



Dear Alliance members,

Welcome to the 9th EU Dog & Cat Alliance newsletter, and the first of 2021!

It has now been a whole year since everyday life was turned upside down and we were forced to adapt to fast-changing situations. We have faced common challenges, but equally many of our struggles have been unique and, for most of us, are ongoing. We have heard from many of you that you are continuing to work hard to deal with the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and difficulties in continuing your fundraising, and all of this on top of existing issues such as a lack of enforcement of animal welfare legislation or a lack of legislation altogether.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part in our recent EU Dog & Cat Alliance members survey. We are grateful that so many of you shared your thoughts, insights and ideas on many different aspects of EU Dog & Cat Alliance membership. Your feedback will help us ensure that the Alliance's vision and future plans continue to be in line with your values and priorities, and that we continue to do our very best for all four-legged friends across the EU.

I am also delighted to announce that we will be holding the first ever virtual Alliance members meeting in April. One year on from when our worlds were in some way or other placed on pause, we believe it's timely for us to meet, share our experiences and learnings, hear updates from the Alliance secretariat and welcome our new members, too. Further to some of your survey suggestions on areas of interest to you, we are also planning some Q&A-style workshops and look forward to lively discussions!

With thanks and warmest wishes,

Suzie Carley



Alliance Updates

Virtual event

On Wednesday 14th April we will be holding the first ever online EU Dog & Cat Alliance members meeting. You will have received a "save the date" earlier this week and more details will follow!



Save the Date



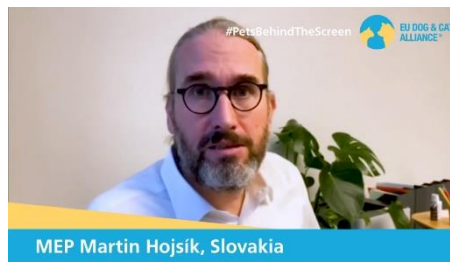
EUPAAG report on online pet advertising and social media campaign

In the last newsletter we announced the launch of the [EU Pet Advertising Advisory Group \(EUPAAG\) report](#). We sent this report to all MEPs, Member State veterinary attachés and relevant European Commission officials.



We also launched a social media campaign with the hashtag #PetsBehindTheScreen, which included videos of five MEPs supporting our recommendations.

We were pleased engagement from stakeholders, MEPs and Alliance members who shared or re-tweeted our posts helped to spread the important message.



A very warm welcome to the Alliance's newest members!
The Alliance now has 94 members across 25 EU Member States and the UK
- here's a little bit about our newest members!

Dier&Recht



Dier&Recht
advocaat van de dieren

We welcomed our first member of 2021 to the Alliance—Dier&Recht! Based in Amsterdam, their mission is to protect animal welfare by influencing legislation and promoting greater enforcement of laws, including work to prevent inhumane and extreme breeding practices.

Swedish Animal Aid



We are delighted to welcome Swedish Animal Aid to the Alliance! This Swedish organisation works in Romania to care for vulnerable cats and dogs by sponsoring a castration programme and providing food and care to the animals.

Ten Lives Cat Rescue



We also welcome our newest Irish Alliance member! Ten Lives Cat Rescue was founded in July 2020, based in Wexford, Ireland. Their mission is to identify and map the local feral cat population and support a comprehensive Trap, Neuter, Return Programme. We look forward to working with them!

Stichting Zwerfkatten Nederland



Finally, we are excited to welcome Stichting Zwerfkatten Nederland as the 94th member of the EU Dog & Cat Alliance! They work to reduce the feral and stray cat population in the Netherlands, with a goal to have every cat in a home in the Netherlands by 2040.

Digital Services Act proposal & feedback submission

In December 2020, the European Commission published its proposal for a [Digital Services Act](#). The Regulation will establish/harmonise obligations for digital services providers to tackle illegal content and will set requirements for them to ensure traceability of traders in online marketplaces, making it relevant to EUPAAG's work on advertising of pets for sale online. As well as working with our EUPAAG members on feedback on the Commission's proposal, we will continue to engage with EU stakeholders on this topic over the coming months.

Fitness Check of EU animal welfare legislation

Following the Fitness Check roadmap last year, in the next month or so the European Commission is due to open a consultation on EU animal welfare legislation, which will include Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on welfare of animals in transport. While the Fitness Check will focus primarily on legislation relating to farmed animals, we want any revisions to also include provisions to protect the welfare of cats and dogs in transport. Please look out for our request for input in the next couple of months.

Meetings and events

Virtual meeting with DG SANTE, European Commission

In February, we had a virtual meeting with the Deputy Director General (DDG) for food sustainability in the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) together with representatives of the Animal Welfare and AMR unit, the Animal Health unit, and the Food Hygiene and Fraud unit. On the agenda of the meeting was inappropriate online advertising of dogs and cats for sale, illegal trade of dogs and cats, and welfare of dogs and cats in transport. They were interested to hear the findings and recommendations of the EUPAAG report and this led into a discussion about illegal trade of dogs. We were interested to hear more details from them about information exchange between Member States on suspected cases of illegal trade via the EU Food Fraud Network's Administrative Assistance and Cooperation System (AAC), which started allowing suspected illegal dog and cat trade cases to be logged in 2020.

European Parliament Working Group on companion animals

In December 2020, we are pleased to say that the EU Dog & Cat Alliance became a permanent observer of the new [Working Group on companion animals](#) in the European Parliament. We have attended two meetings so far, which have covered the guidance prepared by the EU Platform on Animal Welfare on online sale, breeding and transport of cats and dogs, and a discussion on compulsory identification and registration with representatives of DG SANTE.

MEPs in the Working Group want to encourage EU legislation on online advertising of dogs and cats for sale and have also stressed the need for compulsory identification and registration at EU level.

Member Updates

Updates from Animal Eye/CzechPAAG

Following many disruptions due to COVID-19 over the past year, CzechPAAG is now restarting cooperation with Advertising Agencies to tackle online advertising issues.

It is worth noting that there is a proposed amendment to Czechia's Veterinary Act which would oblige breeders to microchip puppies at the time of offer for sale or handing over the dog to a new breeder, but no later than 3 months of age. The breeder would also be obliged to ensure that the dog's identification number is recorded in the dog's vaccination document. In the context of this proposal, Animal Eye are planning a mini virtual conference together with MEP Dita Charanzová and the operators (agencies) of advertising portals about EUPAAG.

Svenska Djurskyddsföreningen and Djurens Vänner hold seminar on dog smuggling for MPs

On March 9, Svenska Djurskyddsföreningen (SDF) and Djurens Vänner held a seminar in the Swedish parliament about illegal trade of dogs. The seminar was moderated by SDF and brought together speakers from the Swedish National Center for Animal Welfare, the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), Djurens Vänner, the Swedish customs authority, the Swedish Board of Agriculture, and Stockholm County Administrative Board.

Statistics show that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of dogs brought into Sweden illegally has increased dramatically. The speakers presented proposals for solutions and measures, including a reporting obligation for veterinarians in the event of suspected dog smuggling, allowing exchange of information between relevant authorities and stricter penalties for both smugglers and dog buyers, amongst others.

News from Cat Care Community in Latvia

We saved 445 cats during 2020, sterilised 250 homeless cats. Now we are working to sterilise homeless cats as well, and have already sterilised 100 cats. We have also started such an online story telling about adopted cats. It can be found in Instagram through the hashtag #cccheroots.



Swedish Animal Aid's castration campaigns in Neamt County, Romania

Since our inception in February 2018, we have contributed more than 2700 castrations. Last year we achieved 919 castrations, mostly dogs as they are particularly vulnerable. This year we have a goal of 1300 castrations (300 cats and 1000 dogs). Cat campaigns are fully funded. We have a team of 3 very dedicated veterinarians who go out to the villages in the warm season. So far this year we have made 222 castrations and the campaigns are rolling all the time. Our big project for 2021 is to find financiers to equip a transport to mobile veterinary clinic.

Save the Dogs launching its 2nd spay and neuter project in southern Italy

After neutering for free 460 owned and stray dogs in the suburbia of Naples, microchipping 172 owned dogs and tracking 228 with an app, Save the Dogs has launched its second project in Calabria, one of the most underdeveloped Italian regions. Calabria has 15,000 dogs imprisoned in its public kennels and local rescue groups struggle to rehome around 1,500 dogs a year, lacking resources and support from the authorities. Save the Dogs will not only provide resources for 200 spays and use dog tracker app, but will lobby local authorities in order to implement efficient dog population control strategies.



Dutch stakeholders call for trade ban to follow law on breeding unhealthy companion animals

In the Netherlands it is prohibited to breed unhealthy companion animals: for instance flat-faced dogs and cats. However, these animals are still traded, and imported without governmental intervention, as the trade in these animals is not prohibited.

To stop breeders and merchants a ban on the trade is required. To this purpose, the Dutch animal welfare organisation Sophia-Vereeniging has drawn up a bill to be presented to Parliament. Dutch veterinarians and Welfare organisations from Fairdog and others teamed up to insist on this trade ban (Cynophylia, Caring Vets, Dibevo, Dierenbescherming, Dier&Recht, Faculteit Diergeneeskunde Universiteit Utrecht, Koninklijke Maatschappij van Diergeneeskunde, Sophia Vereeniging, Stichting Stray).

News from Towarzystwo Opieki nad Zwierzętami w Polsce



Our organisation started a new initiative for owners of animals that live in rural areas. In Poland we have area where there is a big problem with access to vet services. That's why we designed and bought a mobile veterinary cabinet that goes from village to village and offers free sterilization and neuter for dogs and cats. For most of the animals this is the first time when they can get help from a professional veterinary. If you want to know more about it, please email us at: toz@toz.pl



#PuppiesInAPandemic – an update from UK Naturewatch Foundation

Puppy farmers have proved that they are willing to exploit any opportunity, even a global pandemic, to profit from the sale of dogs. At the height of lockdown in 2020, reports to the UK Naturewatch Foundation puppy farming hotline, sadly doubled. At the same time, Naturewatch Foundation asked the three UK leading pet-selling sites to stop hosting adverts for the sales of puppies during lockdown - we were concerned about socialisation of puppies and profiteering puppy farmers. All three websites responded to the campaign and one of them has since announced significant changes to stamp down on illegal sales.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on rescues in the UK (update from Battersea Dogs & Cats Home)

In January, the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH), the umbrella group for dog and cat rescue and rehoming groups across the British Isles and Ireland, conducted a survey to ascertain the impact the pandemic was having on its members 10 months on from the first lockdowns. The survey showed that all rescues had been impacted in various ways, including a reduction of intake and rehoming, the ability to fundraise, reduced staffing and volunteers and reduced availability of veterinary services. Despite these concerns, the stability of the sector has improved since the start of the pandemic due to schemes such as the UK Government Job Retention Scheme and ADCH grants. Across the sector we have also not yet seen an increase in the levels of pet abandonment with a 34% year-on-year reduction of cat intake and a 32% reduction in dogs.

Updates from Prijatelji životinja (Animal Friends Croatia)

There have been several changes to national legislation recently, notably a ban on firecrackers, mandatory rabies vaccinations being changed from yearly to in line with vaccine manufacturers' instructions, and better conditions for animals in shelters. There are several new initiatives to amend legislation, including for a ban on chains, and amendments to the Ordinances on dangerous dogs, veterinary law and facilities for temporary accommodation of pets. Animal Friends Croatia is involved in the Commission for Amendments for each of these initiatives.

Animal Friends Croatia runs a long-term project providing reduced-price or free-of-charge castration for dogs and cats saved from the street or those from animal shelters whose owners are on very low income. As well, Animal Friends Croatia runs a big and important project of dogs castration program in Roma settlements in Croatia's counties.

Good news for stray cats in the Netherlands (update from Dierenlot)

We are happy with the animal-friendly stray cat policy of the province of Utrecht in the Netherlands. The years of hunting for stray cats will end on April 2, 2021! After the Provincial Council of Utrecht passed two motions on alternatives to the hunting of stray cats in November last year, DierenLot, together with the province and stakeholders, worked hard on a detailed plan to start this year in the province of Utrecht with TNRC, (Trap Neuter Return/relocate / Care). This is a good alternative to solve the stray cat problem in an animal-friendly way. We are relieved that cat owners in Utrecht no longer have to fear that their beloved pet will be shot. Formally, 400 cats were shot every year, but it is suspected that there were many more and that there were also cats with an owner.

