

## **PRO ANIMALS FINLAND REGISTERED ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT 2008**

### **General information**

Pro Animals Finland registered association continued its cooperation with Pro Animals Romania during 2008. Pro Animals Romania takes care of animal welfare matters of Gorj county that has about 500000 inhabitants and maintains a shelter of about 400 homeless dogs in the outskirts of Tg-Jiu.

Supporting Pro Animals Romania to struggle to get some cooperation with local authorities and inhabitants has been an essential part of our duties. People's attitudes, their low income and the authorities' sometimes sovereign power have made Pro Animals Romania's work harder but we have had to support them strenuously by trying to affect matters through EU officials and through national and international media, among others, and by showing a good example in practise so that animal protection would be perceived as a part of the welfare of the entire community.

In addition to stray dogs and cats, pets too, and especially horses, need special protection and better treatment in Romania. During 2008, Pro Animals Romania had to realise that horses being treated badly was a very serious problem, and the association has been taking care of an abused horse and also an abandoned foal who was only a few months old.

Regarding animal protection, 2008 was a very eventful year in Gorj county and Pro Animals Romania saw how locals became more aware of cases of animal abuse. In the beginning of the year, Romania welcomed a new animal protection bill that prohibits the killing of healthy dogs and cats and sanctions the abandonment of privately owned animals. Compared to previous years, Pro Animals Romania received an increased amount of reports on animal protection violations. Pro Animals Romania isn't an authority of any kind and has to make a report to the police of every case they hear of and have confirmed. By the time this happens, the person who made the report usually declines to testify for the crime. Romanians are still very much afraid of the police and think that they will get into trouble if they testified against each other. Romanians know the police are to blame for the several poisonings of stray dogs that happened in 2008 in Gorj county and are afraid to press charges because of it. Several privately owned animals are poisoned, too.

### **1. Petitions, official letters, suggestions and memos**

Pro Animals Finland registered association proposed several motions and made petitions to EU officials in order to improve animal protection within EU countries during 2008 and paid special attention to the bad treatment of horses. Petitions, official letters and suggestions were sent to the European Union as well as international animal protection organisations.

Our association also sent several petitions against bad treatment of dogs and horses to the officials of Gorj county. The Ministry of Justice in Finland, among others, received memos of the cooperation between Pro Animals Finland registered association and Pro Animals Romania.

### **2. Supporting Pro Animals Romania's dog shelter**

Our registered association provided for the dog shelter of about 400 dogs maintained by Pro Animals Romania. In addition to the dogs' welfare, we provided dog food on a daily basis, sufficient vet treatment (including surgery and spaying and neutering), medicine for the dogs and tick and flea treatments. Every dog at the shelter received their rabies vaccines during January 2008. The goddog programme changed so that you can now be a shelter godparent in addition to being a godparent to a single dog.

Because the land where the present shelter is on, is owned by the city and it isn't wise to make any renovations under possible eviction, we got some useful items for the shelter (aggregate, solar cell and halogen lamps, headlamps, a portable toilet, tools etc.), an extra warehouse and a couple of outhouses that can be moved when needed. The shelter received building materials for twenty large dog cages from Finland in 2008 and they were built at the shelter with the help of a Finnish volunteer worker. PAFi also provided food assistance for the shelter during 2008.

### **3. Animal protection centre**

One of the biggest jobs in 2008 was to work on a plan to build a new dog and cat shelter in Targu Jiu. The present shelter was supposed to be closed by the end of 2008 but the building of a new shelter can't begin until Pro Animals Romania has managed to get a building site for the shelter. The representatives of Pro Animals Romania were looking for a new site intensively during 2008 but people in the Romanian countryside had become aware of the increasing value of building sites and the economy hadn't gotten worse yet. Suitable building sites were too expensive and unaffordable. The main causes for the delay of the project have been unsuitable building sites, the loss of economic and human resources and the difficult bureaucracy of Romania.

We began to consider expanding the building project of a new shelter during 2008 so that its essential part would be progress in the countryside. This would make it possible for us to get EU funding for our project, for example. Planning and executing a project this huge has called for a lot of research and the world's failing economy hasn't helped to get any cooperation. It takes a lot of effort and sacrifice for small associations such as Pro Animals Finland registered association and Pro Animals Romania to get large projects going while working on so many other projects.

### **4. Local education**

We tried to get the local authorities of Tg-Jiu to understand the ineffectiveness of removing the stray dog problem by killing dogs instead of spaying and neutering and educating people. We continued to educate the local population on the importance of spaying and neutering their pets and on the possibility to adopt local homeless dogs with local media and poster campaigns. We couldn't execute the education at Tg-Jiu's grade schools in 2008 because of insufficient funding but the president of Pro Animals Romania, Carmena Serbanoiu, wrote a book on animal protection strategies within EU countries and began to give lectures on animal protection at the university of Tg-Jiu.

### **5. Pr and campaigns**

The best pr for us is making our work known through different authorities and other media. To become well-known and to make our work possible, it is also very important for our association to have reliable and well-known cooperation partners and strong connections. Our pr concentrates mostly on

developing a better community, highlighting the importance of spaying and neutering to remove the stray dog problem, with the help of a new animal protection centre. We also pay attention to other current issues.

During autumn, we found another cooperation partner in the Finnish cooperative society, Happy Dog, and continued our tight cooperation with the Finnish pet store chain, Faunatar.

During 2008, our members still received about two newsletters a month from PAFi via email. The newsletters talk about our association and the work we do. The same information is also on PAFi's homepage. Our association has a fresher outlook now that we introduced our new homepage and pamphlets in the beginning of 2008. The renewal also helps to gain information. PAFi's internet forum is another good way to promote pr.

During 2008, we campaigned with different themes to raise funds for Pro Animals Romania and its work for animal protection and to ensure the well-being of the dogs at the shelter maintained by Pro Animals Romania.

## **6. Membership and PAFi support products**

At a more practical level, we have strived for making our membership, among others, more effective and through that to reinforce our ability to support Pro Animals Romania. We introduced a selection of dog blankets, a Dog Aid -bag and a magnetic reflector as the new PAFi products. We won't make the selection too vast as product sales isn't the best way to raise funds for PAFi.

## **7. Events**

We didn't participate in any pet-related expos in 2008. The target group of these events isn't ideal for PAFi and attending the events would have taken too much of our limited resources.

During 2008 we participated in, among others, the Markets of Possibilities (Mahdollisuuksien tori) in Lahti and in Tampere and the Ethical Christmas market fair (Eettiset joulumarkkinat) in Helsinki in December. During that year, we participated some smaller events in Tampere, Finland and at a shopping centre called Ideapark in Lempäälä, Finland.

A Match Show was organised in Lempäälä in May to support Pro Animals Finland registered association. It was sponsored by Ideapark's Faunatar pet store and Royal Canin. The Finnish singer Kristian J. Meurman acted as one of the judges.

Small events were organised when the representatives of Pro Animals Romania, Carmena and Patricia, visited Finland in June and in August to meet their Finnish friends.

## **8. Other news**

In the beginning of 2008, Pro Animals Finland registered association reinforced itself with a goddog team, a members team, pr-team and with a team concentrating on Tampere. At the end of the year we realised that several team members have too much going on with other associations, demanding jobs, studies, hobbies and their family that makes distributing time very challenging. PAFi tried to get some

fresh faces to the teams but with poor results. The loss of resources has been a constant nuisance and executing all good ideas and plans has been difficult because of it.

The members of the committee of Pro Animals Finland registered association and a few volunteers visited Tg-Jiu twice during 2008, both in March and in September. Representatives of Pro Animals Romania, Carmena Serbanoiu and Patricia Paraschiv, visited Finland during the summer. Patricia came in June and Carmena in August.

During our trip to Tg-Jiu in March, we got to witness an attempt to seize a neglected horse that had belonged to a Romani family. We saw with our own eyes how ineffective the local authorities are when solving animal protection cases and how arrogantly the people who are responsible for animal cruelty act towards the representatives of authorities and animal protection organisations.

In March, we also visited several city-maintained shelters in Gorj county and realised that all of them ignore animal protection laws and both ethical and moral values related to the treatment of animals.

During a visit to the shelter in Tg-Jiu in September, Carmena Serbanoiu and the president of Pro Animals Finland registered association, Kiia Vasko, visited a new dog shelter that was being built by the city of Tg-Jiu. At that stage, the shelter didn't look like a suitable place for homeless dogs. The new shelter was estimated to have been ready by the end of 2008 but by the end of 2008, it became clear that the constructions will take another four to six months. Once the new shelter is ready, it will be able to take in about 800 dogs. The city is planning to move there the about 100 dogs that are still living at the present city shelter.

The present, so called city shelter, was built next to the shelter maintained by Pro Animals Romania in the beginning of 2008 so Carmena and Patricia have been able to keep an eye on how the dogs are treated at that shelter. Carmena has had to do something about the constant neglect and has made several complaints and petitions to the decision-makers of the city to fix things. We requested an audience with the city mayor of Tg-Jiu but our request was denied.

During autumn, two young Finnish female students spent two months of their studies at the dog shelter in Tg-Jiu. These volunteers were a big help at the shelter and during their training period they saw how much work Pro Animals Romania does and how difficult that work is. Pro Animals Romania basically consists of Carmena Serbanoiu and her daughter Patricia.

Pro Animals Finland registered association was granted their third nationwide money collection licence in a row by the State Provincial Office of Southern Finland, reaching from November 11, 2009 to October 31, 2010. We applied for and were granted licences for fund-raising boxes for the cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Nokia.

In October, Tracey Hampton, a representative of the World Society for the Protection of Animals WSPA, contacted representatives of both Pro Animals Finland registered association and Pro Animals Romania to set an appointment in Romania during 2008. Unfortunately Tracey's job description changed before the end of the year and we had to postpone our meeting to 2009 so that the new representative had time to read up on their duties sufficiently.

Because finding a property for a new shelter and animal protection centre has required a lot of work, Pro Animals Romania petitioned the Tg-Jiu city government to donate them a new property to build a private shelter on during the end of 2008, but the request was unanswered. The land of the present shelter maintained by Pro Animals Romania is planned to be put to use as soon as possible and the possible eviction is still very real.

During 2008, Pro Animals Finland registered association received membership fees of 1.440 euros and goddog fees for the dogs at the Tg-Jiu shelter of 31.542,50 euros. The exact numbers are to be published with Pro Animals Finland registered association's final accounts of 2008.