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Good Evening Mr. Bond

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Her Royal Majesty the Queen of England, Elizabeth II, delivered this line, accompanied by an indefinable look directed towards Agent 007 himself, making her one of the most famous Bond girls of recent times. It was one of the most unexpected and brilliant moments of the great opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Daniel Craig, Mr Bond, entered the private chambers of the Queen in an impeccable tuxedo accompanied by the three real trotting Corgies; Monty, Holly and Willow, who then followed Her Majesty and Mr Bond to the helicopter that would take them to the Olympic stadium. The rest is in the minds of all those who admirably witnessed a spectacle that was both solemn and respectful with the history of Great Britain and with touches of such British humour, such as that which I used to begin this monthly editorial, which, as always, deals with animals, in relation to what we owe them and how to improve their legal standing and the perception of society and of culture through the Law.

Few perhaps know that, in the opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games, aside from the obligatory presence of the Queen's dogs, who even appear in the official website of the British Crown under the "Family Pets" section, within the rubric of "Royal Animals",^[1] Director Danny Boyle involved, and not without controversy, living animals in the initial scenes of the British countryside. It was the first time that animals (leaving aside doves) appeared in an Olympic games presentation, and this compelled much negotiation with the many animal protection organisations, which are very active and have significant social and political weight in Great Britain; the Queen herself is the President of over 30 associations and organisations, among which are the RSPCA, the Red Poll Cattle Society and the Labrador Retriever Club.^[2]

The concern for the welfare of animals present in the initial scenes of the opening ceremony led to a harsh confrontation between the organising committee and the thousands of British citizens that got involved through social media, protection organisations and the relevant supporting personalities, among which figured Sir Paul McCartney, who opposed the use of living animals in a show that, by its nature, would subject them to high levels of stress with the noise from the crowd (62,000 spectators), the music, the lights and the atmosphere. It was alleged that these exhibition conditions were contrary to the active animal welfare laws, and of the agreement made centuries ago by British society and its lawmakers, with respect owed to animals, to those that British society as a whole is proud to love and protect: "The UK prides itself on being a nation of animal lovers – exploiting animals on this global stage is unacceptable".^[3]

In short, an agreement had to be reached by which the 70 sheep, 12 horses, ten chickens, three sheep dogs and nine geese that appeared in the first part of the show would be retired immediately following their appearance, and taken far from the stadium so their stress levels would not further increase, above all due to the fireworks, which, as it is known, always invoke fear in animals.

This agreement to respect animal welfare had to be signed by the artistic director of the ceremony, Danny Boyle, who wrote a letter to all the protesting associations showing his concern for the animals, assuring them that the animals would be treated caringly: “genuine care will be taken of all the animals”.^[4]

It has to make us consider what can influence the opinion of a demos that is sensitive and concerned with animal welfare and, of course, conscientious and well trained. There are lines that mustn't be crossed, for consistency and for genuine commitment. All animal welfare legislation of the European Union is based on the “Five Freedoms”, defined by a British Parliamentary Commission to ensure minimum standards for animals used for production, and in experiments and shows, which originated in the 1965 Brambell Report, highlighting the intolerable situation for animals used for intensive production.^[5]

If Great Britain does not give up its history, its literature, music, visual arts, its landscapes and traditions that were not just exhibited but displayed as something natural in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, it did the appropriate thing for animals for whom the efforts of legislators and scientists, by defining the minimum respect owed to live animals, have just set the legal framework of legislation of every country in the Union.

The motto of the London 2012 Games - to inspire a generation – does not exclude animals; naturally, it includes them, as much as in her domestic scene, Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II, did not go without showing her beloved corgis: Monty, Holly and Willow.

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[1] “Royal Animals”, which contains six sections, the first of which refers to Family Pets, can be found at [The Official website of the British Monarchy](#).

[2] It can be found at the above website, under the title “[Animal patronages](#)”

[3] A reflection of the attitude described in this [link](#)

[4] Cfr. The information published in [The Telegraph](#)

[5] Cfr. The official [Farm Animal Welfare Council](#) page