



José Luis Sanz Ruiz  
Mayor of Seville

20 May 2024

Dear Mr Sanz Ruiz:

I'm writing from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to request your leadership in implementing legislation which prohibits exposing children to the cruel practice of bullfighting.

[The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) – which has been ratified by Spain – recognises the impact that witnessing violence against animals can have on children. Despite this, bullfighting management company Pages has this week announced that children will be offered free tickets to attend *novilladas* at Seville's Maestranza.

Pages has promoted this initiative as “the best way to introduce the little ones” to the world of bullfighting, but the fact is, “little ones” should not be introduced to bullfighting. Exposure to the violent bullying of animals at a young age can have a negative effect on children. Most are likely to be upset by the torment these animals endure. One study examining the relationship between childhood exposure to cruelty to animals and resilience in adulthood found that children exposed to cruelty to animals were 3.26 times more likely to be labelled “struggling” compared to the reference group considered “resilient”.

Children who see adults applauding the slaughter of animals may determine that violence towards animals is acceptable – even enjoyable – or start to believe that life is not valuable. Children exposed to such violence may even begin abusing animals themselves and bullying weaker peers. This is especially concerning when you consider that sociological studies have determined that violent and aggressive criminals invariably start out when young by abusing animals.

Children naturally love animals, and empathy for others is an admirable human trait we must seek to nurture to ensure children become compassionate adult members of society. This is why the UN Committee's General Comment No 26 states, “Children must be protected from all forms of physical and psychological violence and from exposure to violence, such as domestic violence or violence inflicted on animals.” This comment constitutes definitive guidance as to how nations must act in order to comply with the UN convention and meet their legal obligation to protect children's rights.

Public sentiment aligns with this. The Ministry of Culture's own cultural consumption survey confirmed low interest in bullfighting celebrations among citizens. Recent surveys show that over half of the of the Spanish population supports prohibiting or limiting bullfighting. The popular legislative initiative “No es mi cultura”, initiated by Spanish groups and

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company number 3135903.

#### Affiliates

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calling to repeal Law 18/2013 on the cultural heritage of bullfighting, is well on its way to gathering over 500,000 signatures. If successful, bullfighting may lose its cultural protection.

May I please hear from you, confirming that you will protect children from witnessing cruelty that may desensitise them to violence – or even encourage them to replicate it – by banning them from attending bullfights?

We look forward to your urgent response to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Mimi Bekhechi  
Vice President for Europe  
PETA

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