

**Question for written answer E-006942/2013  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Oreste Rossi (EFD)**

Subject: Situation of animal rights in Serbia

Since 1 March 2012, Serbia has officially been a candidate for accession to the European Union. Despite the significance of the European Council's approval, it is right to comment on the situation to date regarding the protection of animal rights in Serbia.

A number of local voluntary associations have denounced the current state of the system of catching and holding stray animals: specifically, they describe the circumstances in shelters in two Serbian towns, Temerin and Subotica. In the first of these, activists maintain that there is a clear and serious failure to comply with the laws in force in Serbia regarding the protection of animals. According to the reports, in the Temerin shelter, strays caught in the neighbouring areas are looked after for just three to seven days before being put down in accordance with former regulation No 29 of 1994 although, as the volunteers point out, this was replaced by the 2005 veterinary law a few years ago. More specifically, Article 168 of the law in question prohibits the slaughter of animals, unless they have been caught in areas where there is a rabies epidemic. For these reasons, I believe that the Temerin shelter not only fails to comply with the law, but can also be identified as a place where abandoned animals are kept for a few days before being slaughtered. As regards the Subotica kennels, which house over 1 000 dogs and has for two years been managed by local volunteers, the local authorities have recently stated that it will be closing due to a failure to comply with the rules governing its operation. According to the volunteers, although the complaints made by the authorities may be correct, there are no other places in Serbia where conditions are better, and closure will only lead to the resumption of the very widespread practice of slaughtering stray dogs in the area.

In view of the above:

- Can the Commission state whether it is aware of the conditions in which animals in Serbia are kept?
- Does it intend to draw the attention of the Serbian authorities to the need for better protection of animal rights?
- Will it take this situation into account when negotiating on the EU acquis, and might this constitute a condition for Serbia's accession to the European Union?