

6 th regional Workshop on Dog Population Management for Balkan countries (SDB6)

Country Report on national situation from Bulgaria

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I. Understanding the situation with stray dogs in the country (2021, 2022, 2023 years)

Bulgaria has a good legislative base in the field of welfare and health of stray and domestic dogs. National Program for Controlling the Population of Free-Roaming Dogs - Bulgaria's Action Plan aims to create and implement long-term mechanisms for effective control that will lead to:

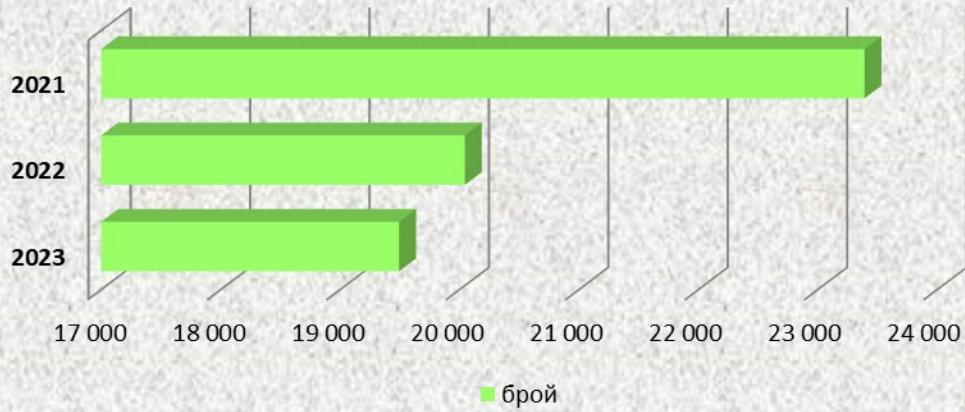
- *reduction of the population of free-roaming dogs on the territory of the country;*
- *good health status of free-roaming dogs (maintaining a population of rabies immunized and dewormed dogs);*
- *reduce the risks for human health from parasites and zoonotic diseases;*
- *increased control over dog breeding and trade;*
- *raising the culture of keeping domestic dogs and promoting their castration and registration;*
- *reducing the risk of occurrence and spread of zoonoses (mandatory vaccination and revaccination against rabies and deworming of stray and domestic dogs).*

The program is in accordance with Chapter 7.7 „STRAY DOG POPULATION

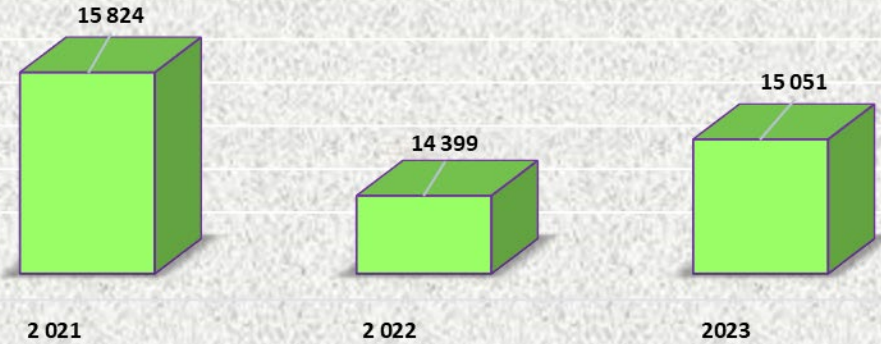


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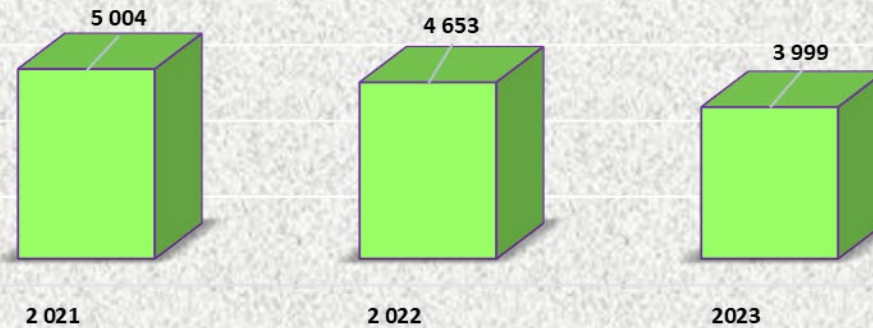
Captured free-roaming dogs



Treated free-roaming dogs

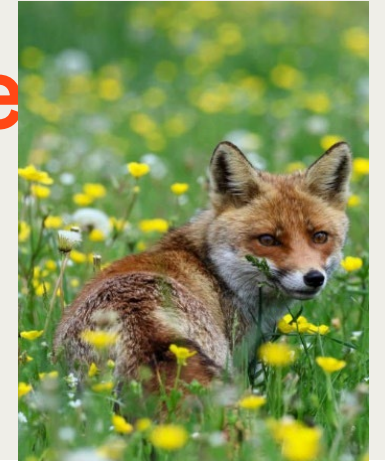


Adopted dogs





I a. Understanding the situation on rabies



Bulgaria has the status of a "rabies-free" country. No case of rabies has been registered on the territory of the country for last 10 years. In Bulgaria a mandatory initial vaccination against rabies is carried out for free-roaming and domestic dogs aged 12 weeks to 6 months. Revaccination is carried out every subsequent year. The country works under a National Program for the prevention, surveillance, control and eradication of rabies in the Republic of Bulgaria, as per Chapter 8.14 of the WOAHA TAHC.



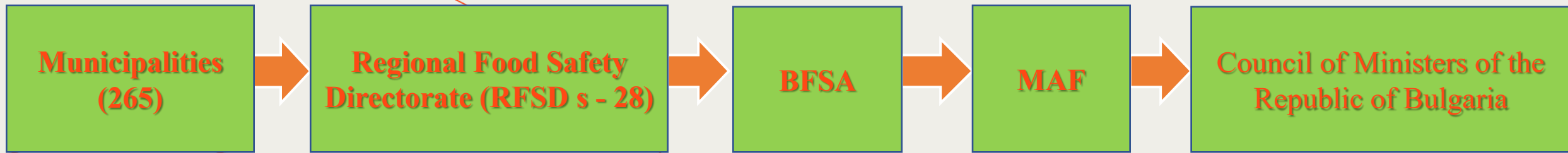
II. Control measures

Through the rules and measures, laid down in Ordinance No. 4 of 2021 for the implementation of the National Program for controlling the population of stray dogs on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and for the procedure for its implementation, the mechanism of financing and accountability, the following results are to be achieved:

- *Mandatory identification and registration of all dogs;*
- *Capture, processing (identification, castration, vaccination against rabies, deworming and return of stray dogs to the places of their capture);*
- *Reproductive control of stray dogs by surgical sterilization and promotion of its benefits among pet dog owners.*
- *Control of pet owners for mandatory identification; registration; rabies vaccination.*
- *Census of stray dogs every 2 years.*
- *Based on the received data, an analysis is made of the implementation of the measures laid down in the municipal programs.*
- *Taking corrective measures in case of violations.*
- *Hierarchical reporting of achieved results.*



Reporting on the implementation of the measures laid down in the National Program - Action Plan





III. Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the population of free-roaming dogs includes a system of observations, analyzes and evaluation of actions and events directly related to the implementation of the National Program.

It is carried out on the basis of the data received from the reports of the municipalities for: counted; captured; treated and returned to places; euthanized and dead stray dogs.

Data from the system on the number of dogs identified and entered into the system.

The findings during the control over the activities of the municipalities by RFSD.

Direct observations.

Based on the received data, an analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of the applied measures is made.



IV. Country roadmap:

Strengths:

Rabies free country;
the promotion of responsible dog ownership can significantly reduce the numbers of stray dogs and the incidence of zoonotic diseases.
Very good Central database.

Weaknesses:

risks to human health (e.g. parasites) - Echinococcosis;
illegal trade and trafficking;
reduced numbers of stray dogs to an acceptable level.

Opportunities:

Carrying out more notification campaigns organized by the Municipalities;
Involvement of volunteers in the supervision of stray dogs;
Conducting campaigns by NGOs as well.

Threats:

illegal animal trafficking;
introduction of zoonoses through illegal trafficking of animals with unclear health status.



IV. Country roadmap - State of implementation of the national roadmap based on the results of the second round of self-assessment conducted using the SAM4DPM system with a focus on progress made since 2021.

Based on the self-assessment and analysis carried out with the help of the Roadmap, actions have been taken to improve the weaknesses and reduce the existing threats to the country. Country progress from 2021 to date:

- 1. A decrease in the number of stray dogs on the territory of Bulgaria is noted;***
- 2. Minimized public health risks due to rabies by maintaining a rabies-free population of dogs - mandatory rabies vaccination of dogs aged 12 weeks to 6 months and mandatory annual revaccination; Better management of other human health risks (parasites) through mandatory deworming of stray dogs every three months.***



3. Not particularly significant reduction in sales of dogs by unlicensed traders. In order to prevent fraudulent practices - illegal trafficking and trade in pets, the following measures have been taken:

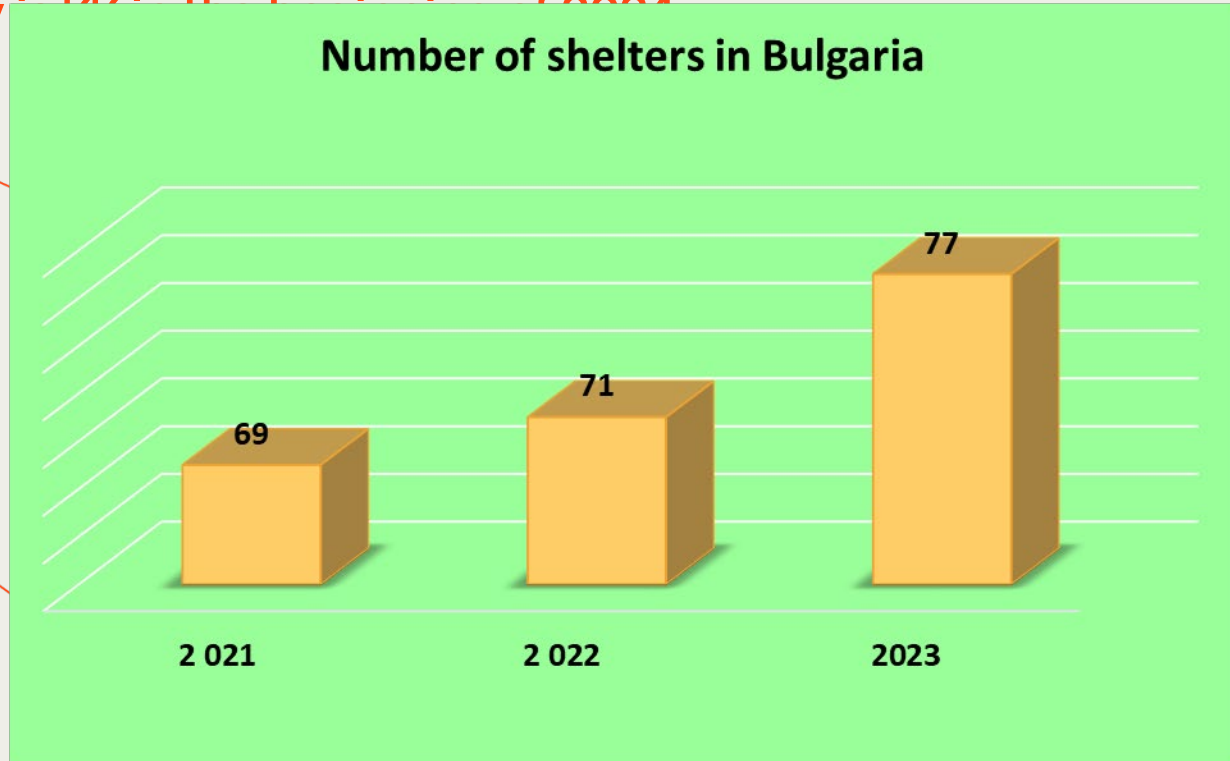
- Additional trainings have been organized for registered veterinarians in the country for stricter compliance with the legislation related to the identification, registration in the database, health certification and traceability of pets.*
- Working in partnership between BFSA, owners of e-commerce sites and NGOs. Based on the increased requirements, a significant reduction in published advertisements for the unregulated sale of pets has been noticed.*

4. Campaigns to promote responsible pet ownership and adoption of stray animals from shelters continue;



Shelters for free-roaming dogs in Bulgaria

The Bulgarian Food Safety Agency has developed and maintains a National Register of shelters in the Republic of Bulgaria. The information can be found on the BFSA website: https://bfsa.egov.bg/wps/portal/bfsa-web/registers/reg_shelters The number of registered shelters on the territory of the country is 69 in 2021, 71 in 2022 and 77 in 2023.



Despite the financial difficulties of most municipalities in the country, there is a significant increase in the number of registered shelters for the period from 2021 to 2023. About half of the registered shelters on the territory of the country are municipal, and the others are private - owned by non-governmental organizations for the protection of animals (NGOs), foundations and other legal entities whose activity is aimed at animal protection.



Information campaigns – free-roaming dogs

In many places in the country, information campaigns continue to be organized and conducted, directing the attention of citizens to free-roaming dogs and the possibility of adopting them from shelters. Representatives of the local government (organizers), RFSD s, private practicing veterinarians, NGOs and interested parties participate in the campaign. The initiatives continue throughout the year. Posters and newsletters are distributed that inform the public about the structure and activities of shelters for homeless animals, the offers and the benefits of adopting a dog from them.

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Information campaigns - pets

In parallel with the control carried out in the country, active information campaigns are also carried out, focusing on the responsibilities of pet owners, and others on the adoption of pets from shelters. Information campaigns - domestic dogs

Campaigns promoting the responsible behavior of pet dog owners are initiated and carried out in the country, in accordance with chapter 7.7. Some municipalities also organize campaigns for free castration of domestic dogs.

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V. Successful stories:

Last 3 years (2021, 2022, 2023):

45 274 - treated free-roaming dogs;

Registered in database – 75 408 owned dogs and 43 089 free-roaming dogs;

13 656 – adopted free-roaming dogs.



Conclusions and next steps:

In order to implement effective control, it is necessary to implement measures and initiatives requiring the participation of all institutions and persons related to owned and free – roaming dogs. The final result for the humane treatment of all dogs depends on working in close cooperation between the institutions concerned - local authorities (municipalities); the official veterinarians in the Regional Food Safety Directorates; The Bulgarian Food Safety Agency and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food; NGO for the protection of animals; registered veterinarians and dog owners.

Next steps - improvement of the measures in the direction of achieving full compliance with chapters 7.7 and 8.5 of the WOAHA TAHC.



Thank you **for** your attention!

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