



Dear Readers,

I would like to start my editorial with great news:

**It's OUR birthday! The German Shepherd breed and Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SV) e.V. are 125 years old.** We want to celebrate this special birthday with you and make 2024 the Year of the German Shepherd. The supplement in this issue provides you with many interesting facts about the German Shepherd and the history of our club, Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SV) e.V.

Let's draw together again as one big SV family and celebrate with joy and fun. One nice side effect is that we'll be able to spread our joy to others. Who knows, they may get curious and want to find out more about our German Shepherds and the wide range of activities our club has to offer. It would be great to gain new enthusiasts.

We will officially begin the celebrations in honour of the German Shepherd on 22 April 2024 with a wreath-laying ceremony at the grave of Rittmeister Max von Stephanitz at the Trinitatis Cemetery in Dresden. As the founder of the breed, Max von Stephanitz clearly formulated the breeding objective: 'Breeding German Shepherds means breeding working dogs.'

This motto was as true then as it is today. Our club offers a wide range of activities to keep our dogs occupied. One important pillar is *Schutzhund*. A few years ago this would never have been questioned. Neither from the outside nor from within SV. This has changed, which begs the question: why is this the case and what has caused this development? The aim of the analysis should not be to look for culprits. Rather, the focus must be on identifying and categorising the causes so that we can work towards a turnaround, to which we hope the vast majority of our members will contribute.

*Schutzhund* is an integral part of IGP sport and our SV breed surveys. And it should remain so, at least as far as I am concerned. The questioning of this discipline shows me that we need to explain more than ever. You can only judge and categorise things if you know and understand them. That is often the problem. This applies equally to working dog sports clubs, regardless of the breed. As the Vice President of the VDH, Christa Bremer, recently said in a statement, 'It's five minutes to midnight for *Schutzhund*.' I agree, and that's why it's high time we turned back the clock.

In my opinion, it is necessary for working dog clubs to take a common path: through a well-coordinated approach between clubs, in close cooperation with our umbrella organisation, the VDH (Verband für das Deutsche Hundewesen e.V.). Promoting this was one of the reasons why I volunteered to be an ambassador for the K9andSports initiative. We reported on the initiative in the March issue, and this SV Magazine follows on from that.

As the President of Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SV) e.V., I see it as my duty to preserve and promote the outstanding character, wonderful nature and health of the German Shepherd. To give one of the oldest German dog breeds and its 125-year-old association a good perspective for the future, both for us, dear members, and for those who come after us.

Roswitha Dannenberg  
SV President