



Andrea Zanoni  
Member of the European Parliament

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**Sr. José Antonio Rodríguez Calzada,**  
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**Subject: Animal abuse in the traditional festival of *Peropalo* in Villanueva de la Vera**

Dear Mayor,

I am aware that in a few days, during Carnival celebrations, the traditional festival named *Peropalo* will take place in Villanueva de la Vera. According to the information in my possession, every year during this "Fiesta" a donkey undergoes heavy abuse.

In recent days, as well as in the past months, I have received numerous reports from European citizens and animal welfare NGOs outraged at this barbaric practice, in which - according to all the reports - a donkey is conducted in the middle of the crowd, pulled by people, beaten, shocked by means of gunshots and firecrackers, obliged to continue this insane parade until collapse, until he falls down exhausted under the weight of so many people.

I know that the official web-pages dedicated to the celebration of *Peropalo* state that nowadays the donkey no longer suffers mistreatment. However, I keep receiving several communications attesting the contrary, accompanied by direct evidence and even by videos.

In nowadays Europe, where fortunately more and more citizens respect animals and where even Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union acknowledges animals as "sentient beings", such barbarity it is totally unacceptable!

I understand that you and your fellow citizens are willing to maintain a centuries-old tradition which is very heartfelt in Villanueva de la Vera, but I definitely cannot agree with the custom to abuse a poor defenceless animal. Nowadays, in order to continue the traditional festival, the real donkey must be replaced by a life sized puppet, just like the one representing the *Peropalo*, which is burnt at the end of these festivities.

I look forward to hearing from you and I wish cruelty-free celebrations to the town of Villanueva de la Vera.

Kind regards,

Andrea Zanoni