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**March 11, 2020**

### **Companion Animals and new human Coronavirus strain (COVID-19)**

The Pancyprian Veterinary Association, as the scientific body of veterinarians of Cyprus, has become the recipient of the concerns raised by companion animal guardians, whether the new strain of human coronavirus (COVID-19) is transmitted from animals to humans or vice versa.

In particular, people should know that there are many different types of coronavirus and which are species specific (feline coronavirus, canine coronavirus, etc.). The transmission of coronavirus between species is extremely difficult, due to the so-called "barrier" of animal species, which does not allow the transmission of the virus from one animal species to another and therefore from animals to humans.

Noting the above, the Pancyprian Veterinary Association based on the known scientific data so far, as well as following the advice announced by World Veterinary Association, the Federation of Veterinarian of Europe, the World Small Animal Veterinary Association and the World Health Organization, clearly states that:

- There is no scientific evidence to our knowledge so far, that the new human coronavirus strain (COVID-19), is transmitted from animals to humans or vice versa;
- There is no scientific evidence that companion animals are infected by the new human coronavirus strain (COVID-19);
- Companion animals are not considered to be source of contamination or reserve tank of the human coronavirus (COVID-19);
- People are safe when handling companion animals (including stray animals), as long as they adhere to basic hygiene measures (where this should be done in any case).

It goes without saying that under no circumstances should pet guardians abandon their pets, but continue to behave responsibly with them, enjoying their companionship and keeping their domestic environment clean.

As far as human profylaxis and precaution measures from the new coronavirus infection, citizens are encouraged to follow the instructions of the competent authorities at all times.