



Dear Members,

This editorial gives me the opportunity not only to write an informative article, but also to share my views on current topics, club political matters, social issues and other relevant topics relating to the German Shepherd Dog. Editorials can provide readers with a clear perspective on current events and encourage debate by supporting or critiquing an agenda. They are one of the most important components of freedom of expression, encouraging the exchange of opinions and discussion on relevant topics. They provide a transparent platform on which views and standpoints can be presented.

The current focus is on the inclusion of working dogs in the UNESCO's national list of intangible cultural heritage for Germany. In turbulent times such as these, when Schutzhund training has been banned for private clubs in Austria, this is a particularly welcome prospect, coupled with the hope that such a ban won't be quite as easy in Germany. However, there is always room for personal interpretation, emotion and connection between the lines. The 'truth between the lines' means that the true or actual meaning of the UNESCO Commission's message is not immediately obvious to everyone because it is implicit. So, in order to identify what is really being said but not explicitly stated, you have to 'read between the lines', or understand the 'subtext'. When it comes to working dogs, as explained by the UNESCO Commission on its website, this refers to the training of dogs for various tasks to assist humans while ensuring the animals' wellbeing. This includes, among other things:

- Working dogs for search and rescue missions,
- Working dogs that assist people and
- Working dogs that protect and guard property.

The term 'working dogs' describes dogs that have been bred and trained over generations for a specific job or activity to assist humans. It would be wrong to associate working dogs only with Schutzhund. The aim of working dog breeding and training is to breed and train a team that can work together to help humans to accomplish certain everyday tasks. According to the UNESCO Commission, working dog training generally involves the targeted training of dogs for various tasks to help humans while ensuring the animals' wellbeing. Respecting the needs of dogs is a key aspect of their humane treatment. This includes providing the dog with appropriate housing, nutrition, care, exercise and social contact, and avoiding unnecessary pain and suffering. Dealing with working dogs therefore encompasses responsible breeding, training and ownership. The UNESCO Commission expects us to have clear ethical and professional standards that promote our handling of working dogs and responsible ownership. These standards provide guidelines for behaviour and decision-making in various areas of working dog breeding and training, particularly in professions involving significant responsibility for other people. They incorporate ethical principles such as respect, integrity, responsibility and professional competence, as well as duties of care. Dogs are used by humans in many areas and form a part of human society. Ethical standards in dealing with working dogs are primarily characterised by animal welfare considerations and responsibility towards our dogs. The focus must be on providing species-appropriate care and training in a manner that avoids causing dogs stress or fear.

Our club has been involved in breeding and training working dogs since the very first performance herding competition in 1901. Our shepherd dog breed ultimately stems from the long tradition of herding. For generations, we have combined traditional knowledge with modern scientific findings on working dog breeding and training methods, thereby making a valuable contribution to public safety and quality of life.

Today, many German Shepherds still accompany travelling shepherds and assist them in herding their flocks. Transhumance would be unthinkable without a shepherd dog as the shepherd's 'assistant'. Countless German Shepherds provide invaluable assistance in police and non-police emergency response, preventing crimes and saving lives on a daily basis. Many of them perform valuable services in disaster relief organisations worldwide, tracking down buried or missing people and ensuring their survival. Our club organises numerous tests and events in various areas of working dog training at the national and international levels every year. Interested members can acquire the necessary knowledge through seminars, workshops and training courses, thereby becoming part of this traditional cultural practice themselves. In our working and communication processes, we must pass on knowledge of working dog breeding and training from generation to generation, ensuring that it becomes part of our cultural heritage.

Yours truly,
Andreas Quint