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The statement of the Finnish Kennel Club concerning decision-making in the FCI and the treatment of dogs in China

The Finnish Kennel Club is a full member of the FCI (Fédération Cynologique Internationale). The FCI General Assembly recently entrusted the World Dog Show 2019 to China, prompting dog people all around the world to protest loudly against the abuse of dogs in China.

The decision of the FCI General Assembly has met with strong criticism globally after the assembly, and Finland is no exception. The Finnish Kennel Club appreciates the opinions and feelings of its members and speaks with their voice. The Finnish Kennel Club is strongly against the Chinese practice of eating dogs and any festivals where this reprehensible tradition is upheld. The intentional torture of dogs prior to slaughtering is particularly inhumane.

Even though the decision to entrust the World Dog Show 2019 to China was made in accordance with the FCI Statutes, the importance of general opinion cannot be overlooked. It is unquestionable that the authority of the FCI and the prestige and reputation of the World Dog Show brand have taken a serious blow because of the decision.

The Finnish Kennel Club states that granting the WDS 2019 to China would have required far more thorough scrutiny and preparation by the FCI General Committee. The General Committee should have put more emphasis on the fact that China has only been a full member of the FCI for a few years. China as a whole is still far from being a modern, developed kennel country and there are areas where dogs are treated very cruelly.

China Kennel Union has taken measures to improve dog welfare in the country, but imagining that a World Dog Show in China could put things right is too much to hope for. Many FCI member countries have had to wait for years – sometimes decades – before earning the right to host this prestigious show. At the General Assembly in Milan, the Finnish Kennel Club voted for Germany as the host of the WDS 2019.

The FKC supports the proposal of the Norwegian Kennel Club that the FCI should draw up a set of standards a member country must fulfil if it is to host a World Dog Show. These standards should include, but not be limited to, a sufficiently long period as full member (NKC proposes 10 years) and documented evidence of the position and welfare of dogs in the country applying for the show, as well as a description of the actions taken in the member country to improve dog welfare if necessary.

The Finnish Kennel Club recommends all Finnish judges who will be invited to judge at the WDS 2019, as well as all exhibitors thinking about participating with their dogs, to pay attention to this statement of the FKC. The Swedish Kennel Club has given out a similar statement.

The FKC calls for an extraordinary General Assembly

The Board of the Finnish Kennel Club requests the FCI General Committee to call an extraordinary General Assembly to discuss the current situation of the FCI. Since the General Assembly in Milan the FCI General Committee has declared a set of actions to improve the welfare of dogs, but this policy must also be ratified



by FCI General Assembly and the actions be included in the FCI rules and regulations, as the Norwegian Kennel Club suggests.

Moreover, there are also other problems related to the decision-making and the planning of operations, and solving these problems requires changes in the FCI Statutes. One such problem, with major strategic implications, concerns its economy. At the moment the operation of the FCI is largely financed by only a handful of member countries. If these members consider actions disadvantageous for the FCI, the entire economical situation of the FCI may worsen dramatically. The income must be rearranged so that all member countries contribute in a more equitable way to cover the expenses of the FCI. The current system is based on how actively the different member countries arrange various international canine events, and the main source of income is the fees from international shows. As the Finnish Kennel Club sees it, the more active members should be rewarded for their hard work instead of being punished by imposing heavier fees.

The FCI does not have a sufficiently comprehensive and detailed plan of action approved by its General Assembly, nor is the budgeting up to the standards that can be expected from a large international organisation. It is quite incomprehensible that the FCI General Committee can propose to the General Assembly a plan to raise the CACIB show fees without presenting any argumentation or budget grounds for such a proposal in the agenda. This increase will hit hardest those member countries that are already contributing the lion's share to the FCI finances. The requirements for adequate planning and budgeting must be included in the FCI Statutes in far more detail than they are at the moment. The Finnish Kennel Club expects that the FCI General Committee prepares its proposals to the General Assembly in far more profound detail and also takes full responsibility for them. The General Committee must follow the principles of good leadership and administration.

Member countries must have the right to express their opinion

The FKC cannot accept that the FCI threatens to impose sanctions on a member country, in this case Norway, for expressing their own and their members' opinions. What makes this even more deplorable is the fact that these threats are directed against a full member of the FCI. The Norwegian Kennel Club can stand as a model in the promotion of dog welfare and breeding. If the NKC had not made their view clear, the FCI would not have initiated the recently declared actions to improve the welfare of dogs. Thus the proposals put forward by the NKC will ultimately benefit both the dogdom and the FCI.

The future

The Finnish Kennel Club is concerned about the future of its central organisation, the FCI, and calls for open discussion to improve both the position of the FCI as a central organisation and the welfare of dogs all over the world. Secrecy is unacceptable, and discussion – including the critical opinions – must be seen as a constructive opportunity and not a threat. Many different cultures are represented within the FCI, enriching us all, but the highest principle of all FCI member countries must be the promotion of dog welfare.

For the Finnish Kennel Club,

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