

His Excellency Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Prime Minister of Greece
Via e-mail: kyriakos@kmitsotakis.gr

Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food
Minister Spilios Livanos
Via e-mail: minister-mailbox@hq.minagric.gr

Ministry of Tourism
Minister Haris Theocharis
Via e-mail: minister@mintour.gr

20th of May 2021

The Cruel Practice of Using ‘Donkey Taxis’ on the Island of Santorini

Your Excellency and Dear Minister:

PETA Germany is the largest animal rights organization in Germany, with more than 1.5 million members and supporters. On behalf of the group, I am writing to you as a great friend of Greece to ask that you enact a ban on donkey rides.

When people around the world think of Greece, they envision the beautiful island of Santorini. Unfortunately, I have recently come across some information that casts a shadow over its charm. On several occasions, PETA has documented the suffering endured by donkeys and mules when they're forced to carry tourists and heavy loads up the more than 500 steps to Firá. These animal rides are considered “traditional” – but it's a shameful tradition. As an actor, I need to have empathy in order to inhabit various characters, and it hurts me very much to see the animals suffer like this. I love donkeys and mules, and I know the living conditions they require.

The reality on the island is a sad one: the animals are compelled to make the laborious journey several times a day and are rarely allowed to take breaks, if at all. Often, they don't even have access to drinking water. Many also suffer from injuries and abrasions caused by ill-fitting and worn saddles, and their wounds often go untreated. They frequently slip on the smooth steps, which poses a great danger to both humans and animals. In most cases, the existing laws are neither implemented nor enforced.

Greece is known worldwide for its great achievements in fields such as astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and mathematics. Classical Greek architecture and sculpture still captivate

visitors to this day. Against this background, I ask that you make Greece famous for its compassion to animals, lead the country in reforming tourism so that it thrives without inflicting suffering on animals, and put a law in place that will finally ban donkey and mule rides. In this way, Greece could serve as a model for the tourism industry around the world!

I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Respectfully,



Tanja Lanäus