

Flemish Government

Animal Welfare Department

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OPINION 22/06/2022 – Flemish Animal Welfare Council

Fireworks

The Flemish Animal Welfare Council calls for a ban on the use, possession and sale of fireworks by individuals.

The Council does so based on concerns about and experience of the impact of fireworks on animals. The unfettered use of fireworks by individuals leads to loud bangs and light flashes at unpredictable times. As a result, animal owners are unable to take precautionary measures.

Enforcement of a ban on the private use of fireworks, as in place in many municipalities, is proving difficult to achieve in practice. Precisely for this reason, the Council also recommends a ban on the possession and sale of fireworks.

Besides animal welfare, other important reasons for such a ban include life-threatening human accidents, fire risks and air pollution.

The Flemish Animal Welfare Council is aware that the minister responsible for animal welfare prepared a Decree¹ in 2019 for a general ban on the use of fireworks, with the possibility for local governments to grant permission under certain conditions. The Constitutional Court annulled this Decree, ruling that this matter is not a competence of the Flemish authorities.

The Council calls on local governments to incorporate a ban on the use of fireworks by individuals in municipal regulations.

It asks the federal government to examine and, if possible, introduce ways of banning the use, possession and sale of fireworks by private individuals.

¹ Decree of 26 april 2019 'houdende een reglementering op het gebruik van vuurwerk, voetzoekers, carbuurkanonnen en wensballonnen'