concerning the system of animal keeping. This was the beginning of the renaissance for the idea of animal protection. Although these were considered modern technologies to produce food for the masses in a relatively cheap way, at the same time important questions like hygenic, sanitary, ethical and enviromental appeared. Animal keeping brought upon many unsolved problems, like the use of medicines to improve output and their accumulated effect in the animals, the placing of manure and the level of damage caused in the enviroment.

The *Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* which was counting more and more influential members started to become such world organization that would appear anywhere an animal needed protection. During World War II experts and volunteers gave help to 256.000 animals. After the war *General Montgomery* himself in a letter expressed his thanks to the society for helping the animals taking part in the battles by which it was part of the victory the allies gained.

Animal protection received an extended importance by the starting movements for protecting the environment *from the 1960's*. In addition to the fauna protection and beyond the general guiding principles (animal keeping, animal's health, proper transport, prohibiting cruelty to animals) the question of experiments and testing medication on animals became important.

## II. The importance of civil organizations in recent

Since the change of regime basically the organizations apparent in society have also changed. The government, their institutions and smallholders used to be dominant but since 1990 several civil self-governing organizations have been established. Consequently this brought necessary, more detailed changes in legal regulations. These civil organizations have been extending their responsibilities, taking up more and more duties.

This was necessary also because several previously neglected matters received importance, among them the protection of monuments or environmental protection. We need to mention here that the European Union pays a respectful attention to these problems. As now the member of the EU it became our responsibility as well. In accordance the role of the different civil organizations has extended and it received more importance and value as they carry out duties that are the responsibilities of the government and the local authorities.

The civil organizations contribute to the higher quality of performing public responsibilities.

Environment protection is a world wide problem. This problem started to emerge around the 1980's. It is obvious as at the beginning of the 20th century because of the war and the recession it was more important to provide the necessities of life for the population. This gave less importance to things like environment protection.

Even in the next couple of decades after the war the main purpose was to produce to have a bigger market for the consumers. This is of course what market economy is about but still environment protection did not receive enough attention. In fact to produce more and better quality different kinds of chemicals, insecticides, hormonal products were being used which of course had their bad effects.

In addition to this to achieve faster results the animals were fed antibiotics and different hormones. Nowadays genetic treatment is a well-known act. All these can seriously harm the health and condition of the animals. It is notable that by consuming food products of animal origin people can get these things into their system directly. By now it has been proved that 60-70% of the harmful

substances get into one's organism by consuming food-products. Consequently the generally used technologies by the agriculture can harm both human and animal health. Unfortunately in this matter the participation of civil organizations is rather trifling. One of the reasons is possibly the lack of financial support, but it is also that the civil organizations have little authority by law to interfere.

The situation is better at the animal shelters which look after stray animals. More and more civil organizations join this function, however this fact alone is not enough to be optimistic. Most shelters are fighting to survive having little or no financial support at all. Modernizing or enlarging is almost impossible. Looking after the animals, regular vet visits, vaccinations require more money than it is available at present. Despite all these deficiencies the shelters have been trying to keep their doors open even if it means voluntary work for the staff. The purpose of these shelters is to ensure proper circumstances for the animals and possibly find them new home. Fortunately they can be said to have done successfully in the latter.

The indisputable merit of civil organizations interested in animal protection is that they have been keeping the public informed and making them aware of the need to protect the environment by changing their attitude and approach to this sensitive matter. All in all, when we talk about animal protection we mean the protection of all population of animals and species as well as individuals.

There are several areas where the protection of individuals are performed, for example animal shelters, agriculture where the proper keeping, transporting, slaughtering are primary and also animal experiments.

When we talk about the protection of populations and species, the first is to protect their habitat. Concerning this there have been several international agreements made while civil organizations have been actively participating.

The first real step in animal protection was taken when the law of environmental protection was codified.<sup>2</sup> This determined the exact function of one in environment protection. According to this, its one's given right to participate in any procedure concerning the environment. Further more the law also states that its one's right to report to the authorities involved any action causing pollution or any kind of harm to the environment.

In such case, the authority is to take action and also reply on the merits of the case in a given time by law. Perhaps the law could be enforced more effectively by making it not only one's right but obligation to report such action.

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<sup>2</sup> 1995. évi LXX. törvény a környezet védelmének általános szabályairól

Unfortunately in practise it is rather unusual for a common person having witnessed any kind of animal torture to turn to the local authority. One of the reasons is that in most cases one doesn't even know which authority is in charge knowing so little of the administrative system. This is why the law concerning environment protection has such importance as it gives the opportunity to any citizen to practise their right through social organizations. These organizations are more familiar with the regulations and can stand for any action needed more effectively. The law also assures people of the right to start social groups or organizations for the purpose of environment protection.

### III. Individuals taking part in nature conservation

In addition to the main provisions of the law of environment protection it also states that it is the duty of all educational institute by the National Basic Educational Programme to get their students familiar with the questions of nature conservation. With the help of governmental, local organizations and other institutions the aim is to improve the culture of our society about nature conservation. As part of popular education, scientific researches and tourism visiting protected natural areas should be available. In order to do so the management maintains institutions for educational demonstrations.

It is the social organizations' for environment protection duty to take action in any case of illegal, harmful act against natural areas or values. The closing provisions of animal protection law<sup>3</sup> includes all the regulations concerning civil organizations. We need to mention here though that the number of regulations which apply to the social organizations are insignificant. The law enables the organizations in charge to take action in any case the law has been broken or request for further action from the governmental authorities in their competence. The mentioned organizations can even take legal action against those who break the law in any way.

To establish and enforce the *National Environment Protection Programme*<sup>4</sup> was needed by the environment protection law. As part of the Programme a National Basic Plan for Nature Protection was also necessary by the law concerning nature protection. The National Environment Protection Programme (as NEPP from now on) is a 6 year-length plan which contains all the necessary changes, resolutions of problems further more the prevention of future developing problems.

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<sup>3</sup> 1998. évi XXVIII. törvény az állatok védelméről

<sup>4</sup> 83/1997. (IX. 26.) OGY határozat a Nemzeti Környezetvédelmi Programról

According to the Programme the main idea of environment protection is to protect the given values and prevent any harm caused to the environment. To achieve this the different participants of the society need to work together constantly in harmony. This applies to both who suffer from the harmful effects of the environment and those responsible for causing them, the self-governments, companies, factories the different organizations for representation of interest or movements for environmental purposes. It can be stated that the importance of this decision is that the civil organizations should as well take part in handling the problems of environment.

Although it isn't properly regulated how much power or legal right the civil organizations can practise in the different cases concerning environment protection. It is also not stated how their standpoints, suggestions are accepted by the authorities or if the authorities are bound to rely on their opinion. While establishing further regulations there need to be more importance given to civil organizations.

Civil organizations should be given proper time to study and form their opinion about drafts concerning environment protection, only in this case could proper view be expected. Concerning this matter there aren't effective regulations mentioned in the law. It should also be regulated if there are any areas where the opinion of civil organizations cannot be overlooked. It is important, otherwise their participation is effortless.

The enforcement policy of the National Environment Protection Programme in 2000 includes financial support for voluntary measures which mention the work of civil organizations in the first place. In 2001 the second term plans of the Environment Protection Programme were accepted, the plans for 2003-2008.<sup>5</sup>

The next few years after the European Union accession lies crucial and also historic challenges. The issues of the accession directly effects society, law and enforcement as well as the quality of life.

The Provision Plan instructs the organizations of interest in a different section (civil organizations, chamber of finance). According to this it is very important to involve non-governmental organizations to participate in environment protection as they can also motivate and educate the public.

To involve the public is very important for the success of the second term plans of the NEPP. As a citizen, an individual has the right to a healthy environment and he is to preserve it for the future generation. On the other hand

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<sup>5</sup> 1117/2001. (X. 19.) korm. határozat a Nemzeti Környezetvédelmi Program második tervezési időszakára (2003-2008) vonatkozó koncepcióról

as a consumer one directly causes damage to the environment so becomes part of the problem.

We can state that the importance of the civil organizations has become higher in the second term plan of the NEPP. The Ministry itself has been taking part in public organizations. One of these is the Hortobágy Nature Conservation and Gene-protection Public Association. It is the Minister who is responsible to designate the protected natural areas. These protected areas are under the care of the Baranya County Organization of the Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Protection Association. By doing so the Minister handed all responsibilities over to a civil organization with the proper expertise.

#### **IV. Nature conservation Fund**

Civil Organizations interested in nature conservation or animal protection can get financial support from the Nature Conservation Fund. These can be given by different legal title for nature protection purposes, such as:

- based on the programmes concerning nature conservation
- support for public purposes of environment protection
- financial support for social organizations, movements or programmes which concern nature conservation

#### **V. National civil basic plan**

The establishment of the National Civil Plan helped to improve the operation of civil organizations and was a big step towards their success.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of the programme is to strengthen society, moreover to improve the co-operation between the governmental and the civil sector in order to achieve more effective operation. The programme provides civil organizations financial support for the following purposes:

- for operation
- for functions of public purposes
- scientific researches concerning the civil sector
- monitoring and recording operation

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<sup>6</sup> 2003. évi L. törvény a Nemzeti Civil Alapprogramról

## **VI. International civil organizations**

Anatole France claims. As long as you don't get to love an animal, part of your soul will slumber. Civil organizations initiated the ban of showing exotic animals in circuses in several parts of the world. The reason was inappropriate keeping conditions. In 2000 in India the prohibition applied to all parts of the country. Dolphins in possession of exceptional intelligence are kept in terrible conditions in many parts of the world. In Mexico after one of the dolphins kept in a cage perished, organizations for nature conservation launched a project for closing down all dolphin centers. As a result the Mexican Minister of Environment Protection introduced a proposal which would provide legal protection for all sea mammals. In 2002 the proposal was accepted in which they stated that there could not be any dolphins captured in Mexican waters. There are several civil organizations for animal protection in the United States, such as the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to animals (ASPCA) and the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) which is responsible for all ZOO-s, safari parks and aquariums. If an establishment can reach standards stated by the AZA it can start operating. This is a good example for a civil organization being responsible for an official task.

Animal experiments is a world wide problem of animal protection. For the confident action of the civil organizations in 2001 the American senate and the house of representatives passed two bills. One of them is about protection of anthropoid apes. According to this, there is a certain amount of financial support available for the apes to be preserved in their natural habitat.

Jane Goodall a world famous scientist for chimpanzees established the Goodall Institute then started the programme called Roots and Sprouts. His aim was to get the children and young aged generation familiar with the animals, their nature, value and preservation.

The importance of civil organizations for animal protection is becoming bigger all over the world. Thousands of people devote their lives to animals and the environment. Their efforts can be seen in many areas, they participate in demonstrations for new, more effective laws and regulations protecting the environment and within the animals. They establish more and more groups, organizations or centers for the welfare of the different species.

The number of animal shelters and rehabilitation centers rapidly grow as more people feel responsible and participates in helping to ease animals' lives. There are animal or environment protection organizations almost in each country in the world.



The Preserve Anthropoid Apes Center was established in the United Kingdom, of which purpose was to provide home and shelter for those chimpanzees that were smuggled over from Africa to Spain for the purpose of being tourist attraction.

The Kenya Wildlife Protection Service was also established by civil initiative. They even stood up against corrupt government officials trying to break the law. Thanks to the operation of this Service the number of elephant population which almost became extinct by poachers started to increase again in Kenya.

A movement called the Friends of the Sea Otter started in California in 1966. Their operation was so successful that they managed to have a law passed by which it was forbidden to shoot sea otters in Californian waters. With this they succeeded in saving sea otters from becoming extinct.

Civil organizations are rare in China. However thanks to an environmentalist the Friends of Nature was established. This organization played an exceptional role in informing the public and get them familiar with the problems concerning the environment even before the recent natural disasters could shed light on its importance. This organization helped a great deal in starting environment protection movements in China.

In 2000 an international association was established called the Ethologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and Citizens for the Responsible Studies of Animal Behaviour. This organization has been running the programme Roots and Sprouts since 1991. There are two groups of the programme operating in Beijing and their main priority is to prevent river dolphins from becoming extinct. The group working in California is trying to save the life of the canal-island fox a species counting only 20 individuals living in California. Protecting leopards are the main concern of the group operating in the Himalaya.