

Mr. Bjørn Gulden
CEO of Adidas AG
World of Sports
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Deutschland

Brussels, 3 April 2023

Subject: Request from animal welfare and conservation NGOs for Adidas to stop the production of products using kangaroo leather

Dear Mr. Bjørn Gulden,

We are writing to urge you to discontinue the production of all athletic shoes containing kangaroo leather, following the steps of Puma and Nike, as a matter of urgency because of the serious animal welfare and environmental concerns arising from the mass hunting of kangaroos.

An average of 1.6 million adult kangaroos are killed every year to fuel the trade of kangaroo products. The killing methods that are used and approved by the Australian government violate European animal welfare standards. As nocturnal species, kangaroos are shot at night in remote areas with up to 40% of kangaroos not killed with fatal shots¹. 10% of all commercially killed kangaroos in 2019 were female². The National Code of Practice calls on shooters to “crush the skull and destroy the brain” of young kangaroos, also called joeys, that could be left in the female pouch. This is mostly done by swinging their heads against a vehicle. If they do not endure this cruel and violent death, most dependent at-foot joeys are left in the field to suffer exposure, starvation, or predation. It is estimated that 400,000 dependent joeys are additional collateral victims of this hunt each year³.

Besides cruel hunting, this trade also poses serious risks to the survival of a species already confronted with the consequences of climate change. The [2021 parliamentary inquiry of the New South Wales government](#) revealed that the survey methods used by authorities to assess kangaroo species' populations are flawed and inconsistent, artificially inflating estimates and kill quotas. In addition, Australia is highly vulnerable to impacts of climate change with multiple droughts, bushfires and floods killing thousands of kangaroos and destroying their habitat.

¹ Ben-Ami D, Boom K, Boronyak L, Townend C, Ramp D, Croft D, Bekoff M, 'The welfare ethics of the commercial killing of free-ranging kangaroos: an evaluation of the benefits and costs of the industry' (2014) 23 Animal Welfare 1, 5.

² Government of Western Australia (2019). 2020 Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Quota Submission for Western Australia.

³ Ben-Ami D, Boom K, Boronyak L, Townend C, Ramp D, Croft D, Bekoff M, 'The welfare ethics of the commercial killing of free-ranging kangaroos: an evaluation of the benefits and costs of the industry' (2014) 23 Animal Welfare 1, 5. Numbers have been revised after the entry into force of the Russian ban on kangaroo meat imports.

These elements highlight the lack of enforcement and control of authorities and the bias of population calculations. They clearly indicate that Adidas' commitment to source kangaroo leather "exclusively from suppliers monitored and certified by the Australian government" is insufficient to indeed ensure animal welfare and species conservation, as specified in the Adidas standards⁴.

For citizens and consumers, kangaroos are first and foremost the icon of Australian wildlife. Nearly 55,000 people supported a [petition](#) asking for the end of EU imports of kangaroo products. World Animal Protection (WAP) Netherlands launched another [petition](#) asking Dutch companies to stop selling kangaroo products that so far collected over 50,000 signatures.

Acknowledging these concerns, [Puma](#) has recently announced phasing out kangaroo leather, instead using a cruelty-free alternative, followed by [Nike](#) on 14 March 2023. Several other brands and retailers including Bol.com, Prada and Versace, have announced to stop the production or sale of kangaroo products. In addition, a large number of supermarket chains have stopped offering kangaroo-meat, based on animal welfare concerns. This movement is also illustrated by the recent bills to ban the sale of kangaroo products introduced in the U.S. States of Arizona, Connecticut, New Jersey, Oregon, and Vermont. Such a phase out is feasible without compromising athletic performances as demonstrated by the high quality shoes made with synthetic material available on the market.

Continuing to source skins from wild kangaroos shot in their native habitats in Australia while this material is totally dispensable represents a growing reputational risk to your company. Conversely, shedding these skins from your product line offers an opportunity for the world to see Adidas' commitment to promoting wildlife protection and animal protection, fighting biodiversity loss, and truly embracing sustainability and innovation.

This is a timely moment for Adidas to announce the end of its use of kangaroos in soccer cleats and sports footwear as a way of demonstrating concern for kangaroos and continuing its shift towards non-animal materials. Adidas can make a big impact and respond to the growing demand for cruelty-free fashion and sports products.

We would like to request a meeting to discuss this matter and we would be pleased to share additional information with you regarding the topic of kangaroo hunting. In the meantime, you can also get more information on [Kangaroos Alive website](#) and watch the [documentary "Kangaroo: A Love-Hate Story"](#).

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest opportunity.

Sincerely yours,

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⁴ Adidas (2022). Standards on animal-derived materials.

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