


European Pet Night: 62 million households in Europe have pets - but they are more than just companion animals

11 European organisations raise awareness of the benefits pets bring to society, while emphasising their welfare and health – ‘We Care’

european pet night
we care 

Brussels, 24 February 2010 - You love your cat, dog, hamster or any other pet you may have, but did you know that keeping animals also contributes to making you healthier and live longer? Have you ever considered that apart from companionship, pets can be working partners or a vital support to a person with disabilities? At the fifth European Pet Night held in Brussels at the European Parliament, a coalition of animal-related organisations want to highlight the importance and value of pets to society. The event will be hosted by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), Caroline Lucas and Horst Schnellhardt.

The event aims to show a different side to pets. 62 million households in Europe have a pet. Pets are known to ease stress, blood pressure and have a soothing effect generally. They encourage people to be more social. But besides this they are invaluable to many disabled people: some 12,000 guide dogs help the blind and partially-sighted lead independent lives and almost 1,000 hearing dogs do the same for the deaf and hard of hearing. Dogs are trained to help people with physical disabilities by performing a variety of every day tasks. In addition, they are often on the frontline of disasters (earthquakes, avalanches, etc) searching for missing people, or for security purposes in the detection of landmines, explosives, drugs, etc.

As a very distinctive example of the inextricable bond between animal and human, European Pet Night is welcoming members from La Grande Odyssée Savoie Montblanc, an international sled dog race where dogs and humans together share and respect nature as a whole.

This bond that ties us to our pets is invaluable – European Pet Night is organised to focus on our companion animals and consider what they do for us. As pet owners, pet lovers, it is our responsibility to ensure their health and welfare and to show, ‘We Care’.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Eleven key European organisations and institutions co-organising European Pet Night 2010 are:

- [ADEu](#) - Assistance Dogs Europe,
- Belgian Police [dog support unit](#),
- Cancer and bio-detection dogs, cancerdogs.co.uk
- European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers ([DG SANCO](#)),
- The [Eurogroup for Animals](#),
- [FCI](#) - Fédération Cynologique Internationale,
- [FEDIAF](#) – European Pet Food Industry Federation,
- [FRDI](#) – Federation of riding for the disabled international,
- [FVE](#) - Federation of Veterinarians of Europe,
- [IFAH-Europe](#) - International Federation of the animal health industry-Europe,
- [IAHAIO](#) - International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organisations.

IFAH-Europe is the representative body of manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in Europe. It is a member a broader organisation – the International Federation for Animal Health, an international non-profit organisation registered under Belgian law. For further information on IFAH-Europe, please visit www.ifaheurope.org.

For more information on **La Grande Odyssée Savoie Montblanc**, go to www.grandeodysee.com

Video and pictures

Last year's video coverage of European Pet Night 2009 can be viewed online at the [IFAH-Europe website](#) and on [Europarl TV](#).

High resolution pictures are available upon request.

 [Click here to download as pdf](#)

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