

RETHINKING SV



Dear Readers,

My editorial in the July 2019 issue of the SV Magazine contained eleven points regarding future developments which I see as important if we are to lead our club towards a good future. In point 6, I stated at the time that our statutes urgently need to be revised, among other things to give the special committees more responsibilities. In point 8, I stated at the time that all three subpopulations of our breed must be subject to intensive care when it comes to breeding. My reasoning is as follows: in my opinion, the reform of the statutes in the mid-1990s ('democratisation'), which we all had high expectations of, has not had the desired long-term effects that would have been beneficial for a purebred dog breeding association. My impression is that after a good start and over 25 years of development, the composition of the National Assembly from the local and federal groups on the basis of the delegate system is no longer a reflection of the association. The various fields of activity within the association and their quantitative proportions are no longer reflected by corresponding proportions of members in the National Assembly. This creates dissatisfaction in many areas and is reflected not only in the negative mood of a considerable proportion of the delegates, but also in the frustration of the members – to the detriment of the association. The consequence is undesirable developments. Two examples:

1. In 1995 the new version of the statutes was adopted with effect from 1 January 1996 – number of members: 92,851. In a certain spirit of optimism, membership figures rose slightly for three years – in 1998: 94,148. From then on, the number of SV members has almost halved – in 2020: 51,204.

2. In 2004, the test regulations adopted by the FCI and VDH were unanimously passed by the National Assembly. In the following years, the number of tests taken within SV decreased from 18,000 to 8,000. From the very beginning, I referred to them as sporting or competition regulations and tried to prevent them by legal means, because I consider the requirements with regard to the selection of suitable dogs for breeding to be far too excessive – especially with regard to new members, which every club urgently needs.

In a closed meeting on 20 and 21 February 2020, the board took up point 6 mentioned above and agreed on a concept of action which is to provide a framework for possible changes. The aim is to 'expand the focus of action of the specific specialist areas while preserving the German Shepherd as a versatile utility dog breed'. This is meant to include the following:

- a) The elected experts from the federal groups will be given decision-making powers within their specialist areas. Mere advisory activity, as is currently the case, is not sufficient.
- b) If necessary, new specialist areas will be defined.

SV has been considerably affected by the development of the current pandemic. Fortunately, we currently have a situation that makes our basic activities (character assessments, tests, breeding shows and breed surveys) possible again. We can qualify our animals for breeding once again. However, the current situation also speaks for the accuracy of the assessment of Italian writer Francesca Melandri: 'The lockdown has only been the first chapter in a long novel. The plot is far from finished.' When we are able to reconvene our committees, it will be increasingly important for us to rediscover our role, show a willingness to change and implement reforms in many areas.

We need to make a fresh start together – if not now, then when?

Stay healthy!

Yours truly,

Helmut Buß
SV Vice-President