

LEGAL STATUS OF ANIMALS IN THE CIVIL LAW SENSE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF ECOSYSTEMS AND AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Abstract:

Apart from the biological sense, animals can also be viewed in the civil law sense as *sui generis* objects and *sui generis* subjects of civil law. With the global development of society, the legal status of animals has changed and this process is not over. In theory, three phases of development are detected, which can be categorized as follows: 1. animals as an object of property rights, 2. respect for animals because of human needs (antropocentric phase) and 3. respect for animals because of themselves (ethical, altruistic phase). Existing legislative solutions are a reflection of historical and legal traditions, but also of modern ideas arising from global social development. They are, to a greater or lesser extent, incorporated into modern legal orders that have a formative role, in terms of forming awareness of the relevance of an issue for the wider community and its development. With the aim of better understanding of the specific status of animals and society's attitude towards them in the historical, philosophical and sociological context, the paper discusses the issues of potential animal subjectivity, debatable from both theoretical and practical point of view, then whether animals or which of them are dangerous things and related question of determining liability for damage caused by animals. In this direction, the paper analyzes the relevant existing legal solutions, international documents, case law and points out possible acceptable solutions to this issue *de lege ferenda*. The expansion of science and technology, in addition to its good consequences, has also caused the bad ones, concerning major changes in nature. All this requires the change in human consciousness, questioning the fundamental attitudes towards life on Earth and one's own responsibility.

Keywords: animal protection, *sui generis* objects of law, *sui generis* subjects of law, dangerous thing, liability for damage, destruction of ecosystems.