

# NEW INSIGHTS

*In future, the GSD International framework will provide insight into the activities of the WUSV and cover specialist topics of international importance.*



## PROF. DR. HEINRICH MESSLER

**About the author** Prof. Heinrich Meßler was born in Cologne. After training as a specialist in orthopedics, he worked as the chief physician at the orthopedic clinic in Mönchengladbach for 25 years. From 1987, the Professor was an orthopedics lecturer within the medical faculty at the University of Bonn. He has been an SV member since 1969. His kennel name “von Aducht” was founded in 1974. He has been the President of the Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SV) e.V. (Society for German Shepherd Dogs) and the WUSV since 2015.

You're now holding the new SV magazine in your hands for the very first time. Over the last decade, the requirements for a specialist publication, such as the SV gazette, have changed dramatically. Global media is now a significant competitor on the information market, and this media is now of significant importance within the offer available. But this comes with the limitation that not every piece of information published online is factually correct. Readers can only trust that the information in specialist publications has been well researched and published by professionals. This makes print media a serious and trustworthy medium. In well-known newspapers, we trust that even if information is published incorrectly, a correction will follow shortly thereafter.

As you can see, we are in the process of adapting our SV gazette to the requirements of modern periodical design: In future, we will distinguish between a gazette and a magazine. We understand the term gazette to mean an information source that is published continuously and summarizes recent events. In contrast, the magazine is published at longer intervals and will focus on a specialist area, such as genetics, breeding, training, rearing, history, etc. A significant proportion of the current SV magazine and future editions will focus on the complex “GSD International” topic. We are proud that the Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SV) e.V. (Society for German Shepherd Dogs) has in the World Union of German Shepherd Dog Clubs (WUSV) an organization with almost a quarter of a million members. These people work with our breed on a daily basis, and have an enormous need for information. The important

point here is to share any concerns affecting our breed with the world and to implement the specifications stipulated by Cavalry Captain von Stephanitz. As the WUSV adheres to our specifications stipulated by us as the founder society, the basis is already there.

To counteract centrifugal developments and to standardize our objectives, we implemented the harmonization concept within the WUSV a few years ago. This logically coherent concept will be implemented in stages. Key aspects include health, character, proof of descent and carefully maintaining our breed's working-dog nature. It goes without saying that our own interests must be actioned via the international umbrella organization. We are not only morally obligated, but also obligated by statute, to carefully implement the interests of the breed entrusted to us. This can only emanate from the founder society and must remain firmly under our control. We must also remember that a maximum of 20% of all dogs worldwide who are classed as “German Shepherds” are cared for by the SV or WUSV, meaning there is huge potential for our breed and our future.

We are at the beginning of a lengthy process that we are calling harmonization and we see it as our task and obligation to give all lovers of shepherd dogs around the world – regardless of their affiliation to different organizations – the chance to bring their dogs within the founder society's system, step by step. The historical review and explanation of the harmonization program in this current edition are the perfect way to start conceptually considering our necessary future work.

# A GLOBAL ASSOCIATION

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## AND ITS HISTORY

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*Other countries strived to follow the example set by the SV in Germany from very early on. There are now 92 member countries of the WUSV. Here follows an overview of its history.*

### **The early years**

After the Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SV) e.V. (Society for German Shepherd Dogs) was founded in 1899, it only took a few years for other countries to become aware of the “German Shepherd” breed and to learn of its various virtues. This development was also further perpetuated by the colonial policies of the German Empire at the time. You can therefore see a short report in an SV gazette dating from 1907 that states “the West African Plantation Society in Victoria has long since used shepherd dogs as guard dogs to protect their plantations with great success,” where two shepherd dogs had been acquired. Even at the time, of its 1033 members, the SV had 58 members from outside Europe.

### **Further development**

In those days, it was quite common for owners of German Shepherds to obtain their sweethearts from the breed’s homeland, but things did not stay like that. In 1902, the first foreign society – which is still in existence today – was founded in Switzerland: the Swiss Shepherd Dog Club (SC). The Austrian Society for German Shepherd Dogs (SVÖ) and the German Shepherd Dog Club of America (GSDCA) were founded in 1912 and 1913 respectively.

### **The Europa-Union der Schäferhundvereine (EUSV – European Union of German Shepherd Associations)**

The number of shepherd dog societies worldwide grew throughout the decade and despite the existence of a standardized breed standard, breed representatives from the different countries were seemingly very different. In response to these nationally motivated solo efforts, which were not always for the good of the breed, the SV launched an initiative in 1968 that aimed to initiate international cooperation among the various sectors to help standardize the breed.

These efforts won approval among the other societies and eleven societies joined together in May 1968 to found the Europa-Union der Schäferhundvereine (EUSV – European Union of German Shepherd Associations).

### **The EUSV becomes the WUSV**

Due to overwhelming interest from societies outside Europe, the EUSV founder members decided to transform the EUSV into the World Union of Shepherd Dog Clubs (WUSV) only five years later; this was made possible thanks to the endorsement of the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI) as the international umbrella organization. The former SV President and EUSV Chair, Dr. Christoph Rummel, expressed the WUSV’s aims as follows: “uniform breed standard, comparison of positions and of the evaluations of German Shepherds in breeding and performance, clarification of open questions about breeding and training, rearing and keeping, as well as the abatement of hereditary diseases ...”

### **The WUSV today**

Since commencing work in 1974, the WUSV has now grown to 92 member societies in 85 countries. More than 250,000 members from across member societies have agreed to one principle aim: to maintain and support the German Shepherd in its breed-typical specificities and its characteristics as a working dog, which form the basis of its multitude of applications. An external sign of this solidarity and shared aims among WUSV members are the international events organized by the WUSV and held by the member societies.

### **The future of the WUSV**

The WUSV’s future work will particularly be influenced by further improving communication between societies, and by working more closely with the national breeding societies and the FCI, as the umbrella organization, thereby establishing a network to ensure the work on German Shepherds that began so successfully over 115 years ago can be continued. Experience gathered during the 40 years of the WUSV has taught us one thing: The love and enthusiasm for German Shepherds knows no bounds, regardless of language, culture or politics.