



Here we are again after 4 years of activity

Whenever we get in front of the keyboard to write, we have to re-read everything we have published in the past years. Even the title repeats the title of our news letter from early April 2021.

We would like to give you fresh news and not keep repeating ourselves. We are often so immersed in our daily lives that we do not realize what is going on around us. There is always something to do. Sometimes even too much to do. But there is also change, for the better.

Happy reading.

January 2022, the usual and the opposite.

We finished 2021 with a series of ups and downs. Laura, our vet, was on holiday in Spain and a dog here at the shelter had a sudden infection in one of her paws. Within 48 hours things had escalated to the point where the limb had to be amputated. In less than 4 hours we decided to send her to Sal, where Dr. Margarete Keil (Marga), a German vet we knew, was still there. With the necessary preparations and antibiotics in full swing, Ayla left by ferry for the salt island. Three hours later Dada was in the harbour to pick her up. And the next morning the operation. Everything went well. Thank you Marga and thank you Dada from OSPA Sal for the logistical support. Ayla is back with us and has recovered well.

The current year is off to a relatively quiet start. The usual illnesses, ailments and problems.

But let's go in order: the usual illnesses. Ehrlichia (or ehrlichiosis) really drives us crazy. If this filthy disease only produced the classic symptoms of fever or lack of appetite in dogs, we would all be much happier and safer. Unfortunately, it is an insidious disease. In fact, we are often confronted with symptoms that are absolutely out of the catalogue. Often the dog does not even have a fever. Sometimes not even lack of

appetite. The case of Mafioso (we do not comment on the name) is quite emblematic. This dog is reported to us as apparently having suffered a trauma: the dog does not walk and howls as if in pain. We went to pick him up at the same time as our vet arrived from Spain. There was no sign of trauma. No pain either. He let himself be loaded into the car without even the slightest yelp. We started looking for something else: biochemical analysis, tests and hemogram. At last we find that he is positive in the rapid test and the hemogram confirms the result: ehrlichia. Well, there is a cure. It takes 28 days of antibiotics. It usually lasts 5-6 days and the dog is fine. With Mafioso the results are not so quick. He wants to go outside but he can't move. So, we start walking him with a cloth under his abdomen until he can recover the use of his back legs. Result after a fortnight of constant follow-up? He happily returned to his home. Today Mafioso roams around Rabil, a town near the international airport and the island's former capital.

Ready for the next case? Another phone call, another dog and the exact same problem. Another 28 days with us for antibiotic treatment. And history repeats itself... and will for a while.





We change the theme but remain in the first month of the year: on Sunday 23 January we manage to do something different. We help the Sola Foundation by providing the entrance to our facility for the distribution of second-hand clothes to the less well-off on the island. Below is a glimpse of the day. About 300 people passed through. Over the next few days, we realise the importance of having done this in our facility: people keep coming in asking if we have clothes to donate.



February 2022, do we go off the beaten track?

In January, we are invited by the Municipal Chamber, the most important authority on the island. The topic of the informal conversation is goat attacks by wandering dogs. Remember, it is important, Wandering Dogs, not stray dogs. The president begins to talk about the problem facing the shepherds. Then we start to investigate this very conversation and ask: "How many goats were killed in 2021 by these phantom dogs?" Or: "How many dogs are there on the island?" But we want to insist with an easier question: "How many of these dogs are dangerous to goats?" No one is able to answer these basic questions.

At this point we ask what the municipal regulations say about dogs. The answer comes like a bolt of lightning: dogs must not run loose and must be registered in a database. Well, all we have to do is tell them to implement the law, their law, and fortunately we agree.

In February, for ten consecutive days, we go through all the towns with the awareness phase. Basically, we explain our project of ethical dog population management and try to make dog owners more responsible. In the meantime, we welcome this decision by the municipal chamber to cooperate with us and to enforce the rules. Until now, nobody had done so. If we were finally able to control the dogs, we would be the first island in the archipelago to do so without setting up municipal kennels and without unnecessary and dangerous slaughter.

We have taken them off the beaten track.





March 2022, the story repeats

March has flown by. With the discovery of these two beautiful, plump puppies and a third blind and lost in the desert, we realise that there is still work to be done in the area of birth control. If the first two were



intentional, the last one was certainly not. In fact, he was abandoned in the Viana desert with the very likely intention of letting him die.

In the meantime, we have managed to convince the owner of the two puppies to let us sterilise their mother. The rest we will see.

We have started catching and neutering cats at the airport. It seems that the check-in and baggage loading area is full. So far, we have caught 6 of them. But we continue to set traps

and plan to catch them all. We're keeping our fingers crossed. On the other side of the landing strip, there are more. The reason is clearly related to the fact that the airport borders the village of Rabil. In the coming months, we will have to concentrate on "hunting" cats in that area.

Still on the feline theme, we are trying to catch the cats that have been relocated to the uninhabited island in front of Sal Rei. There are still some "geniuses" who take them there to let them die. We do not have any comments that would describe these humans fully. So, we refrain.



Tourists

Well, selfishly speaking and referring to our own quality of life, we didn't miss them. Silence, calm, fewer phone calls from strange characters and so on. Slowly, slowly, with the pandemic, we almost forgot how important they are to our business.

First and foremost, they are the witnesses of our work. Only they can help us to be supported outside the island. Here, as we have often said, we do not receive any kind of help from the authorities. On the contrary, sometimes we have to beg them not to make us pay some unnecessary and unjustified tax or levy.

Secondly, we must remember that if we need something urgently, only people from outside can bring it to us. The logistical support provided by tourists is absolutely vital for our animals.

The third element is donations or proceeds from souvenir sales. The donations are divided into material or money and in general we are very pleased with them. Whether small or large, they show us that people appreciate us and value our work. Thank you to everyone who supports us in this way. THANK YOU!

The fourth element that obviously helps us a lot is adoptions. Who better than tourists to adopt our dogs? I would say that only they can get to know and choose their four-legged companion so well.



Evidently the best category is the one who come with materials, donations and even adopt one of our animals. It sounds like a joke, but it's not. This also happens. The picture opposite shows an example from England: Katie and Oliver. To them go the laurels. THANK YOU! You are fantastic. Remember: every dog that leaves the island is a rescued animal and you save his life. Thank you for them.

With the return of the tourists, we are once again able to send off dogs ready for export. So, in the last few months we have had five dogs and two cats leave. In a few weeks another three will leave. We can say that adoptions thanks to tourists are working well, very well indeed.



Tragedy and hope

We often overlook sad stories in our newsletters. Sometimes because they risk hiding the beautiful stories we live, and sometimes because they are particularly difficult situations.

But we want to tell this one. One morning a young boy arrives at the clinic in a daze. He is looking for help. He found a dog that was sick. The vet leaves. Once on the spot she realises that the dog has been there for hours under the eyes of everyone: citizens, police, firemen. Everybody's been there and nobody's done anything. Only these kids. This is the scene the vet sees:



Behold the details: dog placed in the shade, on a pallet and a towel. Although all care was taken to put him in excellent condition, unfortunately there was not much more to be done. The dog died a few hours later in the clinic. No one can understand our astonishment and pleasure at finding him so well protected and not left to the indifference of passers-by. Thank you, guys, you are our hope. Keep up the good work and the future will be better for everyone. KEEP GOING THIS WAY!

Thank you all. We are on the right track.

Don't let our work be in trouble, support us, we are on a positive track and we would like to continue.

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