



August 28, 2007

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Dear Minister Jeremic:

Re: Neglected Lipizzaner Horses

We, at the Int'l Fund for Horses, appreciate all previous actions taken by the Serbian government on behalf of the starving Lipizzaner horses. However, these actions have not ended the willful abuse and neglect of these horses.

The horses were brought to north Serbia from Lipik, Croatia, in 1991 to protect them from the war that erupted after the breakup of Yugoslavia.

The Lipizzaners have been kept at the farm of Todor Bukinac near Novi Sad, 40 miles northwest of Belgrade, amid continued wrangling between Serbia and Croatia over their ownership and the cost of care.

Agriculture Minister Slobodan Milosavljević responded when he learned of the plight of the Lipizzaners at Bukinac's estate, and visited the farm earlier this month. It is our understanding that he donated 20 tons of horse fodder for these horses. Animal protection group Freedom for Animals claim the food never reached the Lipizzaners, but was used by Bukinac to feed his other horses in another part of his estate.

The facts as we understand them are:

1. The Serbian government's stand is the matter needs to be "resolved between the farm and the Croatian government."
2. The farm owner is demanding EURO 410,000 in compensation for the horses' care but according to Serbian authorities, Croatia has refused to pay.



3. A spokesman for Croatia's Agriculture Ministry said that Serbia should return the horses to Croatia, "like it returned everything that was taken from Croatia during the war."
4. A group in Croatia called Lijepa Nasa are petitioning for the "unconditional" return of their horses. They have been negotiating for the return of these Lipizzaners since 1999.
5. The farmer demands being paid before he releases the horses.

Demands are being made on all sides, and nothing is being resolved. In the meantime, these horses are being starved and refused veterinary care.

We urgently call on you to use your powers to intervene immediately on behalf of these Lipizzaner horses.

We respectfully suggest the Serbian government either provide for the proper care of these horses until this dispute is resolved, or demand they be turned over immediately to the Croatian government.

If you crave admission to the European Union, who are passing ever increasing protections for animals, your country needs to be seen to be willing and able to resolve matters such as this, particularly when horses of a world renowned breed are being left to die a slow and painful death by starvation.

We would appreciate a response on what action you are taking as we will be releasing an international press release.

Thank for your urgent attention.

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