



Dear Readers,

Sometimes things happen that make me wonder: is this actually normal or is a line being crossed? I am referring to an incident that concerns the freedom of the press and the freedom of opinion. I think it's a good thing that these freedoms exist in Germany. But does everything we're allowed to do have to be done to the full? My personal opinion is NO. Especially not when whole groups of people are denigrated. The more a person is in the public eye, the more responsibly they should handle the statements they make. Did the events at the beginning of this year meet these criteria? Everyone will have to judge that for themselves. What I mean are the allegations related to IGP sport and the people who practise it. A comedian who calls himself a 'dog professional' reported on the topic of protection sport in two of his podcasts. IGP sportspeople, their dogs, local groups and clubs, including SV, were targeted. Sweeping claims were made that it was normal for dog sportspeople to consume alcohol while practising their sport. Dogs, he claimed, are trained as weapons using prohibited methods and represent a danger to society. In my view, words are what have become weapons here. It is not a good thing for our sport when someone who represents a large part of society claims something like this. We all know that there are some black sheep. But these few cases must not be taken as a reflection of dog sport as a whole.

The SV Public Relations Committee immediately drew up a series of recommendations and measures that we believe are purposeful. Our advice is to take up the issue at SV, to stand behind our members and to counter prejudices in the public in various ways. Of course, in coordination with our umbrella organisation VDH, and possibly in cooperation with other working dog associations. What counts is that we follow the same direction.

On social networks, there have been many great statements from IGP athletes across all associations. They make factual arguments and demonstrate why they love their hobby. A huge community quickly became visible. This is impressive, and I would like to express my sincere thanks to all sports enthusiasts who are standing up for our sport in this way. The message is clear, and now the clubs have to do their part.

The fact is, clubs are NOT the driver of biting incidents. They provide expertise with great volunteer commitment and help to educate, train and exercise dogs. We at SV should use these circumstances as an opportunity to present this discipline to the outside world in a professionally sound and easily understandable way. When I personally think about what makes our dog sport special, it is the community, the development of friendships and the togetherness that provides a balance to everyday life. If we want to continue to maintain the variety of sporting activities with dogs, it means that we have to get away from being against each other. It is important to tolerate that people's needs and views can be different. Is there a right or a wrong? No, I don't think so. Our own attitude seems right to us at first. But if we make an effort to look at things from the perspective of others, we may reach a basic understanding that at least helps us to accept their views. The solution to many problems in our club is to work together instead of against each other. If we succeed in this, comedians will no longer have a chance to denigrate the excellent work we do.

Yours truly,

Roswitha Dannenberg
SV Press Officer