

Pamela Anderson

May 8, 2009

Justice Minister Claudia Bandion-Ortner
Bundesministerin Mag. Claudia Bandion-Ortner
Bundesministerium für Justiz
1070 Wien, Museumstraße 7
Austria

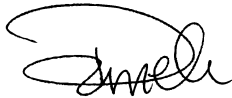
Dear Ms. Justice Minister Bandion-Ortner,

Thanks to the tireless efforts of animal advocates, Austria now has one of the most advanced animal welfare laws in the world and has banned fur farms, experiments on apes, and battery farming of laying hens.

Instead of celebrating these progressive steps, Austrian authorities have given in to powerful industries and betrayed their citizens and animals by unleashing a campaign of suppression against animal welfare activists—putting them under surveillance, raiding their offices and homes, and detaining them without charge in actions reminiscent of the shame of Guantanamo. The authorities are now openly threatening to use an anti-terrorism provision of the criminal code against the animal welfare groups, declaring the whole movement to be a criminal organization and allowing people who have not committed crimes to be jailed for up to five years. Legitimate NGO work is being treated like mob activity or terrorism when it is simply kindness in action, decency in motion, and vital social evolution.

A free democracy must allow for protest and free expression. I call on the Austrian Ministry of Justice to drop these shameful accusations against legitimate animal welfare campaigners and to make sure that such an abuse of power doesn't happen again.

Sincerely,



Pamela Anderson
Honorary Director
PETA