

27 August 2026

The Honourable
Anastasios Nikolaos Zorzos
Mayor of Thira

Via e-mail: dimarxos@thira.gov.gr

Mr. Georgios Nomikos
President of the Municipal Port Fund of Thira

Via e-mail: dlthiras@santoriniports.gov.gr

Re: Replacing Donkey Rides on Santorini: PETA Germany Offers to Fund Exoskeletons

Dear Mayor Zorzos,
Dear President Nomikos,

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals – PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters worldwide – to make a concrete offer to the Municipality of Thira: **if donkey rides between the Old Port and Fira are permanently discontinued, we are prepared to fund the purchase of exoskeleton devices as part of a pilot project for animal-free visitor transport on Santorini.**

Exoskeletons are wearable, battery-powered mobility devices that assist users when walking and climbing stairs by reducing the physical effort required. These innovative devices could help many visitors who currently rely on animal transport and provide a modern alternative to the use of donkeys and mules.

We are making this offer because we remain deeply concerned about the treatment of the donkeys and mules used for tourist rides on Santorini. PETA has published numerous investigations and reports documenting the extent of their suffering, showing that these intelligent, sensitive animals are treated as mere tools for profit. The conditions they face violate basic animal welfare standards and tarnish Santorini's international reputation as a tourist destination.

The recent closure of the Karavolades Stairs has also demonstrated the need for sustainable, animal-free transport solutions. The resulting pressure on the cable car system has highlighted that its current capacity is insufficient. We therefore urge the Municipality and relevant authorities to expand cable car capacity as part of a long-term strategy to replace animal transport entirely.

Santorini has a unique opportunity to become an international example of forward-thinking tourism by combining improved infrastructure with a commitment to animal welfare. By ending donkey rides, expanding cable car capacity, and introducing innovative technologies such as exoskeletons, the island could demonstrate that visitor mobility and compassion for animals can go hand in hand.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and look forward to your response.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Yvonne Würz

Senior Campaigner
PETA Germany