

**Open letter to Mr Aleksander Čeferin, UEFA President on the use of soccer shoes in kangaroo leather during EURO 2020**

Brussels 8 July 2021

Dear Mr Čeferin,

Eurogroup for Animals - a federation of 77 animal advocacy NGOs throughout Europe and beyond - and the undersigned, are writing to you to express our concern about the **use of soccer shoes made with kangaroo leather by some players during the EURO 2020 competition.**

**We call on you to help end this cruel exploitation of kangaroos by making a public statement in this regard. This commercial industry is the largest consumptive mammalian wildlife industry in the world, with a high risk to kangaroo welfare, their role in threatened ecosystems and to Australian society<sup>1</sup>.**

Significant **welfare issues** arise from the commercial shooting of kangaroos: high numbers of mis-shot kangaroos, high risk of killing females with dependent young, and the methods used to kill young kangaroos (joeys). **Adult kangaroos** are shot at night when they are most active. [Studies](#) indicate that non-fatal body shots are as high as 40%, causing injuries and painful prolonged deaths to kangaroos.

[Government studies](#) investigating the fate of joeys after their mothers were killed concluded that the majority of joeys were not being euthanized by shooters, yet instead are left to die as a result of starvation, exposure or predation without their mothers to teach them vital survival skills. An [estimated](#) 800,000 dependent young suffer an inhumane death in the wild each year.

Contrary to Australian Government's claims, **the kangaroo industry is not well regulated.** Shooters are instructed to kill young kangaroos via decapitation, or a forceful concussive blow to the head or a single shot to the brain or heart. It is difficult to monitor shooters in the field because shooting occurs at night. Regulatory agencies are unable to enforce these provisions and fail to achieve humane conduct towards kangaroos.

In Australia, kangaroos face multiple threats including commercial and non-commercial shooting, extreme weather events such as drought, fire and flooding, habitat destruction, disease, vehicle strike, entanglement in fencing and restriction of movement by exclusion fencing. These factors seriously impact their health and welfare. Moreover, **kangaroos are being killed in far greater numbers than what is ecologically sustainable or socially acceptable.**

The 2019-2020 wildfires impacted an [estimated 4.96 million](#) macropods including kangaroos, wallabies and pademelons. Kangaroos that were not killed by the fires suffered from injuries, predation and lack of access

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<sup>1</sup> Four species of kangaroo are killed for meat, skins and leather on Australia's mainland. These include Eastern Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*), Western Grey Kangaroo (*M. fuliginosus*), Red Kangaroo (*Osphranter rufus*) and Wallaroo (*O. robustus*) (herein collectively referred to as kangaroos).

to food and water. Local and regional extinctions have been observed in 2019 and 2020, with kangaroo populations further decimated by devastating bushfires, floods and drought. Despite this, the Australian government continues to authorise the commercial killing of kangaroos without any updated assessments (except in Victoria), adding new "harvest zones" despite a dwindling demand and/or diminishing populations.

Finally, **the kangaroo is an iconic species valued and recognised worldwide. Kangaroos are of cultural, social and spiritual significance to Aboriginal people**, who hold traditional knowledge about kangaroos, other native animals and the Australian landscape.

**The EURO 2020 competition is followed by millions of people in Europe and around the world and it offers a great opportunity to raise the awareness of players and teams about the cruel and unnecessary kangaroo exploitation.**

**High performance soccer shoes don't need kangaroo leather and indeed the majority EURO 2020 players wear shoes made with synthetic materials**, without any leather component.

We call on you to help ending this cruel exploitation of kangaroos by joining the international campaign #KangaroosNotShoes and by making a public statement in this regard.

Yours sincerely,  
Reineke Hameleers  
CEO, Eurogroup for Animals

