



Rui Costa
 Presidente
 Sport Lisboa e Benfica

Via e-mail: rcosta@slbenfica.pt

Dear Mr Costa:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals UK – PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally – to ask you to retire Vitória, Gloriosa, and any other eagles held at the Estádio da Luz and replace them with human mascots.

A bright stadium filled with boisterous fans is no place for animals – and those brought to such a venue often try to escape, as happened at the Estádio da Luz a few years ago. Under such conditions, birds easily become frightened, disorientated, and panicked – placing themselves and others at risk. PETA has detailed records of incidents involving birds used as mascots at other stadia – including an owl who died after being hit by a ball, eagles who crashed into walls or glass windows, and a falcon who landed on a fan's head, sinking his talons into the man's scalp. In another incident, a rowdy football fan punched his rival team's eagle mascot.

Eagles simply don't belong at sporting events. In nature, these magnificent birds enjoy vast territories, spend most of their time high in the tree line, soar freely, and hunt over wide spaces. Those who are used as mere displays are denied the opportunity to engage in their natural behaviour, leading to extreme frustration and stress.

Today, most people understand that, as PETA's motto reads, in part, "animals are not ours to use for entertainment". For this reason, many professional and university sports teams use only willing costumed humans as mascots, not frightened animals. Costumed performers can lead cheers, react to the crowd, and pump up the team – which animals can't do.

If you agree to retire the birds to a sanctuary, PETA will cover the costs and replace them with a fabulous eagle mascot costume that's sure to be a hit with Benfica fans. Please join other clubs showing compassion by pledging not to use live animals as mascots.

Sincerely,



Mimi Bekhechi
 Vice President of International Programmes
 People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

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