



Message from the Chair

Dear Alliance members,

It's a pleasure to share with you the sixth EU Dog & Cat Alliance newsletter. What a brilliant year it's been! We've had two fantastic Alliance meetings, which included workshops on the outcomes of the European Parliament elections, as well as on reporting adverts for pets on Facebook. One of these meetings also marked the 5th anniversary of the Alliance! We've welcomed several new members, including our first Danish member! This means we're looking for members in just two more Member States, Luxembourg and Slovakia, before we have representatives across the whole of the EU. The EU PAAG project has also been making great strides (check out the latest at <https://www.dogandcatwelfare.eu/eupaag/>) and we are well on our way to achieving our goal of 10 EUPAAGs by 2020.

The European Parliament elections took place for the first time since the Alliance was formed in 2014 and resulted in more than half (60%) of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) being replaced. With so many new MEPs, we have reached out to and begun the important work of forming new relationships with those MEPs, as well as building on existing relationships with returning MEPs. We also welcomed the new President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, as well as a new Health Commissioner, Stella Kyriades, who we hope will make introducing new and improved legislation on companion animal health and welfare a priority.

We've got an exciting year ahead and we look forward to keeping you updated along the way. In the meantime, whilst we recruit for a European Policy Advisor, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with either Claire Calder or Claire Wilson-Leary.

For now, I hope you have a wonderful and relaxing festive break surrounded by your loved ones. Merry Christmas and a happy New Year! Best wishes, Suzie Carley

NEWS

Welcoming MEPs to the new Parliament!

With the European Parliament elections resulting in such a high turnover of MEPs, we knew we had to focus on raising the profile of the Alliance, and what better way to do this than with a creative mailout to all MEPs!



In October we sent the above welcome pack to MEPs which included a briefing on the dog and cat welfare issues we work on and a postcard inviting them to meet with us to discuss these. The pack also included the gift of an eco-friendly mug to help them cope with their busy agenda! These packs have now also been sent to key members of the new European Commission.





As a result of the mailout, we have met with several MEPs and had productive discussions on the work of the Alliance and we look forward to meeting with more in the New Year! Work is also still underway to plan an event in the European Parliament next year. We hope that as many EU Dog & Cat Alliance members as possible will be able to attend the event and meet with their MEPs whilst in Brussels, so we will update members as soon as we can confirm the date.

Council Conclusions on animal welfare

There was fantastic news in Brussels just this week when it was announced the Council of the EU has adopted these Council Conclusions on animal welfare: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/41863/st14975-en19.pdf>. Crucially, the Council Conclusions include the following: *INVITES the Commission to assess the need for and impact of new legislation covering all animal species kept in the context of an economic activity for which specific animal welfare legislation does not exist at present, in particular cattle at least six months old, farmed rabbits, pullets, **dogs and cats** but also, turkeys, broiler and laying hen breeders, sheep, goats and farmed fish.*

We issued the following media statement from the Alliance:

An EU Dog & Cat Alliance spokesperson said: "We estimate there are 66 million pet dogs and 75 million pet cats living in the EU but there is very little to protect them in law. The EU Dog & Cat Alliance has long been calling for EU legislation to protect dogs and cats and the adoption of the Council Conclusions on animal welfare is a hugely welcome step in the right direction. We look forward to seeing the European Commission's plans for assessing the need for legislation to protect dogs and cats."

UK exit from the EU

Following the UK's General Election on 12th December, it is now almost certain that the UK will leave the EU on 31st January. 27 MEPs 'in waiting' will replace the UK's MEPs. These MEPs were elected as part of the European Elections in May but have been waiting to take their seats. We are planning to send each of these new MEPs a desk drop once they take their seats in the European Parliament next year.

We will remain fully committed to the Alliance post-Brexit and have been planning for this since the UK referendum in 2016.

New office space in Brussels! We're excited to have signed a lease for new office space in Brussels which means we'll be able to spend more time there meeting with MEPs!



Alliance celebrates 5th anniversary at International Companion Animal Welfare Conference

In July, the EU Dog & Cat Alliance hosted its ninth meeting at the International Companion Animal Welfare Conference (ICAWC), which marked our fifth anniversary. Five years on, the Alliance now represents nearly 90 organisations across 26 EU Member States!

The meeting brought together representatives from across Europe to discuss improvements for dog and cat welfare. It provided an opportunity for Alliance members to share knowledge and news about all the fantastic work they are carrying out, and to discuss key concerns or challenges they are facing in their countries.

Thank you to everyone who was able to make it!



EU Dog & Cat Alliance awards

Also at ICAWC, Dogs Trust CEO Owen Sharp presented awards to three Alliance members for their contributions to making the Alliance’s mission – improving dog and cat welfare across the EU – a reality. There are monetary prizes attached to the Alliance awards: 1000 EUR for the Member of the Year award and 500 EUR for the Award of Merit. The winning organisations must tell the Alliance Secretariat how they spent the money, which must be on improving the welfare of companion animals.

The EU Dog & Cat Alliance Member of the Year award was, for the first time, awarded to two members, Djurens Vänner and Svenska Djurskyddsföreningen, for their joint work on driving forward the Swedish Pet Advertising Advisory Group (SWEPAAG). SWEPAAG was established to address the increasing problem of inappropriate dog and cat adverts appearing on classified websites and social media in Sweden. The awards were presented to Fredrik Malmgren of Djurens Vänner and Johan Beck-Friis of Svenska Djurskyddsföreningen.

The EU Dog & Cat Alliance Award of Merit is awarded to an organisation which has displayed the same active spirit whilst acting in the confines of more limited resources. This year, the Award of Merit was awarded to the Veterinarians for the Protection of Animals Foundation, active in Hungary and whose work with the Alliance is led by Gabriella Markus. Huge congratulations to all three organisations!



Fredrik Malmgren, Owen Sharp, Johan Beck-Friis



Gabriella Markus



A very warm welcome to the Alliance's newest members!

The Alliance now has 89 members across 26 EU Member States

- here's a little bit about our newest members!

Rila's Dream



[Rila's Dream](#) have been actively working to improve animal welfare in Bulgaria for around 10 years, supporting in-country NGOs and volunteers with funding for CNVR and general supplies (food, bedding etc.), as well as using their network to rehome over 500 stray dogs. By partnering with international, national and local stakeholders, they intend to build and operate a permanent clinical facility, offering advice and subsidised consultations to local pet owners.

Dyrevaernet



[Dyrevaernet](#), our first Danish member, are a pet welfare organisation that rescue dogs, cats, rabbits and other small mammals. They rehome around 1500 pets a year, mostly dogs. As well as two shelters they have two mobile rescue units that respond to abuse/neglect cases and two mobile veterinary clinics that serve low income pet owners.

Cat Care Community



Cat Care Community
DŽIVNIEKU AIZSARDŽĪBAS
BIEDRĪBA

[Cat Care Community](#) is a non-profit organisation that strives to improve the lives of stray cats in Latvia by finding them loving homes. To date, they have sterilised more than 300 cats and found homes for more than 700 cats. Their main tasks are to help cats find new homes, to help cats survive on the street by placing houses for them, to give opportunities for society to participate in animal rescue, and to educate society about animal welfare.

Sophia-Vereeniging



[Sophia-Vereeniging](#) is an NGO registered in The Netherlands which works with other stakeholders to raise awareness of animal welfare issues and call for improved animal welfare legislation. Their current campaigns include but are not limited to the illegal pet trade, extreme breeding of pets, pet advertising and obligatory cat castration by cat owners to prevent stray animals.

Stichting DierenLot



[Stichting DierenLot](#) is an animal welfare Charity in the Netherlands, founded in 2004 helping animals in need through awareness campaigns and supporting local and regional animal shelters. They help shelters financially and by providing food and animal ambulances. They also share knowledge through the DierenLot Academy which organises a conference twice a year with workshops, attended by over 1000 delegates.

Viva! Foundation



[Viva! Foundation](#), based in Poland, runs several campaigns for homeless animals, including Adopciaki.pl (Pets to adopt) <https://adopciaki.pl/>. In the last year, through their activities for homeless animals, they found new homes for 2,393 animals, funded 1,762 castrations and provided veterinary assistance 7,409 times.



In the Spotlight! with Christian Pace, MSPCA



Tell us about your organisation...

The MSPCA is the oldest animal organisation in Malta having been founded 6 months after the formation of the RSPCA. Historically we were the government's animal control service, which ceased when we refused to euthanize anymore healthy animals. We have strived since to improve the rehoming of dogs and cats in our care by improving their quality of life, through evidence-based practices, shared in a wide network of local and international organisations. This means we have doubled the number of cats and dogs rehomed in a year when compared to 2015. We look forward to further improvement in the coming years.

What initiatives are you working on in Malta at the moment?

With the assistance of Dogs Trust and The Ministry for Gozo, we have recently relaunched a dog neutering campaign on our sister island to further tackle the stray dog problem which still poses significant welfare issues for dogs there and continues to overwhelm the island's sole rehoming center. Our educational program reaches out to all schools in Malta but also to expectant families to empower them to manage the changing household and reduce the number of dog bites to children. The MSPCA also monitors the situation in petshops, zoos and dolphinariums to identify and raise awareness on welfare issues that arise from animal exploitation. We are very vocal about the hidden horrors brought upon animals by a broken political system. Last June we were able to rally public support in opposition of the introduction of dog racing to the country which led to this being effectively ruled out by Parliament soon after. Throughout the year we lobbied for regulations to protect horses used in transport from being exploited in the 40°C heat. While legislation finally came after years of lobbying, now we have turned to highlighting the lack of enforcement.

What developments would you like to see in EU legislation on pets?

Where to start? We would definitely like to see EU wide compulsory microchipping for dogs and a centralised EU database, alongside stricter regulations on pet travel to minimise the introduction of disease to naïve populations. We would like to see the EU passing a directive to push states to tackle stray population humanely to reduce the burden on some Member States of overseas rehoming. Beyond the traditional animals we know as pets, we would like the EU to upgrade exotic animal legislation for both zoos and pets in private collections to curb the problem of big cats kept and bred for profit and exploitation at the detriment of their wild counterparts.



Spay and neuter in Romania and Italy: a good year for Save the Dogs!

2019 showed an increase of surgeries performed by Save the Dogs in Romania: 1,301 animals were neutered (200 more than in 2018). Of these, there were 616 dogs and 685 cats. 50% of the dogs and 80% of the cats were owned pets, while the others were strays or feral. Save the Dogs also started its first Italian project named #TooManyPuppies, sponsoring 200 dog sterilizations in the suburbia of Naples through a local partner. 50% of the dogs neutered were owned ones, while the others were roaming. A census through a mobile application will monitor the impact of the project on the stray dog population.

Animal Friends Croatia have been

cooperating with a manufacturer of detergents, on a campaign "[Čarli – My Best Friend](#)". Company "Labud" produced a limited edition of dish washing detergents, with dogs and cats on the package, and is actively promoting the adoption of cats and dogs through the media. 10 shelters are included in this campaign.

Állatorvosok az Állatvédelemért Alapítvány

The Hungarian organisation, Veterinarians for the Protection of Animals Foundation, recently had a successful meeting with MEP Dr Katalin Cseh, who seemed dedicated to animal welfare issues. In fact, MEP Cseh has a dog adopted from a shelter and agreed that more EU legislation on animal welfare is needed to harmonise legislation across EU Member States. MEP Cseh was particularly interested in mandatory neutering of dogs not kept for breeding and a ban on pet adverts by non-registered breeders.

Naturewatch Foundation launched [#Hotline4Puppies](#) this year, a confidential puppy farming phone line and email for the public to report individuals they suspect of puppy farming, or breaching animal welfare standards in the breeding of dogs in the UK. After just three months, Naturewatch Foundation has received hundreds of reports. Animal crime experts at Naturewatch Foundation formulate the reports into police-friendly information packs. The reports are supported up by additional evidence sourced using covert investigation techniques, which are then sent to appropriate enforcement agencies such as local councils. For more information go to: <https://naturewatch.org/report-suspected-animal-crime>.

International Cat Care provides information and courses for people who want to make an impact on cat welfare, from veterinary care to helping unowned cats. This year the charity has relaunched its website (www.icatcare.org) containing over 400 pages on cat health and cat care advice. It can be translated to 27 languages on the page.

The Kitten Checklist was launched by The Cat Group and it is freely available and can be translated. It can be found at www.thecatgroup.org.uk/pdfs/The-Kitten-Checklist.pdf. A print-ready version is also available.

Early 2020 will see the launch of a huge new section on ICatCare's website called Cat Friendly Solutions for Unowned cats which will cover population management using TNR, to Cat Friendly Homing for cats which can be homed with people as pets.

Svenska Djurskyddsföreningen hosted a seminar on puppy smuggling, attended by more than 100 people, as well as the media. The day included talks by: the competent authorities about the animal welfare problems, animal health risks and economic fraud involved in the trade; the county administrative board of Skåne (in the south of Sweden) about how they handle illegal dogs that have crossed the border; the FVE about the lack of legal instruments concerning dog trade in the EU; and the Swedish Kennel Club about the information they give to buyers. Johan Beck-Friis of Svenska Djurskyddsföreningen chaired the event and Fredrik Malmgren of Djurens Vänner also gave a presentation about the fantastic SWEPAAG project our members are driving forward. The speakers all agreed that authorities and NGOs must have a better dialogue to be able to fight the smugglers and that these meetings should continue. A new seminar next year was promised by the Swedish University of Agriculture.

