



**2023**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**



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**REPORT**

## → Summary



Save the Dogs and other Animals E.T.S. is a recognized Foundation, registered as "SAVE THE DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS ENTITY OF THE THIRD SECTOR " (protocol no. 102012; VAT no. 97394230151) in section "g - Other Third Sector Organizations" as referred to in Article 46, paragraph 1 of Legislative Decree No. 117 of 3 July, 2017, in accordance with Article 22 of Legislative Decree No. 117 of 3 July, 2017, and Article 16 of Ministerial Decree No. 106 of 15 September, 2020, issued by the RUNTS Office of the Lombardy Region.

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- 6** [Message from the President](#)
- 8** [Who we are](#)
- 10** [The world we want to inhabit](#)
- 12** [A strategy to combat overpopulation and the phenomenon of stray animals](#)
  - 13 Using prevention as a weapon
  - 14 Local community involvement
  - 15 Contributing to Sustainable Development Goals
- 16** [How we work](#)
  - 17 In Romania
  - 18 In Italy
  - 19 In Ukraine
- 20** [The governing and management system](#)
- 22** [Save the Dogs staff members in Italy](#)
  - 24 The profile of our staff (as of 31.12.2023)
  - 25 Organizational chart
  - 26 Prioritizing flexibility and trust in the workplace
  - 27 Voluntary work
- 30** [Save the Dogs staff members in Romania](#)
  - 31 The profile of our staff in Romania
  - 32 Save the Dogs Romania organizational chart
- 34** [How much we raised in 2023](#)
  - 35 How we spent the funds
  - 35 Restricted and unrestricted funds

# METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

## **36** What we did in 2023 **Romania**

- 39 International adoptions
- 40 The clinic
- 41 Length of stay at our facility
- 42 Home From Home
- 43 Equines
- 43 Working with the local community – Connecting Lives
- 44 The Poarta Alba prison project
- 45 Communication and fundraising

## **46** What we did in 2023 **Ukraine**

- 47 Two years of outreach in Ukraine
- 48 The sterilization program
- 49 Direct aid for animals
- 49 Outreach strategy in 2024

## **50** What we did in 2023 **Italy**

- 52 'Too Many Puppies'
- 53 Campania
- 57 Calabria
- 59 Friends On the Streets, Companions For Life

## **64** Fundraising

- 65 How much we raised in 2023
- 66 Fundraising: private individuals
- 68 5x1000 donations for *Save the Dogs*
- 69 Fundraising: companies, foundations and partners
- 70 Communication
- 72 Our supporters

## **76** Balance Sheet Italy

## **78** Balance Sheet Romania

## **80** Final Reflections

The Annual Report of *Save the Dogs and other Animals* E.T.S. aims to communicate and evaluate the results achieved by the Foundation, providing additional elements of its transparency and accountability as available for consultation by its stakeholders. This Report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions dictated by the Code of the Third Sector (Legislative Decree No. 117 of 3 July, 2017), to which *Save the Dogs* has complied from a structural point of view. It is inspired by principles of full disclosure, thoroughness, transparency, neutrality, respect of the

time period, comparability, clarity, truthfulness and verifiability, reliability and autonomy concerning third parties.

The structure of the financial statements contained in this edition has been implemented in accordance with the "Guidelines for the Preparation of Financial Statements Social Report of Third Sector Entities" issued by the Ministry of Labor and Political Social Affairs, Decree of 4 July, 2019.

# Message from the President



Fostering hope.

This is the mission of *Save the Dogs* every single day, illustrating the impact of our projects and the lives of numerous animals saved across three countries.

What seems to be gradually diminishing nowadays is the ability to **believe in a better world**, as we are literally and figuratively bombarded by daily news reports that seem more like bulletins of war (even when they are focused on our own cities), and the **degradation of human relationships**.

In these dark times, marked by rising poverty and violence and the eco-anxiety affecting us all, non-profit organizations like *Save the Dogs* play a crucial role in **demonstrating that Goodness does exist**, that it is continuously nurtured, and arises from our collective efforts: from those who support the non-profit sector and those who work tirelessly within it to alleviate suffering and combat injustices.

**While our primary aim is to help animals**, I firmly believe that a **beneficial side effect of our work** lies precisely in ensuring that people do not lose faith in humanity and continue to want to contribute to **change and progress**, rejecting the spread of apathy and defeatism.

I dearly hope that reading this Social Report will **inspire private and institutional donors to continue their generous and dedicated support** for projects like ours in the three countries where we operate.

We do not wish to shy away from acknowledging our struggles and moments of discouragement. However, we also want to celebrate the small and large victories we achieve day by day. Seeing the looks of gratitude in the eyes of the many animals we save also motivates us to persevere, even when everything – especially in these tough times – seems to be working against us.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to everyone who has enabled us to accomplish what we have achieved this year and is contained in this annual report.





# Who we are

It is estimated that there are around 600 million stray dogs worldwide, and an immeasurable number of animals are locked up in kennels from East to West, often condemned to death or destined never to be adopted.

It was to address the tragedy of canine overpopulation that *Save the Dogs and Other Animals* was founded in 2002 by Sara Turetta, a former advertising professional from Milan, after she went on a life-changing trip to Romania. Here, the phenomenon of stray animals is particularly severe and, as in many parts of the world, abandoned dogs are killed by the thousands after spending a short time in squalid municipal facilities, just as was the case in Italy before 1991.

With its team of 50 operators, *Save the Dogs* runs an integrated project to combat stray animal populations in the southeast of the country,

restoring dignity to thousands of abandoned animals by **providing treatment for them, offering sterilization programs and rehoming them wherever possible with adoptive families**. The association's headquarters is *Footprints of Joy*, a Northern European complex that includes a shelter for 200 dogs, a cattery, and a sanctuary for 75 abandoned or maltreated horses and donkeys. In 2017, an 800-square-meter social clinic was inaugurated with the establishment of an environmentally friendly building that serves a vast territory with no veterinary services. To date, the association has provided free sterilization for approximately **42,391 animals, including dogs and cats**, while thanks to an intensive **international adoption program** more than **8,422 animals** have been placed with adoptive families through a network of partner organizations in various European countries.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

## Who we are

In addition to **sterilization programs and emergency care**, *Save the Dogs* promotes a **culture of understanding and respect** by conducting **educational outreach activities** with schools involving various entities from the **local community** (centers for people with disabilities, prisons, old people's homes) in order to build **mutually positive connections** between people and animals.

Drawing on its experience in the country with the most dramatic stray animal situation in Europe, *Save the Dogs* launched "**Too Many Puppies – we love them, therefore we sterilize them**" in 2019, a stray prevention program dedicated to parts of Southern Italy. The project, which initially began with stray dogs and privately-owned dogs in the Litorale Domizio area near Naples, was expanded after the first three years to the Caserta region, specifically Castel Volturno. A similar intervention was also launched in 2021 in Calabria in the provinces of Cosenza and Crotona. As of the present, **3,004 animals have already been sterilized in Italy** thanks to *Save the Dogs*.

In 2021, the "**Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life**" project was launched, providing basic necessities and free veterinary care for dogs belonging to the homeless in Milan. To date, the team has reached out to and assisted **124 people** and their four-legged companions. In 2023, the project experienced a notable growth in the number of beneficiaries supporting the initiative.

In the aftermath of the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, *Save the Dogs* immediately committed to **providing aid for people fleeing the country with their pets**. Between March and July 2022, a fixed outpost was set up at the border between Romania and Ukraine for the distribution of essential goods. From March 2022 to the present, *Save the Dogs* has sent over **1,103 tons of food**, ensuring that some 9,000 cats and dogs have been regularly fed, and has **sterilized and microchipped 3,441 animals** in the cities of Odessa, Mikolaev, and Izmail.

### ROMANIA

**43,391**

ANIMALS STERILIZED

**8,422**

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS

### ITALY

**3,004**

ANIMALS STERILIZED

### UKRAINE

**MORE THAN 1,000**

PEOPLE FLEEING WITH ANIMALS ASSISTED AT THE ROMANIAN-UKRAINIAN BORDER

**1,103**

TONS OF FOOD DISPATCHED TO UKRAINE

**3,441**

ANIMALS STERILIZED

### AWARDS

*Save the Dogs* has received numerous international awards, including the **Marsh International Animal Welfare Award** and the **Jeanne Marchig Award**. The founder was honored in 2012 with the distinction of the **Order of the Star of Italy** by President Napolitano. She also received the **Clarissa Baldwin Award** from the British organization Dogs Trust, and in 2022, she was awarded the **Margherita d'Argento** (an award granted by the 'Oasi Felina' Feline Sanctuary in Trieste). In 2024, Sara Turetta was proclaimed the winner of the 13th edition of the Italian State Railways ("Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane") **Italian Fundraising Award** (IFA), the first and most important award dedicated to non-profit professionals as part of the Fundraising Festival.

### WE ARE A MEMBER OF

the EU Dog & Cat Alliance, Editorial Committee of VITA and actively collaborate with ICAM, the International Companion Animal Management Coalition.



# The world we want to inhabit

The world is a place where the fate of humans, animals and the environment is deeply interconnected.

At *Save The Dogs and Other Animals*, we believe that social justice extends to animals and the environment. Their care and protection are directly influenced by our choices and behavior patterns.

Progress toward a **truly evolved society** can only be achieved by **understanding** the needs of animals, especially domestic ones, and by embracing our **responsibilities** to ensure their **protection** and a **dignified life**, striving for **harmonious co-existence** with all living beings.

## → What we are doing to achieve our goals

Our dedication is constantly guided by our **commitment** to:

- Promoting effective and cultural methods for **controlling dog and cat populations**
- **Managing** and supporting shelters with high standards
- **Raising awareness**, particularly among the younger generations, by educating them about responsible coexistence with pets
- Collaborating with communities through **networking**
- Creating impactful projects with a strong **social impact** that benefit those who are most vulnerable.

*Save the Dogs* acts in accordance with its founding principles of **empathy, compassion, solidarity, transparency, and lawfulness** and is committed to improving the **effectiveness of its activities**, encouraging constructive communication with its various different stakeholders and increasing **social responsibility** both within and outside the organization.

## → The values we believe in

### Animals

- **non-violence** and **respect** for all living things
- the promotion of **animal well-being**
- **empathy** and **compassion**
- **harmonious cohabitation between humans and animals**
- **protection of the weak** and **the creation of mutually beneficial shared channels** between vulnerable animals and humans

### Our supporters

- **transparency** about all the financial and operational aspects involved
- **truthful, fair, unambiguous and non-piteous communication**
- **conscientious use** of funds that are in accordance with the donors' intentions
- non-violent **communication** based on the principles of the Manifesto of Non-Hostile Communication

### Our collaborators

- a serene working environment
- the **safeguarding of well-being in the workplace**
- **compliance with applicable employment law legislation** in the countries where we operate
- **stable contracts** for as many employees as possible
- **use of the remote 'smart working' from home formula to improve conditions for the staff**

### Environment

- selection of suppliers that offer **eco-sustainable products** (e.g., FSC paper)
- elimination of **single-use plastic**
- use of **renewable energy sources** wherever possible
- limiting home-to-office travel by staff
- waste **recycling**.

# A strategy to combat overpopulation and the phenomenon of stray animals



## ➔ Using prevention as a weapon

For many years, the English-speaking world has been fully aware of the **serious worldwide problem of canine and feline overpopulation**. Millions more domestic animals are therefore being born than there are families willing to take them into their homes. This **man-made imbalance** of wanting to fulfill a (legitimate) desire to share one's life with dogs and cats has resulted in a **tremendous price being paid** both in terms of **animal suffering** (millions are being euthanized or cramped into tiny facilities or are roaming the streets with no protection or safeguards) and in **economic terms**, with a massive amount of public funds being spent by authorities around the world killing or locking up unwanted street cats and dogs.

This awareness on behalf of Anglo-Saxon countries is not, unfortunately, echoed in a similar way in countries that have Latin or Slavic cultures, where a combination of historical and socio-economic factors has seen the problem of overpopulation becoming ever more serious (there is a greater resistance to carrying out birth control methods), with **animal protection organizations primarily focusing on one aspect: finding homes for animals that have already been born**. Noble and important as this is, this approach is ultimately not a solution.

*Save the Dogs* has espoused the philosophy of the Anglo-Saxon animal protection movement and has chosen to tackle the problem of canine and feline overpopulation and stray animals by **prioritizing the root causes** rather than the consequences.

**Prevention is therefore central to everything we do**, addressing the reasons that lead to an excessive number of animals being born and investing in the single action that has the greatest impact on the canine and feline population: namely, **sterilization**. By sterilizing one animal, we are effectively saving the lives of thousands of dogs and cats that will not be born to that individual animal and its offspring.

In an ideal world, it would be the responsibility of a country's authorities to recognize prevention as a priority. One would therefore expect there to be free or subsidized sterilization programs, both in Italy and in Romania. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

***Save the Dogs'* prime objective is to convince the local administrations where we operate to invest in prevention** rather than continuing to spend alarming amounts of money on managing dog pounds or on the killing of animals, actions that have proven to be both ineffective and unethical.





## → Local community involvement

The issue of overpopulation is closely linked to that of **responsible coexistence with animals**, which signifies not only taking responsibility for birth control but also understanding their needs, respecting their well-being, and enforcing laws regarding identification and official registration. In our view, it is therefore essential to **integrate veterinary activities such as sterilization with other types of initiatives of a cultural, educational, and social nature** in order to stimulate a change in the mentality regarding coexistence with cats and dogs and, consequently, responsibility for birth control. From a strategic point of view, **involving the local community does lead to a lasting change in mentality**, as well as fostering beneficial relationships between *Save the Dogs* and other entities in this area. Furthermore, by offering opportunities to vulnerable populations such as the elderly, disabled individuals, refugees, and prisoners, we are able to demonstrate that animals can be life companions and **positive contributors to our society**, even when they are considered “cast-offs” to be eliminated or hidden from view.



## → Contributing to Sustainable Development Goals

Working with local communities and actively engaging in impoverished rural areas (in Romania) means that *Save the Dogs*' initiatives are in line with the **United Nations' 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, signed on 25 September, 2015. All 193 signatory countries have committed to achieving the agreed-upon targets within the set timeframe, including Italy, with everyone being called to account: governments, businesses, institutions, civil society

organizations, and individuals. Animal welfare organizations are also playing a significant role in this endeavor, contributing in concrete ways to achieving these goals.

The *2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* are an important reference point for our work, and *Save the Dogs* is an active participant, focusing in particular on **6 key objectives**:



Working animals in Romania are essential to the livelihoods of the poorest communities.



Ensuring free veterinary care and equipment for donkeys and horses helps owners keep their animals healthy, which has a positive impact on household economies.



The *One Health* concept recognizes that the health and well-being of humans, animals, and ecosystems are all interconnected. By protecting the health of animals, we are also safeguarding the health of the humans who live in contact with them and the surrounding environment.



We strive to improve the quality of life of vulnerable animals and people (the elderly, the disabled, children, prisoners) through projects that involve both, thereby adopting an inclusive approach.



We combat the issue of stray animals and canine and feline overpopulation, which has a significant impact on wildlife as well as on the lives of communities.

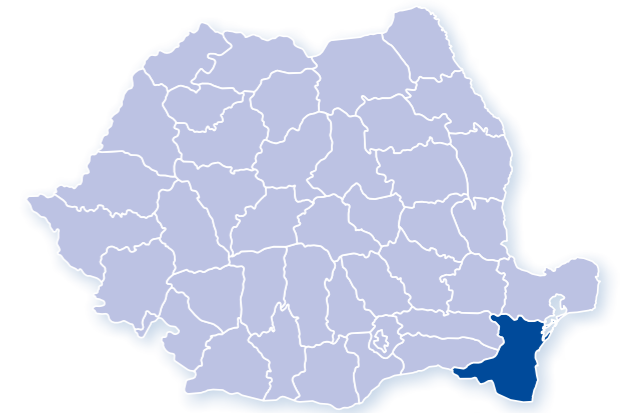


Public-private partnerships can be effective in supporting initiatives aimed at improving animal welfare. *Save the Dogs* always seeks to partner with local Administrations, even if this is not always possible. We also network with other non-profit organizations whenever the opportunity presents itself. Furthermore, we establish collaborations with companies that prioritize animal rights and support companies committed to advancing and promoting a culture of social sustainability. We help them develop high-impact initiatives and communicate their social commitment through reporting, enriching their relationships and enhancing their reputation in the process.

## → In Romania

With its team of 54 operators, *Save the Dogs* runs an integrated project to combat stray animal populations in Cernavoda in the southeast of the country, restoring dignity to thousands of abandoned animals by **providing treatment for them, offering sterilization programs and rehoming them with adoptive families**. The association's headquarters is *Footprints of Joy*, a Northern European complex that includes a shelter for 200 dogs, a cattery, and a sanctuary for 75 abandoned or maltreated horses and donkeys. In 2017, an 800-square-meter social clinic was inaugurated with the establishment of an environmentally friendly building that serves a vast territory with no veterinary services.

*Save the Dogs* seeks to be of benefit to both animals and vulnerable people living in the territories where the organization operates, in the firm belief that the **fate of those living on the margins of society is united by the same lack of rights**, and that it is only by bringing these things together that it is possible to make the world a better place. For this reason, *Save the Dogs* has always implemented community-led programs in Romania to provide substantial benefits for people and animals living in vulnerable conditions, by means of door-to-door aid programs, education, and animal-assisted interventions, targeting minors and marginalized people.



## → In Italy

In Southern Italy, where we do not have a center like the one we have in Romania, our principal mode of intervention is via our local partners who play a strategic role in the “Too Many Puppies” program. These are voluntary associations that work together with us to combat the phenomenon of stray animals, and we are fully committed to **building lasting networks and relationships with these organizations**. Partnerships like these enable us to reinforce the framework of the local community by identifying deep-rooted realities that we can support by developing skillsets, strengthening infrastructures, and improving relationships with the local government authorities.

In Milan, as part of our “Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life” initiative, *Save the Dogs* has created operational synergies with various humanitarian entities that have long been involved in assisting the homeless and people in need. In addition, we are also collaborating with institutions to draw attention to structural rather than ad hoc issues regarding the attention that is given to animals, especially as they play an essential role in providing affection for vulnerable individuals, as is often the case where complex social phenomena is concerned.

### Campania

- **Project partner:** San Francesco Dog Shelter
- **Beneficiaries:** neighborhood dogs, stray dogs and cats, privately-owned dogs and cats
- **Area concerned:** Castel Volturno and the surrounding areas
- **Activities:** free sterilizations and microchipping, support for the San Francesco dog shelter
- **Period:** September 2022 – ongoing.

### Calabria

- **Project partners:** Amici Animali FEF Association (Cosenza) and the Oasi Argo shelter (Crotone)
- **Institutional partners:** we have had various institutional meetings with a significant number of mayors, with whom we are working in order to achieve cultural growth which will lead to innovative regulatory provisions, striving to engage in a dialogue for improvements in regional legislation to combat stray animals. We are also maintaining a close collaboration with the municipality of Cirò Marina so that we can address issues related to the installation of the veterinary clinic we funded within the Oasi Argo shelter.
- **Beneficiaries:** stray dogs; neighborhood dogs; privately-owned dogs; dogs that are resident at the Oasi Argo shelter
- **Area concerned:** the Municipality of Rogliano, municipalities in the province of Cosenza, the City Council of Cirò Marina
- **Activities:** sterilization programs; microchipping; raising local awareness
- **Period:** March 2021 – ongoing.

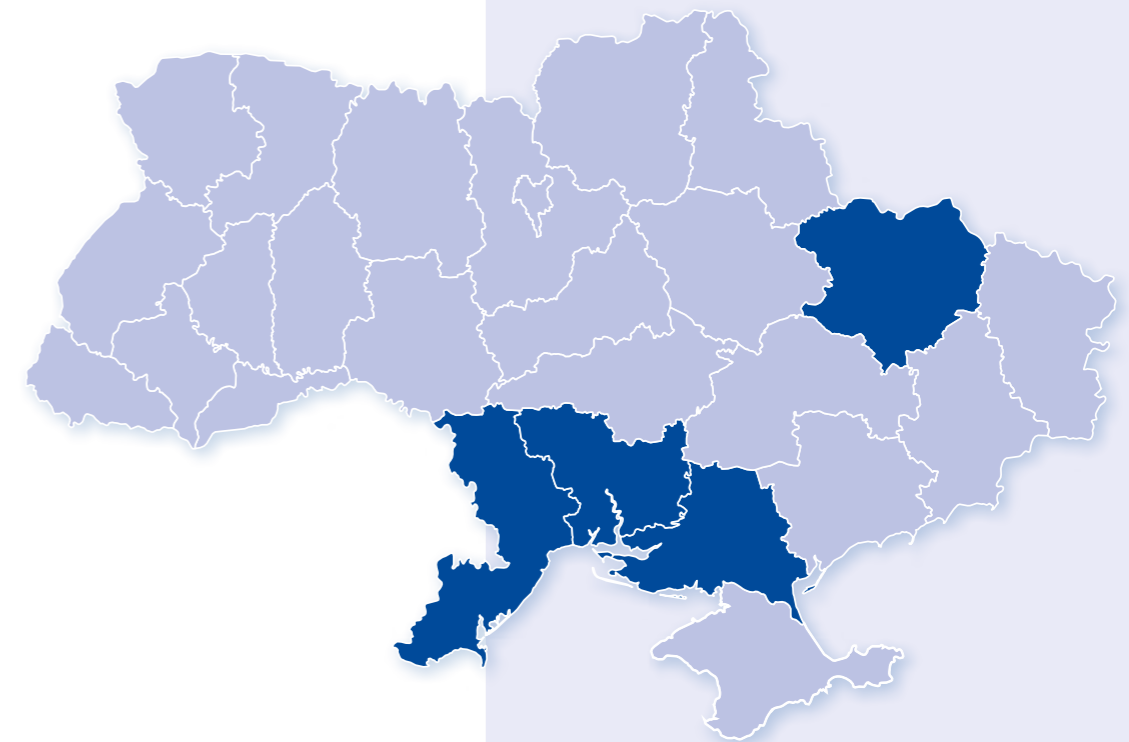


## → In Ukraine

In March 2022, *Save the Dogs* began assisting animals belonging to refugees from Ukraine and set up a fixed station at the border with Romania, as well as helping to organize first aid shipments to Odessa and Izmail. As the war continued and the border point at Isaccea was dismantled, the food aid operation was expanded and extended to other regions in the South and Southeast of Ukraine. Today, **the operation covers a wide area of Ukraine**, including **Kharkiv** in the northeast, **Mykolaiv** in the south, and Kherson behind the Russian front line.

In May, *Save the Dogs* launched a sterilization and microchipping program in cooperation with **five veterinary clinics in Odessa, Izmail and Mykolaiv**.

- **Project partner:** 20 shelters and 400 volunteers, 5 veterinary clinics
- **Institutional partners:** Romanian border authorities, Ukrainian military authorities for the authorization of the local distribution of supplies
- **Beneficiaries:** stray dogs and cats, refugees accompanied by their pets, dog shelters and catteries
- **Area concerned:** 9 cities and over 80 villages in the areas of **Odessa, Kharkiv** in the northeast, **Mykolaiv** in the south, and **Kherson**
- Activities:** distribution of food and essential supplies necessary for the animals' survival, sterilization programs and micro-chipping
- **Period:** March 2021 – ongoing.





# The governing and management system

**Save the Dogs and other Animals E.T.S Foundation** is an international organization operating in Romania, Italy and Ukraine through projects to combat canine and feline overpopulation.

## SAVE THE DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS ITALY

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that the Organization operates consistently with its mission and values.

**SARA TURETTA**  
*President and Founder*

**BARBARA MASSA**  
*Vice President*

**SERGIO SELLITTO**  
*Treasurer*

### SUPERVISORY BODY

Verifies the effective implementation of the 'organization, management and control model'

**LUIGI CORBELLA**  
*Supervisory Board*

### MAIN ISSUES DEALT WITH AND DECISIONS TAKEN

The main issues and decisions adopted by the Board of Directors during 2023 included an update on the intervention in Ukraine, the Final Budget 2022, and the Annual Planning and Budget 2023, as well as the new revised Companies Policy and the new vision of the organization.

## SAVE THE DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS ROMANIA

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**SARA TURETTA**  
*President*

**EMERIC TORKOS**  
*Treasurer*

**ANDREA LENCHIEVICI**  
*Councilor*

**ELENA MIRCESCU**  
*Auditor*

## SAVE THE DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS US

The US branch was established in 2022 at the outbreak of the war in Ukraine to facilitate donations and sponsorship from this continent. Due to different timelines in submitting financial statements to the relevant authorities, the U.S. branch's accounts have not been included in this Social Report and will be published separately.



## Save the Dogs staff members in Italy

Our team is currently comprised of 14 people. This number is 32% less than in 2022, a consequence of the reduction in the number of external collaborators and the departure of two members of staff, who have chosen to undertake new professional challenges after having worked with us for many years.

The *Save the Dogs* team is composed of motivated and competent individuals who dedicate their time and energy to our mission, in which they deeply believe.



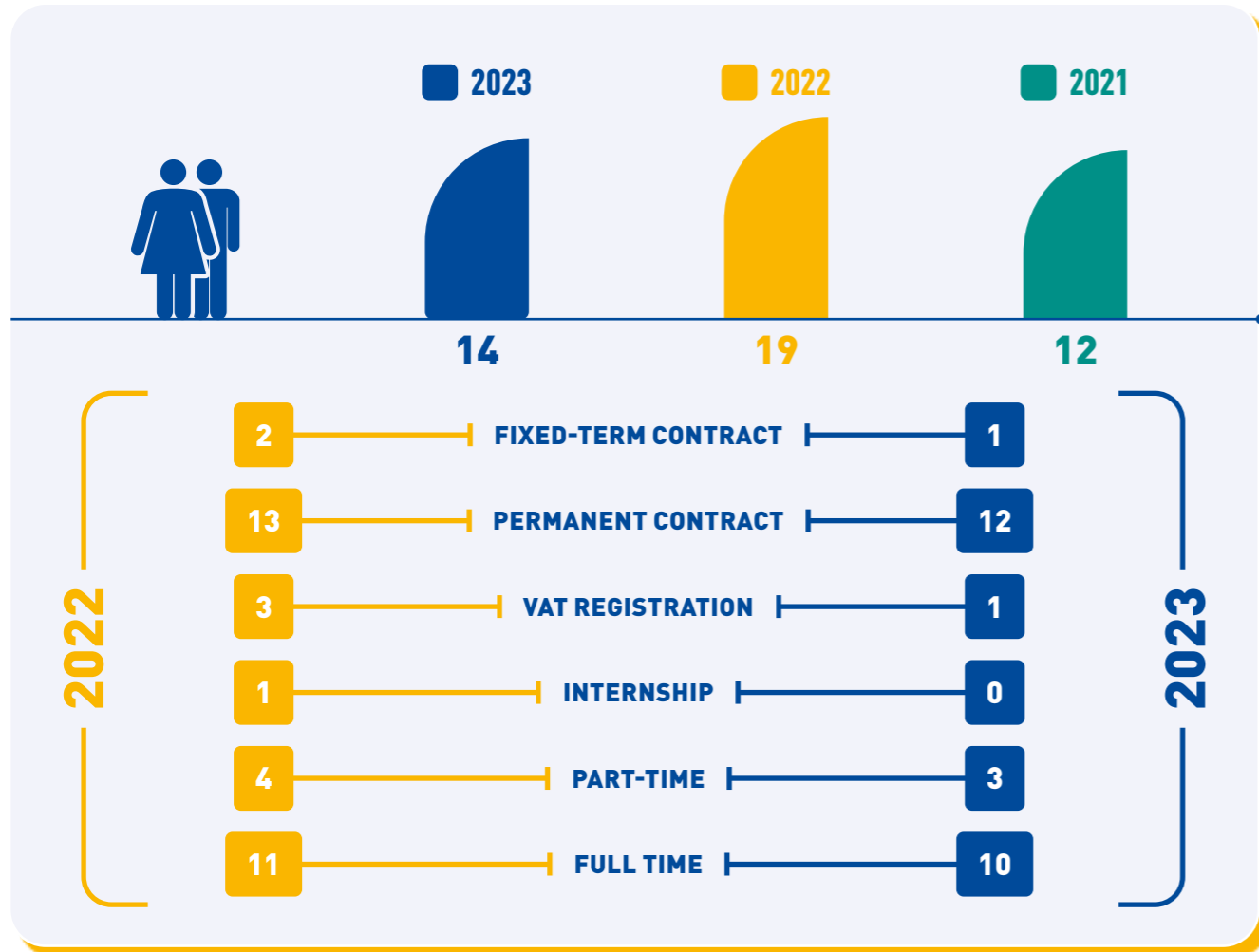
*My first meeting with Save the Dogs took place in 2017, and it was love at first sight. I then left for Romania, where I spent 3 years working in the adoption office at the Cernavoda shelter. In the meantime, I also graduated as a dog educator from the SIUA Training School and subsequently joined Save the Dogs' staff in Milan, working on the "Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life" project.*

**Sara D'Ascanio,**  
Milan Street Unit Operator

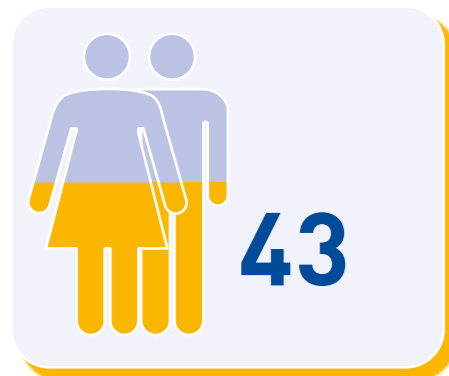


## ➔ The profile of our staff (as of 31.12.2023)

### Number of staff members by year



### Average age of employees



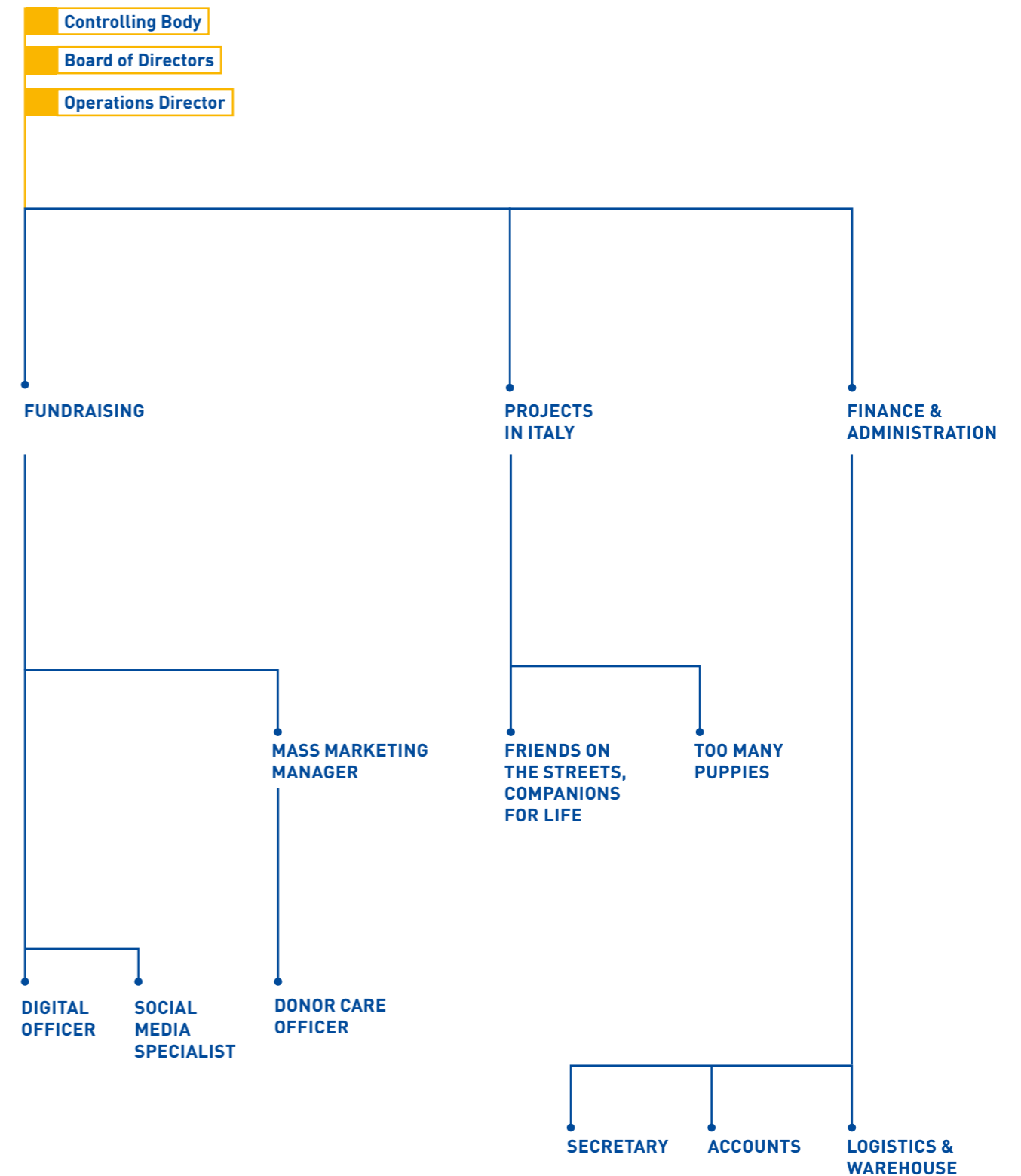
### Gender percentage



### Average staff salaries



## ➔ Organizational chart



## → Prioritizing flexibility and trust in the workplace

Save the Dogs places its focus on the individuals who bring their expertise and passion to the mission every day. To support this, the organization has adopted 'smart working' or working from home, which was first introduced during the pandemic, as a permanent way of working.

This approach aligns better with the staff's needs and fosters a culture of trust and empowerment. We are committed to planning and maintaining a **healthy work-life balance**, supported by the introduction of new technological tools.

### The three main components of this organizational model are:

#### Flexibility

Implementing 'Smart Working' to offer greater flexibility and a better balance between personal and professional life, giving everyone the ability to be able to plan their tasks and responsibilities.

#### Regular Team Meetings

To encourage in-person collaboration and team cohesion, Save the Dogs hosts team-building days every two months in various locations outside the office, such as co-working spaces or similar types of associations.

#### Green Week

During holidays or peak vacation times, Save the Dogs has introduced additional work-from-home weeks to further support work-life balance during specific periods, such as summer and Christmas.



## → Voluntary work

Donating one's free time is an important act of altruism that we greatly value because it represents actively engaging for change. With the enhancement of the Milan project to support animals belonging to homeless individuals, **2023 was the year in which volunteering became an even more important axis of Save the Dogs' development.**

There are three main ways in which volunteers are involved: at our Milan offices supporting our daily activities, working with the Milan Street Unit, and helping with the organization of material collection booths and stalls.

### Type and number of hours of volunteer work performed

151 Total hours of time donated



**100**  
Non-occasional  
volunteer hours  
(Milan Street Unit  
volunteers)



**51**  
Occasional  
volunteer hours  
(stalls and office  
support)

### The key role of volunteers in the 'Friends On The Streets, Companions For Life' Project

This project relies on the enthusiasm and hard work of **volunteers** who, coordinated by the **staff members** of our Foundation, ensure an optimal number of people for our street units.

The presence of volunteer veterinarians is also crucial, allowing us to **constantly monitor the welfare of the animals**, a factor of utmost importance in protecting the health of the individual dogs we assist and their human companions.

### Volunteers in 2023



**6**  
volunteer  
veterinarians



**15**  
general  
volunteers



*I decided to join Save the Dogs' street unit activities after talking with a friend who was already familiar with the organization. From the very first outing, I realized the importance of the work the association does every day, taking care not only of the cats and dogs but also their human companions.*

*I think this connection is perhaps what touches me the most and motivates me to carry on volunteering with Save the Dogs.*

*People and their pets are not simply a dual act; they're also friends, partners and life companions. Every time I am thanked for handing out a new leash or an extra bag of food, I feel a genuine human connection that is free from prejudices and preconceptions, even those I might unintentionally have held myself in the past.*

**Camilla**, a Milan Street Unit volunteer



## Booths and stalls: an essential activity to ensure the sustainability of our projects

The exponential increase in the number of animals and individuals finding themselves in vulnerable conditions, and supported by our "Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life" project in Milan, has necessitated the organization of periodic collection days for food and es-

sential goods. Donations are made by customers visiting the shops and stores that have allocated specific spaces for us. The collected goods are then distributed by the Milan Street Unit and sent to our partners in Campania and Calabria in southern Italy.



**N° 15**  
stalls at  
retail outlets



**N. 31**  
volunteers  
involved

**22,662 €**  
Value of material collected



*I volunteered at several collection stalls during the year, and it was a very rewarding experience. In taking part, I felt I was genuinely able to help vulnerable animals and had the opportunity to meet other motivated people who, like me, had chosen to donate their time for this good cause. I hope to contribute even more in 2024.*

**Arianna**, a volunteer based in Milan







# Save the Dogs staff members in Romania

**Recruiting qualified personnel in Cernavoda** has always been a challenging aspect of managing our center, given the difficulty of attracting skilled workers to such a provincial area.

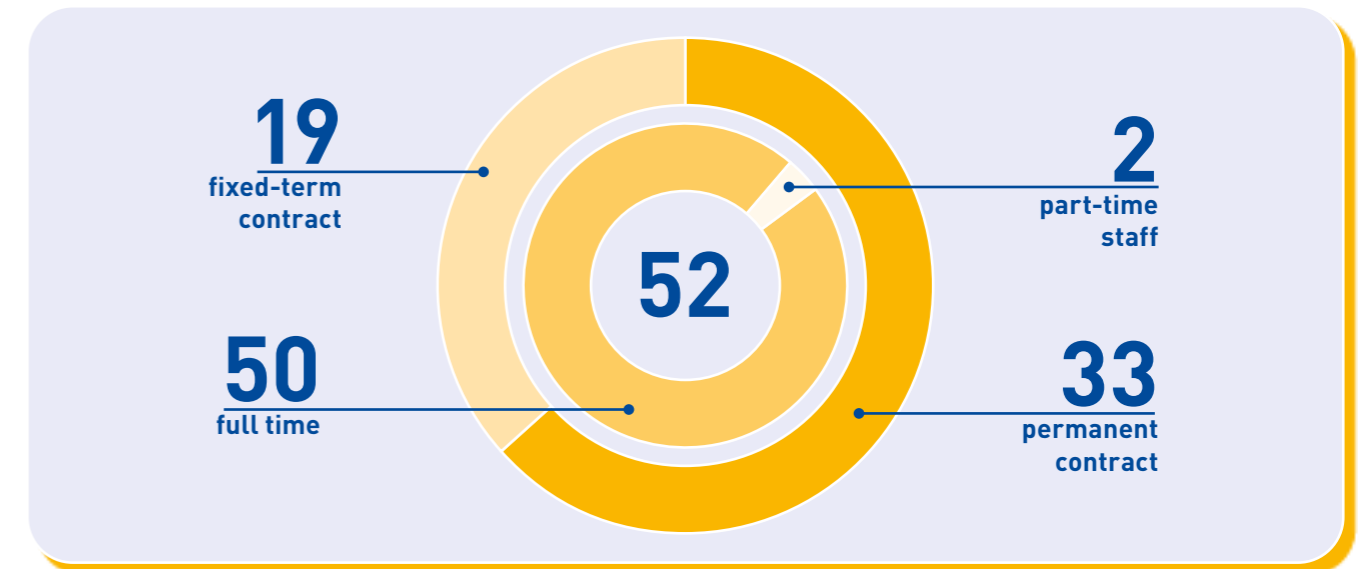
Despite these challenges, we have succeeded in maintaining a high staff retention rate. In 2023, **our overall retention rate was 83%**. The clinic reception has the highest staff turnover, mainly

because suitable candidates, often young and at the start of their careers, do not stay in the position for long.

In 2023, the veterinary medical department saw the most significant hires, with two new staff members adding value to the medical services we offer in the shelter and in the clinic.

## ➔ The profile of our staff in Romania

### Type of contracts



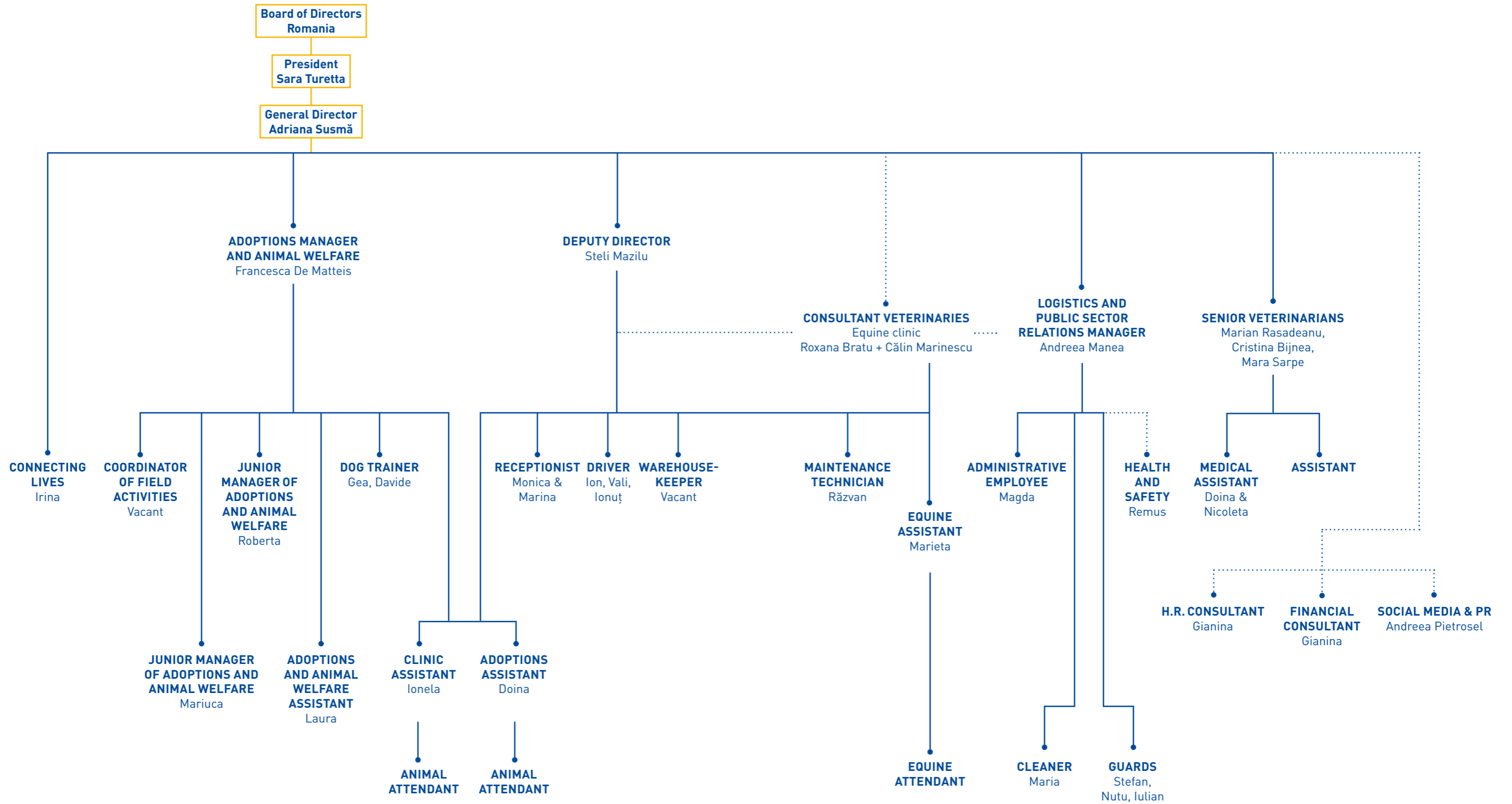
### Average age of employees



### Percentage of women



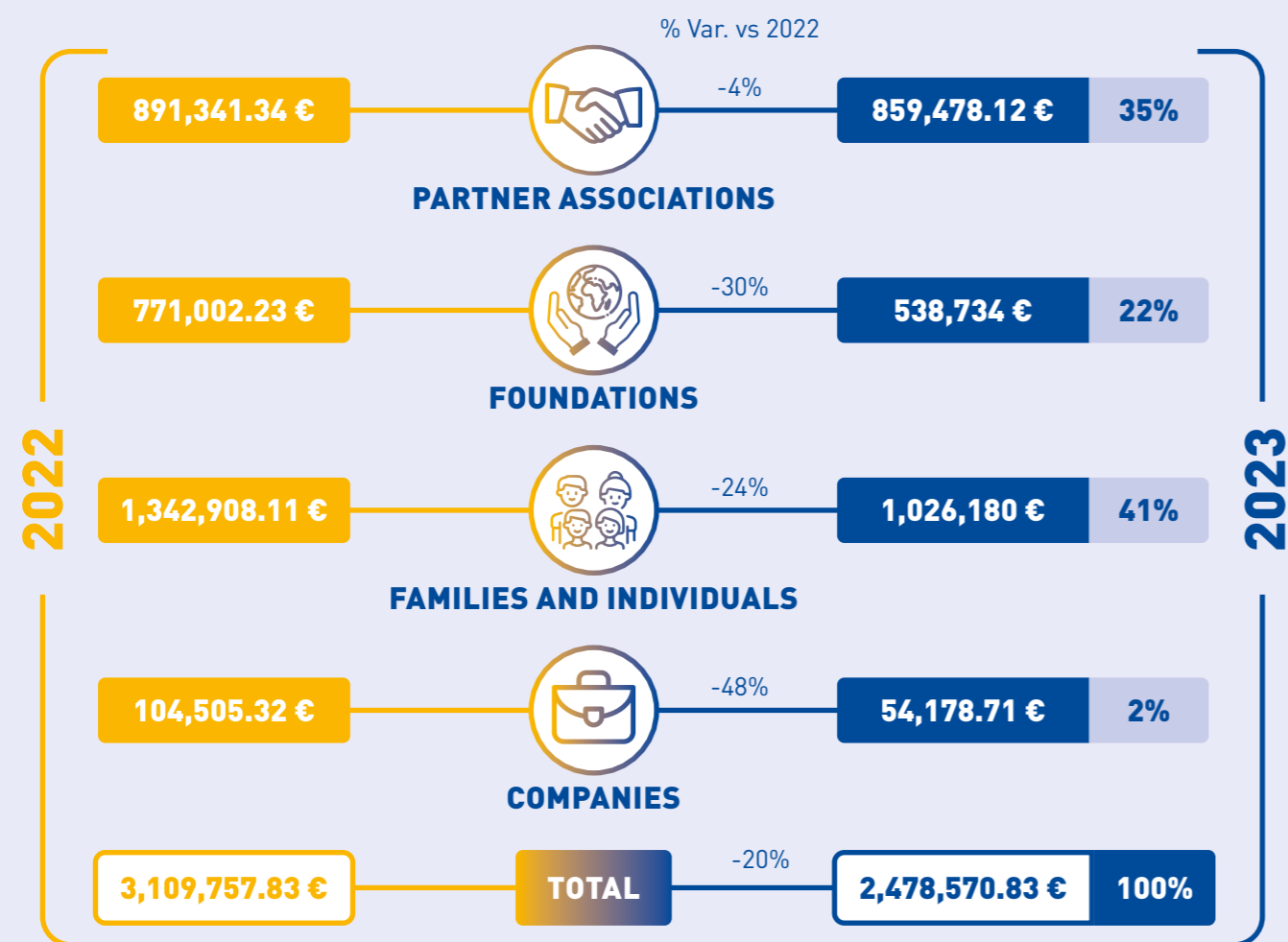
# → Save the Dogs Romania organizational chart



..... The dotted lines indicate the consultants collaborating with us.



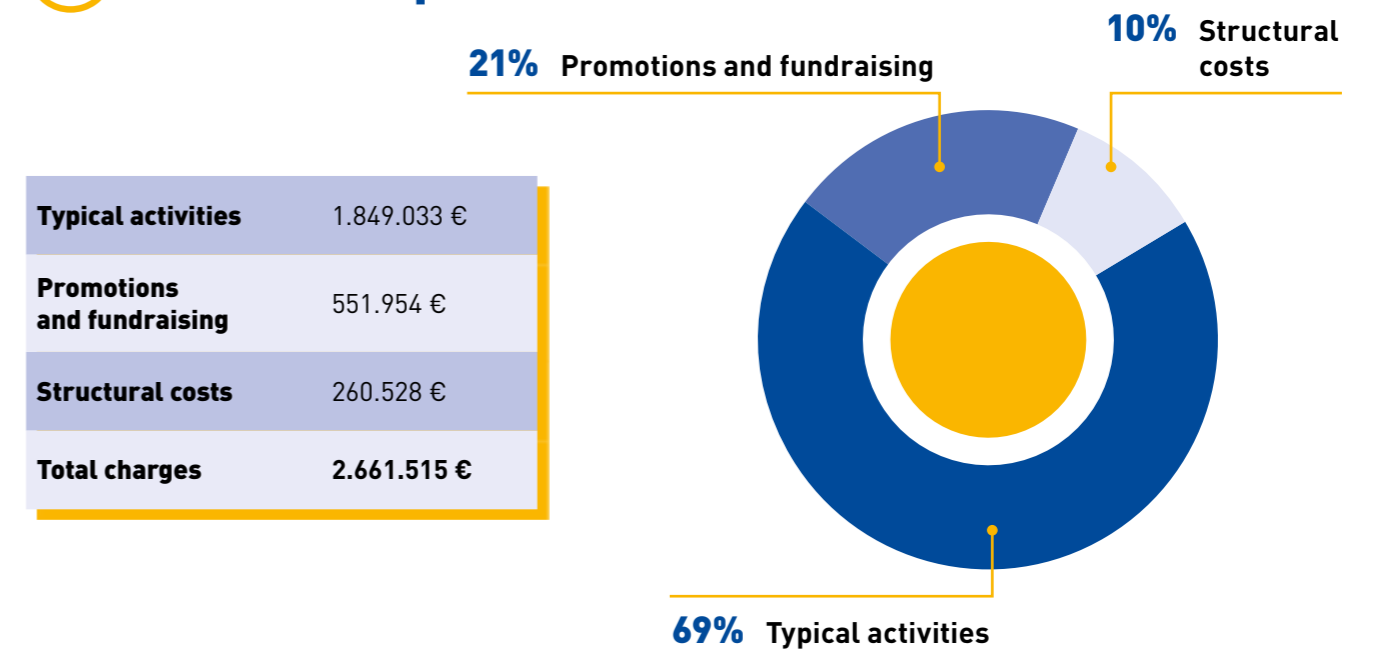
# How much we raised in 2023



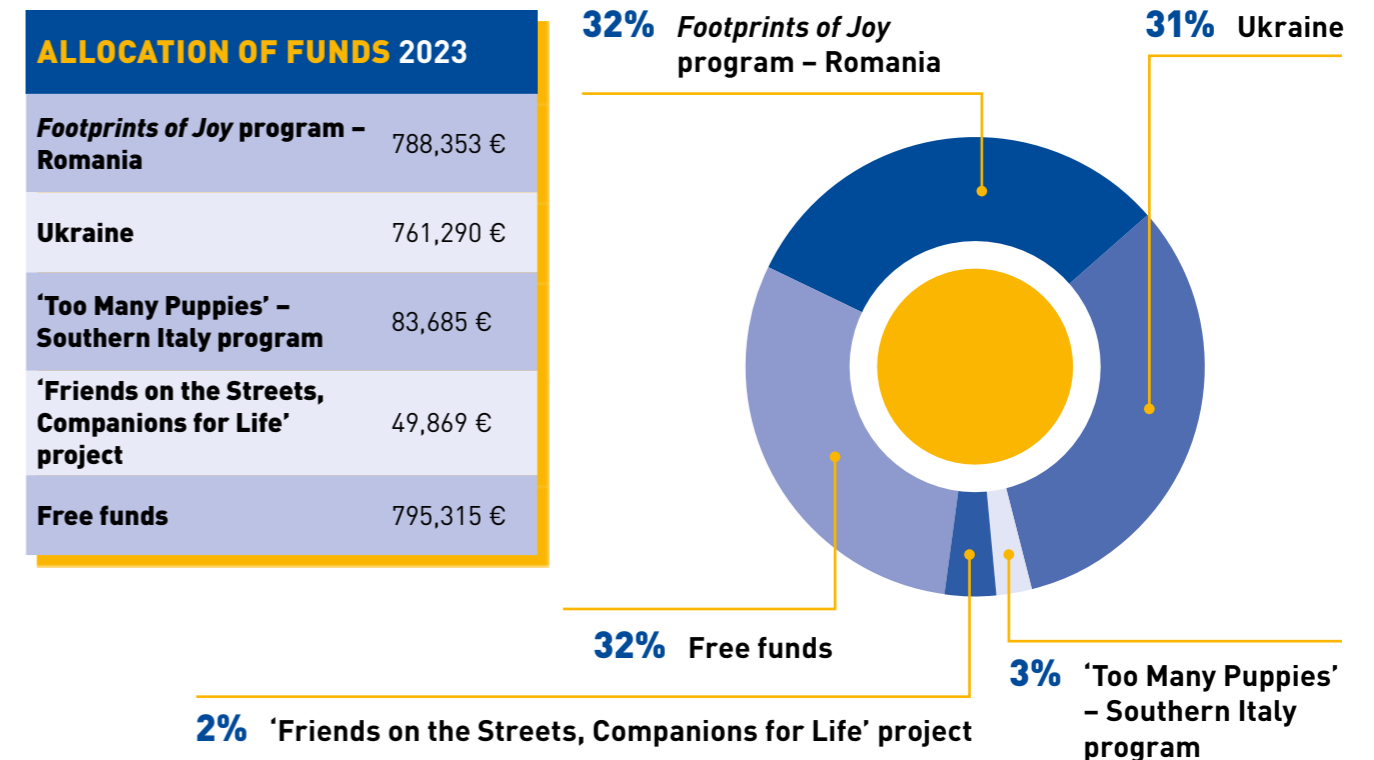
**120.207,13 €**  
in-kind donations from companies, individuals and collection activities at the booths and stands.

**181.427,93 €**  
**5X1000**

## → How we spent the funds



## → Restricted and unrestricted funds





# What we did in 2023

## Romania

In 2023, we observed a continued trend from the previous year, marked by a **significant drop in adoptions and a fairly stable number of sterilizations**.

The sharp decline in adoptions in **Germany and Sweden** compelled us to reactivate our **adoption program in Italy** after many years, with the aim of relieving the pressure on our shelter and making room for more animals in urgent need of help.

Launched in November 2023, this program was made possible thanks to our collaboration with **Fondazione Squadra 4 Zampe**, a non-profit organization established in 2011 in **Vairano**, located halfway between Milan and Pavia. Today, this foundation liaises with various private and public entities to support animals in distress by implementing **educational and informational programs**, guiding dogs through **individual training courses**, and promoting responsible adoptions.

The slight **reduction in the number of sterilizations** carried out (**-3.3%**) is due to specific events that slowed down or blocked operations at the center. In April, our staff had to deal with an **outbreak of distemper** that forced the clinic to close down for a period of time in order to protect the health of all the residents. This consequently prevented the sterilizing of unvaccinated animals and dogs living on the streets for several months, although this was somewhat offset by an increase in the number of cat sterilizations performed.

Operations were also heavily impacted by **extreme weather conditions**, including windstorms and snowstorms that disrupted work and caused significant material damage. In addition, a four-day power outage prevented normal daily operations from continuing. Thanks to a mobilization of our donors, we were able to purchase and install a generator to meet the entire shelter's consumption needs in the event of future outages.

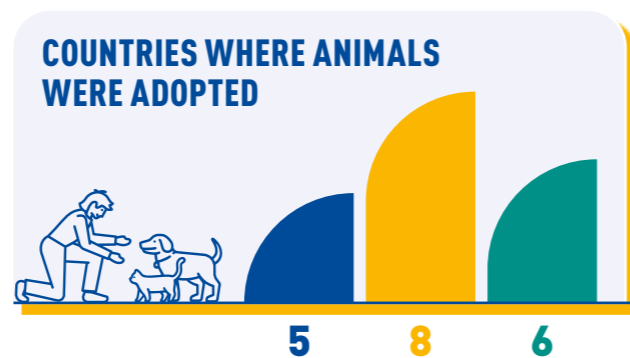
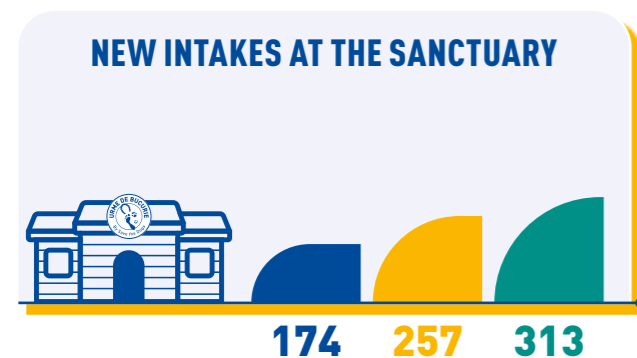
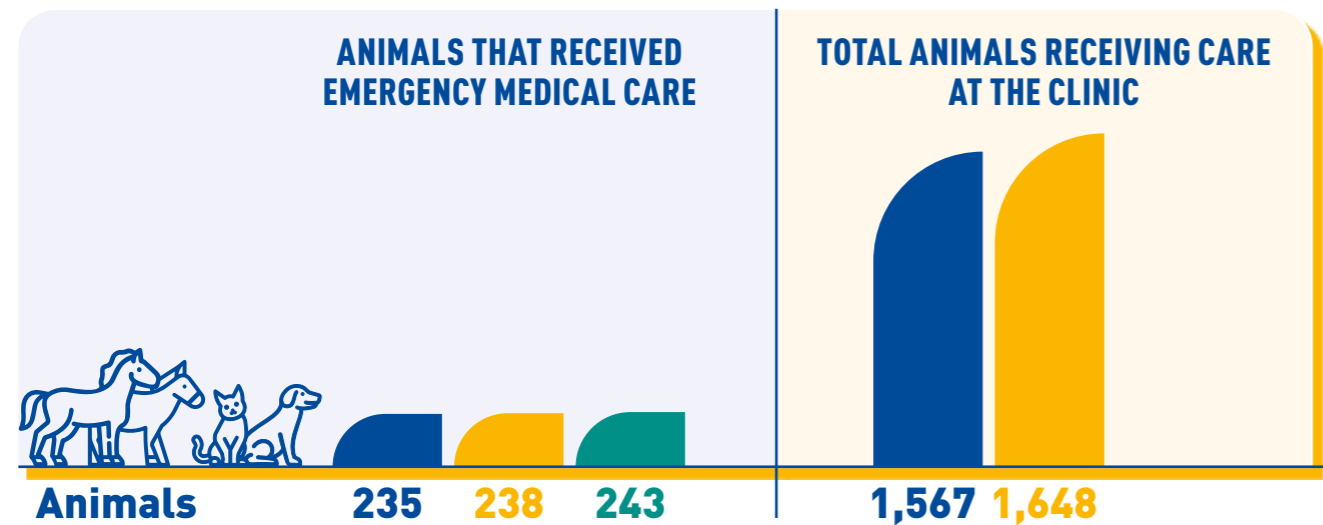
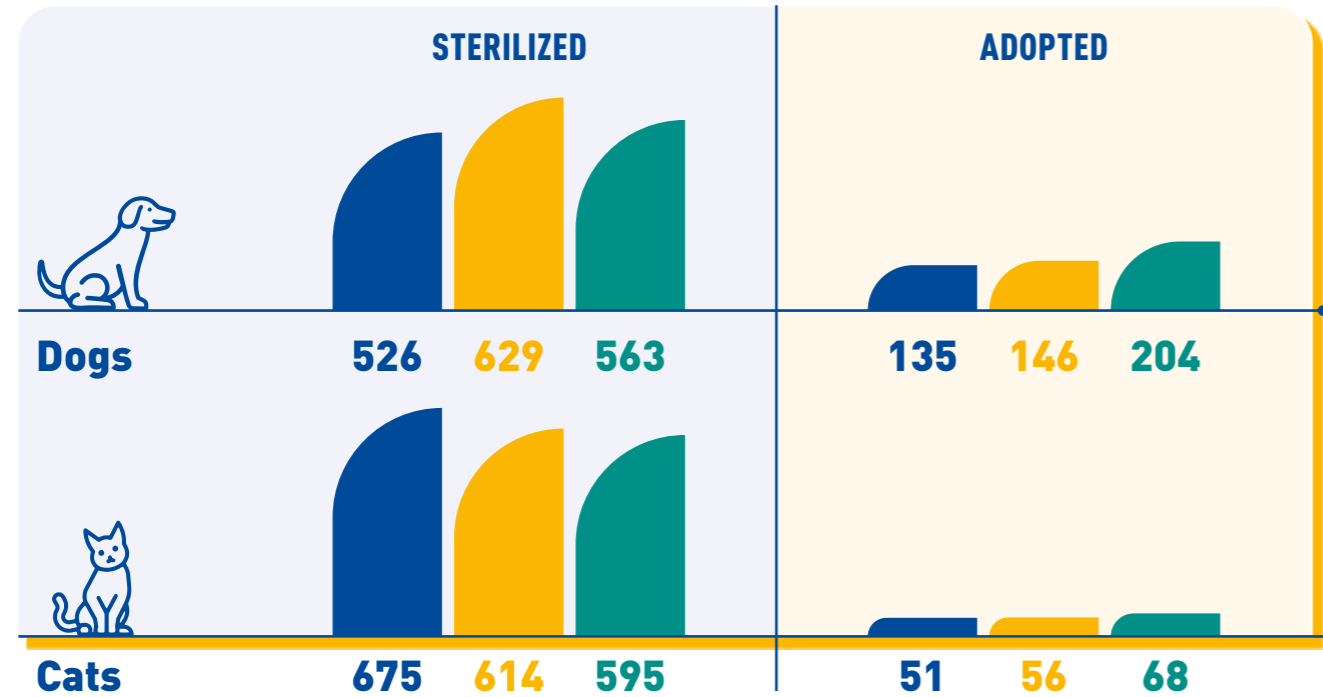
Meanwhile, relations with the **local community continue to grow stronger, and we are witnessing an increasing openness to the idea of having people's animals and pets sterilized**. This encouraging trend confirms the valuable role of organizations like *Save the Dogs* in promoting **sterilization as good practice** and a key aspect of responsible pet ownership.

The year's first half saw renewed collaborations with community **schools**, partnerships with the **Poarta Albă penitentiary**, and the **Center for Therapy for Disabled Children and Adults**. Additionally, 2023 also saw the establishment of new relationships with local businesses, numerous participations in public events, and appearances in the media by our President in Romania. All these factors have contributed to an increase in the number of visits to the shelter and donations supporting our activities.

### Veterinary clinic key figures 2023

# 2023/2022/2021

Comparison



Of the 1,201 sterilizations performed free of charge (526 dogs and 675 cats), 52% were privately-owned animals, 34% were strays, and 14% were animals that had been admitted to our shelter.

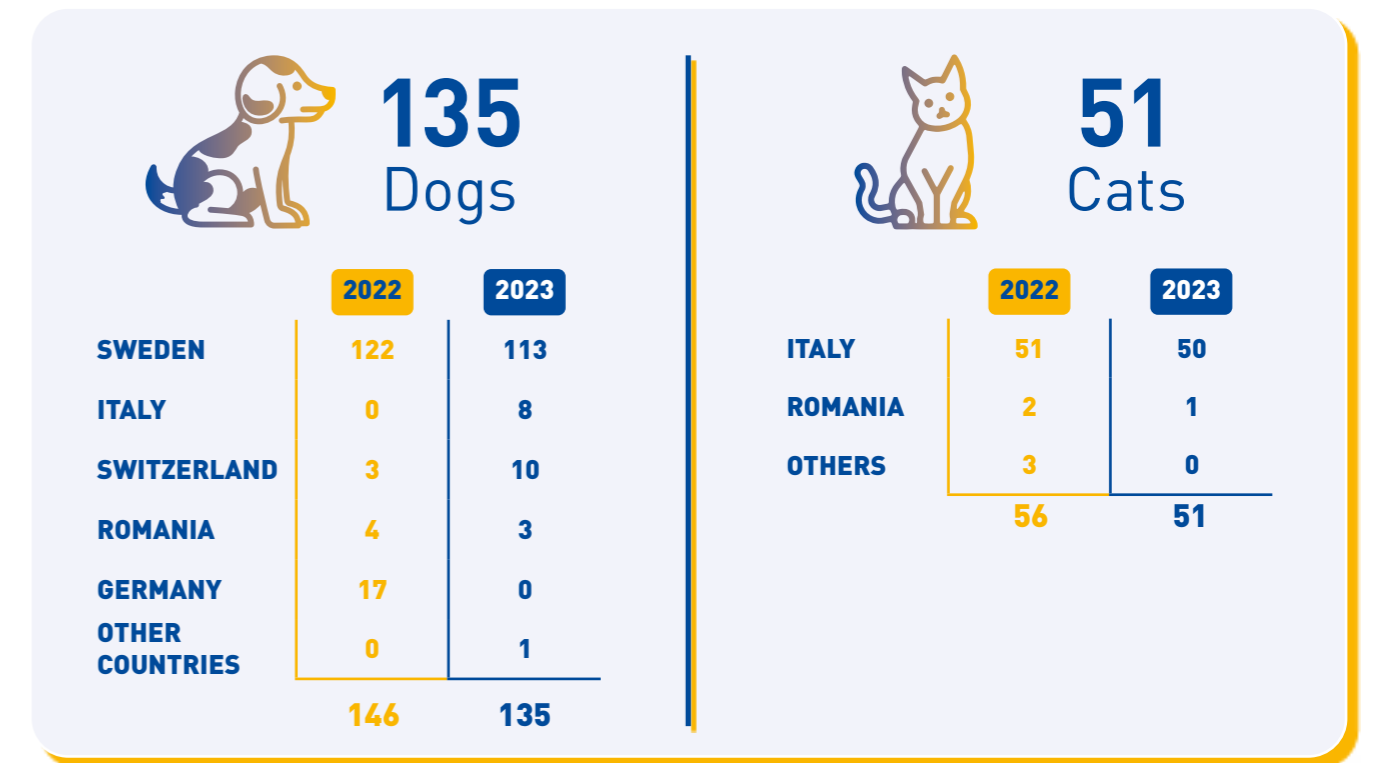
The out-of-pocket expenses for sterilizations were largely covered by the generous contribution made by the **Suzy Utzinger Foundation**, which was once again at our side this year in the fight against canine and feline strays in Romania. We remain eternally grateful for the association's support.

With regard to the number of **animals that were admitted to the shelter**, there was a **decrease of about 33%**, mainly due to our immense difficulties in finding new partners for international adoptions. Of the 174 animals taken in, 119 were dogs (35% adults and 65% puppies), while the remaining 55 cats were comprised of 9% adults and 91% kittens.

## → International adoptions

2023 was our most challenging year yet

The total number of adoptions decreased by 9% in 2023 compared to 2022, from 203 animals to just 186 animals in 2023.



Up until 2022, we relied heavily on countries like Sweden and Germany to find adoptive homes for our animals.

However, this balance was completely disrupted in 2023 due to a **sudden decline in the number of families willing to adopt an animal and the saturation of shelters** across Europe, even in areas that historically had low numbers and a high turnover. In 2022, our Swedish partner *Hundhjal-*

*pen*, with whom we have been collaborating since 2004, **reduced their intake of dogs to 122**, down from 139 in 2021 and 145 in 2020 (long gone are the days when up to 300 adoptions per year with them were possible). Simultaneously, our German partner closed its doors after experiencing a major internal crisis, leaving us without any support in what had historically been the most generous country in terms of adopting dogs from different parts of Europe.

In 2023, the situation deteriorated even further, and we sought to understand the reasons for this decline by speaking with numerous activists in Italy, Scandinavia, Germany, and the Netherlands.

- **The boom in adoptions during the pandemic** resulted in a peak in demand in 2020 and 2021. It was therefore inevitable that the number of adoptions would then drop, given that the pool of families willing and able to adopt pets is inherently limited.
- **Once the pandemic was over, we saw a “return” to the quantity of abandoned animals.** With the end of remote work for many employees, individuals and families found they were no longer able to take care of the pets they had adopted. Additionally, many adoptions took place without the correct type of preparation by people who were looking to fill an emotional void or alleviate the strain of social isolation, without fully understanding the responsibilities of owning a cat or dog.

- **Increased “competition” among associations** operating in challenging areas, which was exacerbated by a plethora of private volunteers who, through social media, managed to place animals even thousands of kilometers away, purely to be able to say they had rescued them. As a result, professional organizations charging higher adoption fees to cover medical and socialization costs are bearing the brunt of this kind of practice.
- **The relocation of unsocialized dogs** (often carried out by volunteers or small, unprofessional associations, or in the worst case scenario, by opportunist speculators), handed over to local shelters by families unable to manage them. Shelters in the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands are subsequently full of animals that require extensive behavioral rehabilitation (which does not always have a happy outcome) before they can be rehomed.




**GIVEN THIS ONGOING SITUATION, SAVE THE DOGS HAS DECIDED TO RELAUNCH THE ITALIAN ADOPTION PROGRAM, IN COLLABORATION WITH FONDAZIONE SQUADRA 4 ZAMPE.**

The dogs arriving in Italy are carefully selected from our small to medium-sized, highly sociable residents, to ensure they can find homes as easily as possible.

## → The clinic

The total number of animals assisted in the clinic in 2023 decreased by 1% due to the external difficulties we faced: namely, the distemper epidemic and the severe lack of medical staff in the first part of the year. In 2023, 66.10% of first aid

cases involved stray animals and 33.9% involved animals with private owners. **66.10% of first aid cases involved stray animals and 33.9% animals with private owners, a 12% increase in the number of street animals rescued.**

 <p><b>1,567</b> Animals treated in the clinic</p>	 <p><b>235</b> Emergencies</p>	 <p><b>174</b> New admissions at the facility<sup>1</sup></p>
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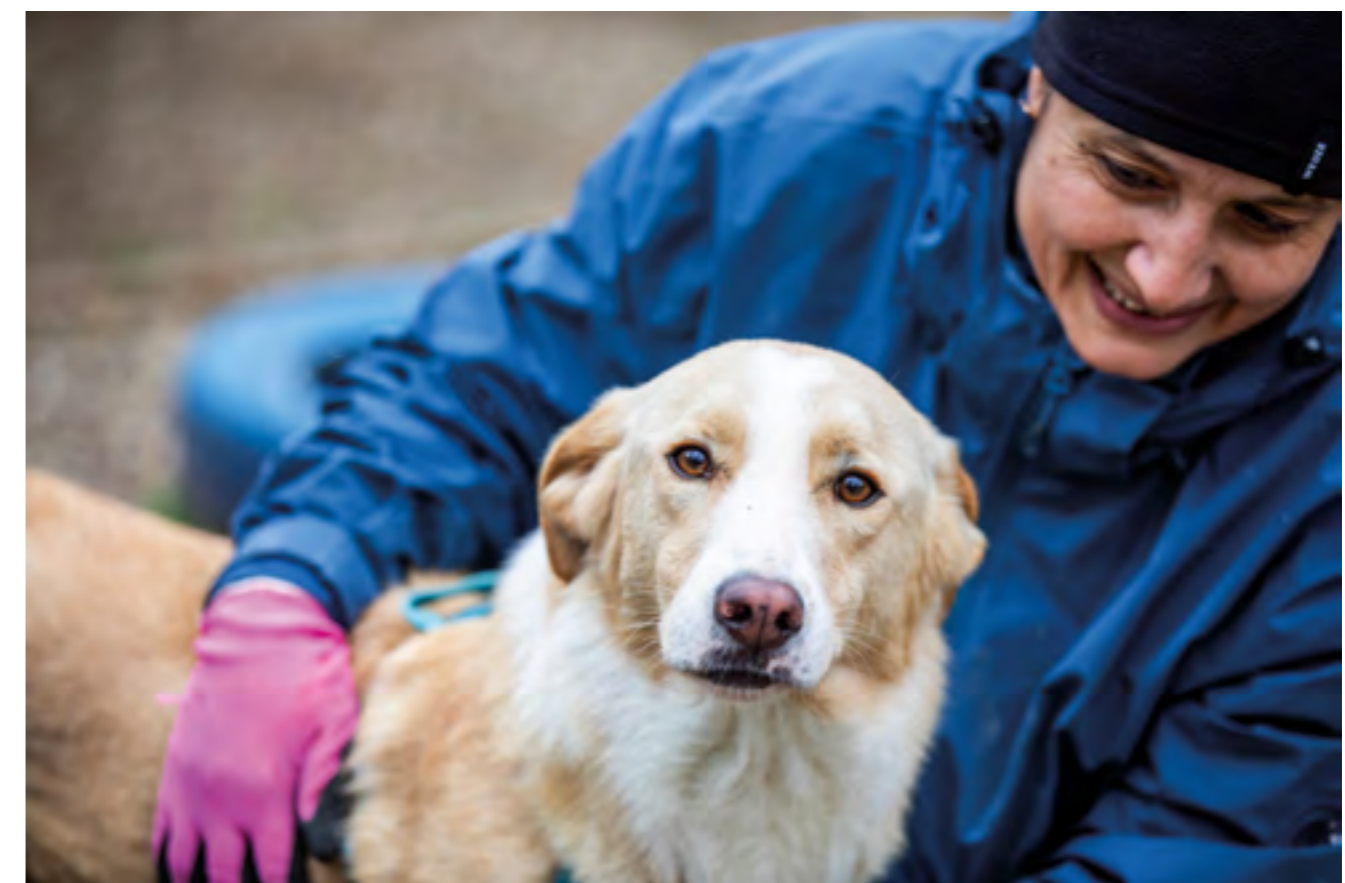
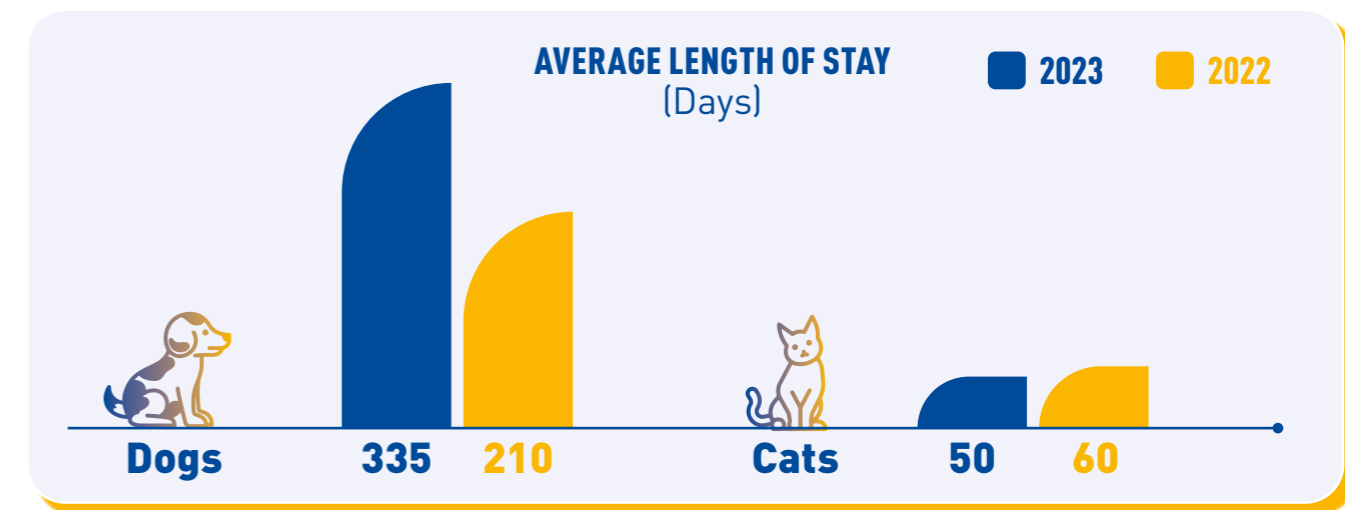
<sup>1</sup> refers to cats and dogs taken in permanently by Save the Dogs for treatment and adoption placement programs (the figure also includes animals who subsequently died due to the severity of their illnesses or injuries).

**AS OF 31 DECEMBER, THERE WERE 177 DOGS AND 53 CATS IN THE FACILITY.**

## → Length of stay at our facility

The decline in international adoptions is also reflected in the estimated length of stay from the date of sterilization. While in 2022 the average was 210 days for dogs, it was **335 days** in 2023. For cats, the figure was 55 days (vs. 60 days in 2022). The extended average length of stay increases the

likelihood of stress for the animals and makes it more difficult to introduce new dogs. This implies a greater commitment on the part of the adoption team to managing the socialization and pre-adoption process for the dogs, as well as crucial support from an increased number of dog educators.



## → Home From Home

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, enough funds were raised in 2023 to build Home from Home, the new area in the shelter dedicated to preparing dogs for adoption.

Work began in the fall of 2023 and was completed in 2024, at the time of writing this report. The photos were taken at the opening of the facility in June 2024.

**FRANCESCA DE MATTEIS, HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS EXPLAINS HOW THE NEW "HOME FROM HOME" AREA WILL IMPROVE THE ADOPTION PROCESS.**



**1) Why is it so important to have an area like "Home from Home" in a shelter? What is its main purpose?**

The dogs that are admitted to our shelter mainly fall into three categories: **very young abandoned puppies**, who are sometimes as young as four weeks old, **stray dogs**, or **adult dogs** that were once kept in a yard and later abandoned. **In the first two cases, these dogs have no experience of what it means to live in a domestic environment.** Dogs from such backgrounds therefore cannot and should not be placed directly into a family; this would be highly inadvisable, as the new environment, unfamiliar people, and often highly urbanized settings would be extremely stressful for them. Furthermore, families who are not given adequate information could find

**EACH DOG WILL HAVE A PERSONALIZED PROGRAM BASED ON THEIR UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS, AS EVERY DOG IS DIFFERENT AND HAS DISTINCT NEEDS, CHALLENGES, AND PREDISPOSITIONS.**

themselves unprepared for the challenges involved, leading them to give up on the adoption. For all these reasons, the work we do every day, in collaboration with the dog trainers, is indispensable. **"Home from Home" is an essential phase in better preparing dogs for family life.** This initiative is a crucial development that we urgently needed to introduce at the shelter.

**2) What activities will take place inside this space? Will the dogs engage in specific activities?**

The activities that will be conducted inside "Home from Home" will be tailored to each dog, based on their individual challenges, needs, and distinctive characteristics. Some dogs, for instance, are **unsure about walking on different surfaces**; we will therefore address their fear by helping them get used to walking on carpets and playing with toys or objects that interest them, so that they become acclimatized to feeling comfortable on surfaces they've never experienced before. Others may be **scared of unknown objects**. Introducing them to items like televisions, moving fans, sofas, deck chairs, or trash cans – objects they have never encountered in the kennels – will help them adjust to these types of experiences. It is also not uncommon for some dogs to be frightened by sudden noises. For them, we will design activities based on loud sounds, such as a window slamming, a trash can suddenly falling off a table, or noises coming from a television or radio.

## → Equines Donkeys and horses

The year 2023 was marked by significant changes, including the arrival of new specialized personnel and improvements in the welfare of our animals.

**We ended the year with 21 horses and 56 donkeys permanently housed at the Cernavodă equine sanctuary.**

Following a thorough evaluation, we decided to end our collaboration with the Fetesti veterinarian and hired a full-time veterinary nurse, along with a young equine specialist from Bucharest.

A significant improvement in the well-being of our donkeys and horses has been facilitated by working with a **Romanian farrier**, a professional that is extremely hard to find in this country. Unlike the Italian farrier who used to work on behalf of our partner *The Donkey Sanctuary*, the Romanian farrier is able to visit the shelter more frequently (3 days every 2 months), ensuring optimal maintenance of the animals' hooves and joints. This regular presence is vital given the increasing average age of our animals, who are getting older and require more attention.



Professionals from *The Donkey Sanctuary* provided additional assistance with two thorough visits during the year. A specialized dental team also spent 3 days with us to address dental issues and offer specific training to our local staff.

## → Working with the local community – Connecting Lives

Throughout 2023, the "Connected Lives" program further expanded through a variety of projects and initiatives involving the community.

We have strengthened our partnership with the Therapy Center for Disabled Children in Cernavodă by conducting regular weekly visits. During these sessions, we cover simple topics about human-animal interactions and encourage children to make hand-made toys for their pets or for the animals in the shelter.

Our center has become a key player in the official initiatives at Școala Altfel (Different School) and Școala Verde (Green School), where we organ-

ized multiple visits for children aged 7 to 12, accompanied by their teachers and parents. During each visit, we provided the students with valuable insights into animal welfare, responsible pet ownership, and information on how to interact safely with dogs, cats, and horses. A total of 171 children participated in these visits.

In the field, Save the Dogs staff fed 936 stray dogs, treated 464 animals with anti-parasitic products, and donated 139 items including harnesses, collars, and kennels. We also managed numerous social cases in the clinic, assisting 199 families in Cernavodă and the surrounding rural areas.

## → The Poarta Alba prison project

Funded by: the Italian Buddhist Union

Our Roots & Shoots project with the Poarta Alba prison in Romania was initiated under the guidance of the **Jane Goodall Institute**. The renowned British primatologist first proposed the idea of starting an innovative community engagement intervention 15 years ago to our *Save the Dogs'* President, but it was only at the beginning of 2023 that the ideal conditions for collaborating with JGI Global were created.

In line with a shared approach that considers **humans, animals, and the environment as being deeply connected, we have launched two different types of interventions.**

The first, **inside the prison**, involves two *Save the Dogs* operators regularly visiting the prison's psychiatric hospital. They engage the inmates in manual activities using mostly recycled materials (such as rope, fabric, plastic, and metal cans) to create toys and kennels for the animals. Inmates who have pets at home can give the hand-made fruits of their labor to their visiting families, while those without can send the toys to the *Save the Dogs'* clinic. The second intervention targets inmates nearing the end of their sentences, who are permitted to leave the prison for **educational and work activities**. They visit *Footprints of Joy* in groups

of ten, accompanied by two prison staff members, and take care of the donkeys and horses by grooming them, feeding them, and cleaning the stables. Their interaction with the animals takes place under the supervision of *Save the Dogs'* team members, who tell them stories about the individual animals and explain the concept of "well-being" for the equines, as well as the cats and dogs staying at the facility.

**During these visits, we have often witnessed the inmates becoming emotionally moved while interacting with a dog or donkey, showing keen interest in the animals' backgrounds and the association's history.**

Through these different types of meetings, both inside and outside the prison, we can impart basic educational concepts about cohabiting with domestic animals: for example, we can explain why a dog kept on a chain is an unhappy being, why dog fighting is an atrocity, and why sterilization is not "unnatural" but a necessary reality.

**The Italian Buddhist Union has recognized this project's exceptional value, which is unparalleled even among the 10,000 Roots & Shoots projects worldwide, by awarding it funding to extend the program through 2024.**

### ALEX'S TESTIMONIAL

Reflecting on a workshop where he had made toys for cats and dogs, **Alex** commented:



*Today felt like I had been liberated from my imprisonment. It was a real breath of fresh air.*



## → Communication and fundraising

2023 was a significant year for communication and fundraising efforts in Romania, establishing important corporate relationships and the launch of new digital tools.

### Corporate Involvement

For the first time ever, our center planned a **team-building day that involved 50 employees from Mars Romania and Royal Canin in social activities and maintenance work**. This event not only increased our visibility and brought food donations, but also led to both companies pledging 20% of their profit taxes to our cause, leveraging a Romanian law that redirects substantial funds to non-profit organizations.

Sara Turetta's presentation at the "Question Everything" conference, hosted by **Ascendis**, Romania's largest consulting firm in the field of organizational development and training, brought our association to the attention

of various international companies. The President of **DSV: Global Transport and Logistics** was so impressed by our President's commitment and personal story that he elected to allocate 20% of the company's profit taxes to our association, resulting in their making a significant donation.

**The three contributions are the largest donations in terms of value ever received in Romania, amounting to a total of 136,000 Euros.**

### Visibility

Launching the **urmedebucurie.ro** website was a key step in significantly boosting the association's local visibility at a local level.

Equally impressive are our indicators on social media platforms: **Facebook** page visits increased dramatically by **95.1%** in 2023 compared to 2022, while on **Instagram** we recorded a **100%** increase. In terms of **new followers, both platforms saw an increase of over 200%**.

Increased media exposure, the growing number of visitors, and the influx of Romanian donors have necessitated greater investment in creating informative materials such as brochures detailing the shelter, the first customized map of the site, and the introduction of the Distance Support program for Romanian donors.





## → Two years of outreach in Ukraine

More than two years since the outbreak of war in Ukraine, *Save the Dogs* remains the only Italian animal protection organization still fully operational in the country.

Ukraine continues to endure the devastating effects of the war on both humans and animals. Many regions are under constant missile and bombing assaults, **worsening the situation for animals daily**. The **severe flooding** caused by the Russian attack on the largest dam of the Dnieper River in June 2023 has further exacerbated the situation, particularly in Kherson and Dnipropet-

rovsk, which has also had a severe affect on the animals living in these regions.

By 2023, the outreach had extended to a broader area of Ukraine, including Kharkiv in the north-east, Mykolaiv in the south, and Kherson, just behind the Russian front line.

**This involves two principal types of intervention: the distribution of food and essential goods, and the launch of a sterilization and micro-chipping program in collaboration with five clinics across Odessa, Izmail, and Mykolaiv.**

### Since the beginning of the conflict, we have never abandoned the animals that have been left behind



**1,103**  
Tons of food



**3,441**  
Sterilizations carried out



**1,548**  
Anti-parasitic treatments



**455**  
Kennels

### Food distribution

Since the beginning of the conflict, we have dispatched over **1,103** tons of food (627 in 2023) in order to feed 9,000 animals living on the streets or in shelters.

Our area of operation stretches from **Odessa** to **Kharkiv** and also includes territories on the front lines of the war, such as **Bakhmut**, which has

been devastated by Russian attacks, and **Kherson**, which is still struggling to recover from the flooding caused by the destruction of the Nova Kakhova dam. We also distribute food in Izmail, a locality not far from the Romanian border, a place which is infamous for the high numbers of abandoned and unwanted dogs and cats, further aggravated by the effects of war.

What we did in 2023  
**Ukraine**

## → The sterilization program

The majority of animals living on the streets are not sterilized, and a sharp rise in the birth rate is unavoidable unless comprehensive measures are taken. The new litters will experience significant challenges. Not only do they inhabit areas still embroiled in conflict, but many of the towns are deserted and there is no one to care for their needs.

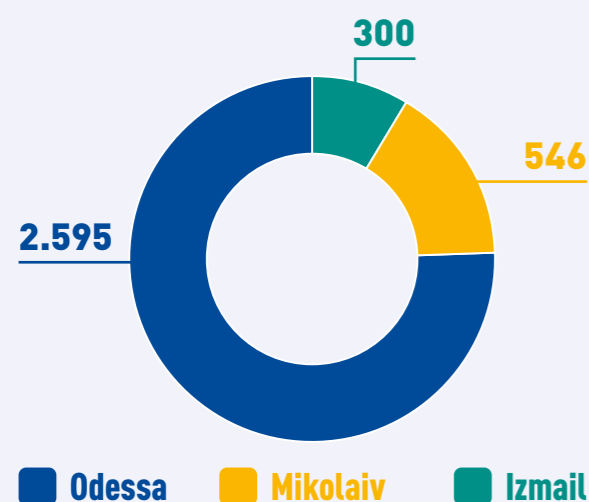
For this reason, *Save the Dogs* has launched a free sterilization and micro-chipping program for stray and privately-owned cats and dogs in partnership with five clinics in May 2023. The

program started in **Odessa** and later expanded to **Izmail** and **Mikolaiv**. Initially, it aimed to assist 1,000 animals over a six-month period: 800 dogs and 200 cats.

By the end of 2023, however, these goals were significantly exceeded, and a total of **3,441 sterilizations were performed (+244%)**.

The following tables present the numbers of animals (dogs and cats) that were provided with sterilization, microchips, and rabies vaccinations in 2023.

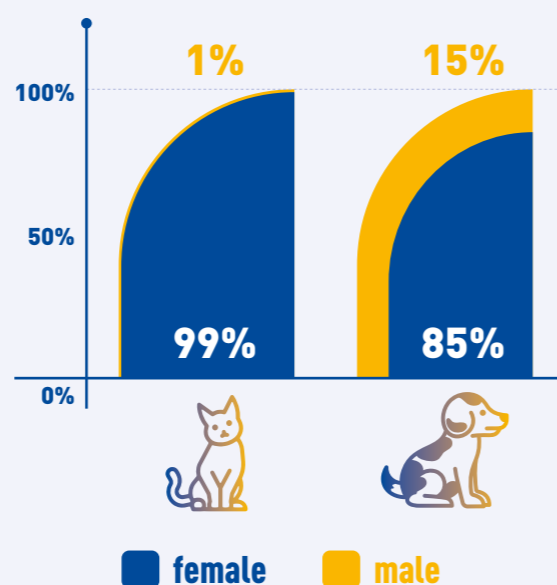
### Number of sterilizations, microchips, and rabies vaccinations



Most dogs and cats assisted by the program in Odessa and Mykolaiv are privately-owned, whereas the majority of sterilized cats in Izmail are strays.

Our efforts were mainly concentrated in the urban areas of Odessa, Izmail, and Mykolaiv, where we established strong partnerships with volunteers right from the start of the war. Even though the high demand for veterinary services in these cities led to a general increase in service costs, we were able to successfully negotiate favorable

### Animals assisted



agreements with many clinics, enabling us to reach and assist more animals than anticipated.

In **Izmail**, a city close to the border, large quantities of pets were abandoned by families fleeing the conflict. There has therefore been a **notable rise in the number of cats** living in colonies, both here and in the surrounding areas. **Estimates suggest that the feline population has tripled during the war.** Accordingly, we have chosen to direct the focus of our activities in this city on the cat population.

## → Direct aid for animals

In addition to food supplies and sterilizations, we also provided **veterinary care and essential goods**. *Save the Dogs* responded to the specific needs of our partners by sending anti-parasitic

treatments, kennels, and blankets, and by covering the costs of treating injured animals, particularly those affected by the tragic Kherson dam bombing.

### HENRY'S INSPIRING STORY

One of the most moving stories over the past two years concerns Henry, one of the many dogs rescued by the *Save the Dogs*' partners. When the Kakhovka dam in Kherson was destroyed in June 2023, Henry was one of the many animals suffering from the aftermath and the dire consequences of the dam's destruction, including the subsequent flooding and industrial oil spills. Alone, petrified, and covered in toxic



substances that were burning his skin, Henry was in a state of collapse when the rescuers found him. Just three months later, thanks to the care and dedication of volunteers, he started the life he'd always deserved living with an adoptive family.

## → Outreach strategy in 2024

In May 2024, *Save the Dogs* launched a new phase of the outreach phase based on a partnership with the **Ukrainian Veterinary Medicine Foundation (UVMF)**, established by the Ukrainian Small Animal Veterinary Association (USAVA) and supported by the American Vet Foundation and FE-

CAVA. UVMF serves as the logistical and technical partner in Ukraine, supervising **sterilizations** at veterinary clinics in **Odessa, Izmail, and Kharkiv**, as well as **food distribution** in **Odessa and Kherson**.



# What we did in 2023 Italy

THE CHALLENGES	OUR RESPONSE	THE IMPACT
<p>In Southern Italy, the mismanagement of the canine and feline population by the local authorities results in a high number of <b>stray animals and overcrowded shelters</b>, imposing enormous costs on the community.</p>	<p>In Campania and Calabria, we provide sterilization and micro-chipping for stray and privately-owned animals free of charge, preventive actions that should be carried out by the local health authorities (ASL) and municipalities.</p>	<p>In the medium to long term, sterilization helps to <b>control</b> the canine and feline population, reduce the number of animals on the streets, admissions into shelters, and irresponsible adoptions.</p>
<p>The lack of awareness among pet owners regarding the meaning of “<b>well-being</b>” for their dogs and cats leads to situations of maltreatment, while uncontrolled breeding results in <b>unwanted litters</b> and <b>abandoned animals</b>.</p>	<p><b>We support communities by promoting responsible coexistence with their pets.</b> We do this using educational materials and engaging in dialogues with people, promoting the good practice of sterilization and registration of their domestic animals.</p>	<p>Pet owners gain <b>awareness</b> and gradually adopt <b>responsible behavior</b>. Regarding official registration, we explain the legalities and promote the <b>importance of complying with the regulations</b>.</p>
<p>The rise in <b>new forms of poverty</b> puts the ability of pet owners to adequately care for the health of their four-legged companions in jeopardy.</p>	<p>Pet owners who live in <b>vulnerable</b> conditions (such as the homeless or those accessing social services) are supported with basic necessities and access to free veterinary services.</p>	<p>The health of the animal and its human caregiver is preserved, protecting their <b>emotional bond</b> and <b>preventing the animals being abandoned</b> for economic reasons.</p>

## → 'Too Many Puppies'

**Canine and feline** over-population can be effectively addressed by **sterilizing animals, improving registration systems**, educating owners about **responsible pet care**, and working with **public institutions**.

### Actions undertaken

'Too Many Puppies' is the initiative **launched in Campania and Calabria by Save the Dogs and other Animals to combat the phenomenon of stray animals**. Through a network of trusted local

- **PROVIDING STERILIZATIONS** free of charge for both privately-owned and stray dogs and cats
- **MICRO-CHIPPING AND OFFICIALLY REGISTERING** as many animals as possible

### How we work

Our intervention in Southern Italy relies on local partners who play a key role in the program. These are volunteer organizations that collaborate with us on initiatives to tackle issues concerning stray animals. We aim to build **lasting networks and relationships with these part-**

ners, strengthening ties with the community by identifying entities that are already well-established and assisting in developing their skills and upgrading the infrastructure, as well as developing our relationships with local institutions.

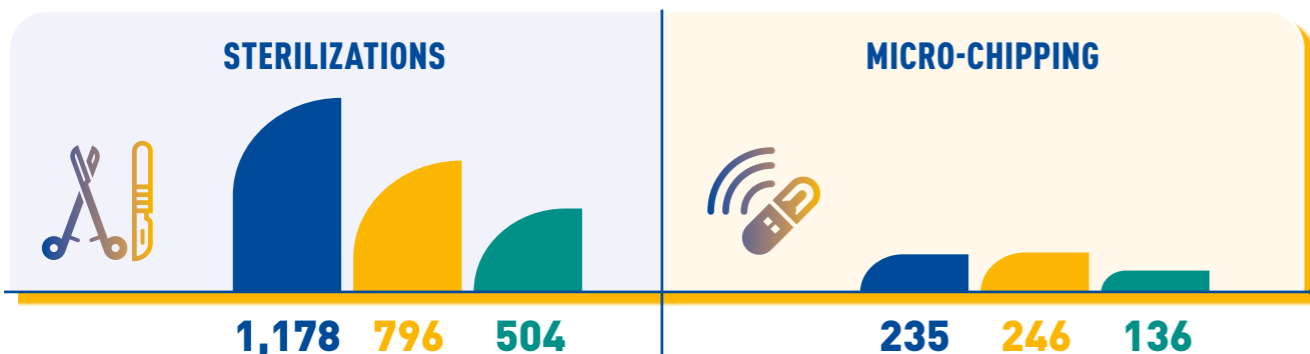
associations and veterinarians, we develop and fund **integrated programs that directly impact the number of animals living on the streets, in kennels, and in shelters**. These projects include:

- **PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP** through education and raising awareness
- **COLLABORATING WITH INSTITUTIONS** to implement best practices for preventing and combating canine and feline over-population.

ners, strengthening ties with the community by identifying entities that are already well-established and assisting in developing their skills and upgrading the infrastructure, as well as developing our relationships with local institutions.

### 2023 In numbers

■ 2023 ■ 2022 ■ 2021



**We consistently increased the number of sterilizations carried out in 2023, with 48% growth over 2022 (683 dogs and 495 cats). There was a slight decrease in the total number of animals officially registered (-5%).** There was a greater increase in the number of new microchips and animals registered in Castel Volturno, where almost all dog owners who bring their pets to be

sterilized are also happy to have their animals put on the registry. The situation is, however, very different in Calabria, where there is still strong cultural resistance to responsible pet ownership. This is an area on which we will focus our efforts in the coming years, by providing more targeted free micro-chipping and introducing initiatives to raise awareness.

## → Campania

Four years after the launch of 'Too Many Puppies' in Campania, the numbers are very encouraging: **1,785 sterilizations have been carried out** (1,248 dogs and 537 cats), with **535 microchips inserted**. Since 2022, our intervention has also

been extended to the Caserta area with the collaboration with the *San Francesco Dog Shelter* in Castel Volturno, an area that is characterized by social and environmental degradation, that has large numbers of stray animals.

### 'Too Many Puppies' in Campania

- **Project partner:** Rifugio del Cane San Francesco (San Francesco Dog Shelter) President Gabriella Guadagnino
- **Beneficiaries:** homeless dogs, stray cats and dogs, privately-owned dogs and cats
- **Geographical region involved:** Castel Volturno and surrounding areas
- **Activities:** free sterilizations and micro-chipping, support for the San Francesco kennel
- **Period:** March 2019 – present

### The San Francesco Dog Shelter

The *San Francesco Dog Shelter* serves as a **vital support for locals**, particularly those who cannot afford to sterilize their dogs and cats, and also for the local health unit (ASL), which, due to limited resources, is unable to meet the numerous cat sterilization requests referred to the shelter.

Founded in 1965 by volunteers who wanted to provide shelter for the many stray dogs they personally cared for, it has been managed since 2015 by the *San Francesco Dog Shelter APS Association*. This organization, which is comprised of both original and new members, believes that the respect and protection of animals are indispensable ethical values in ensuring a civilized community.

The shelter accommodates around 200 dogs that come to the facility either because they have been abandoned or because the owner no longer wishes to keep them. Stray animals reported in the area are also rescued, as are cases where the animal has been mistreated.



## Sterilizations in 2023

CAMPANIA 2023			
Total number of animals sterilized: 756			
<b>Total dogs sterilized</b>	<b>327</b>	Strays	34
Male	86	Privately-owned	185
Female	241	Semi-domesticated	108
<b>Total cats sterilized</b>	<b>429</b>	Strays	368
Male	103	Privately-owned	37
Female	326	Semi-domesticated	24
Total number of dogs micro-chipped and officially registered <b>163</b>			
Dogs sterilized that were already micro-chipped <b>154</b>			

The project includes two days a week of sterilizations carried out free of charge for privately-owned cats and dogs and strays in the Castel

### Sterilized animals

In 2023, of the 756 animals sterilized, **31%** were **dogs**, primarily **privately-owned** or **semi-domesticated**, and **57%** were **cats**, for the most part strays. There is currently a **lack of general awareness in Italy regarding the issue of feline over-population**, which is unfortunately becoming an increasingly serious problem. In Castel Volturno and the surrounding areas, there is a significant number of cats living in groups that are not officially recognized as colonies. These

groups often reside on private land or shared properties, or have been abandoned and find someone to feed them in their garden. This is a common occurrence, although many people in this situation do not have the financial means to sterilize all the cats they provide food for.

**As this issue grows, there has been an increase in cat sterilization requests in 2023 compared to those required for dogs.**

**Volturno area. In 2023, 756 animals were sterilized** within the "Too Many Puppies" program.

## Changing lives together

### MAYA'S RESCUE

**When this mother and her puppies were rescued by the Shelter, they were in a terrible state:** they were so emaciated that we could see their ribs. Maya would lie in her bed for hours, staring blankly with vacant eyes while her puppies slept next to her.

We don't know exactly what had happened to her, but **her ears had been cut off, and from the outset we suspected she had been used for**

**breeding**, a cruel and all too common practice even today.

If it hadn't been for the intervention of the San Francesco Dog Shelter, it is fairly certain that none of these dogs would have survived. Today, thanks to the sheer dedication of the volunteers, **they have all made a good recovery. Maya has been spayed, thanks to the "Too Many Puppies" initiative, and her puppies have been adopted by a family.**



## Improvements made to the shelter Save the Duck at Castel Volturno

In 2023, Save the Duck made a significant contribution to its **ongoing commitment to animal welfare** by funding improvements at the San Francesco Dog Shelter in Castel Volturno, *Save the Dogs*' partner in the "Too Many Puppies" sterilization project.

This operation focused on securing a row of kennels for dogs like Lexya, who require special attention because they have a tendency to jump fences. Lexya had a tragic past: she used to be a **fighting dog**. This **cruel and illegal practice** sees animals trained for combat who have to fight to the death in competitions which generate significant profits for organized crime through illegal betting.

Lexya was saved from this grim destiny and brought to the San Francesco Shelter. Upon arrival, she was emaciated and her body was cov-

ered in scars. Although her physical condition has improved over time, her emotional state remains troubled. She continues to have difficulty interacting with other dogs and people and frequently jumps fences. So far, she has only made a connection with one of the volunteers and with Gabriella, the President of the shelter.

Due to her aggression toward other dogs and her tendency to jump out of her enclosure, her current living situation is unsuitable.

**Thanks to the construction of new kennels, funded by Save the Duck**, dogs like Lexya will have better prospects of rehabilitation, with the possibility of regaining their lost equilibrium and discovering the affection of an adoptive family sometime in the future.

## Save The Duck's Contribution in 2023

- A section of the kennel designated specially for dogs that tend to be «fence jumpers»
- Safety upgrades and replacement of all dividing fences with new welded mesh
- Installing new welded mesh on the tops of all kennels
- Tiling and installing kennel doors

## The new exercise area

Thanks to a generous donation from a *Save the Dogs* supporter, land next to the San Francesco Dog Shelter has been purchased which will be used as a new exercise area, contributing to the well-being of the animals housed there.

- Acquisition of a 2,200 sqm plot adjacent to the San Francesco Dog Shelter
- Plans to create at least three play areas in the future.

## → Calabria

Since the launch of the "Too Many Puppies" project in **Calabria** in April 2021, **to date we have sterilized 1,097 dogs and 88 cats, and have mi-**

**cro-chipped 282 animals**, thanks to the **untiring work and dedication of our partners in Calabria.**

### Too Many Puppies in Calabria

- **Project partner:** Amici Animali FEF association (Cosenza) – President Nuvola Naccarato, Oasi Argo shelter (Crotone) – President Caterina Semeraro
- **Beneficiaries:** stray dogs, neighborhood and privately-owned animals
- **Geographical region involved:** 20 municipalities in the province of Cosenza
- **Activities:** sterilizations, micro-chipping, raising local awareness
- **Period:** March 2021 – present

## Sterilizations in 2023

In Calabria, the project involves collaboration with private veterinary clinics, to which owners and our project partners take animals for sterilization. **422 animals were sterilized in 2023.**

CALABRIA 2023			
<b>Total number of animals sterilized: 422</b>			
<b>Total dogs sterilized</b>	<b>356</b>	Strays	144
Male	75	Privately-owned	143
Female	281	Semi-domesticated	78
<b>Total cats sterilized</b>	<b>66</b>	Strays	35
Male	19	Privately-owned	28
Female	47	Semi-domesticated	3
Total number of dogs micro-chipped and officially registered: <b>72</b>			
Dogs sterilized that were already micro-chipped: <b>42</b>			

## Sterilized animals

In 2023, of the 422 animals sterilized, 84% were dogs, primarily privately-owned or semi-domesticated, and 16% were cats, for the most part strays. Most of the stray dogs were rescued, sterilized, and taken to our partner shelter, Oasi Argo in Cirò Marina. **In Calabria, challenges include the limited availability of veterinarians**, particularly in remote areas, and also the economic hardships faced by many. The “Too Many Puppies” project aims to provide an accessible and affordable solution for all animal owners,

thereby reducing the occurrence of too many instances of home-bred litters.

Dogs participating in the project often come from remote areas and have given birth several times. This group includes shepherd and Maremma Sheep dogs, which are rarely sterilized by their owners. Part of our partners’ work is also to operate in these “critical” situations and sterilize dogs that repeatedly give birth to puppies that end up being abandoned in rural areas.



## → Friends On the Streets, Companions For Life

### Assisting dogs belonging to the homeless in Milan

The “Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life” project was created by *Save the Dogs* to support the welfare of animals living with homeless individuals in Milan, who face the practical and

emotional challenges of life on the streets or in occupied buildings – often due to circumstances beyond their control.

### The key numbers of 2023



### The project

**Our primary goal** is to **create relationships based on trust with the homeless** and users of our service, by understanding their personal stories and connections with their pets. Providing food or care isn’t the full story; **meaningful interaction and communication** are key to fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. We therefore need to invest the necessary time in building **human relationships** and creating the **stable connections** that have enabled us to **assist 124 couples (individuals and their pets) and a total of 151 animals** from January 2023 to now, supplying them with essential goods such as food, bowls, muzzles, leashes, and anti-parasitic treatments, as well as **sterilizing** the dogs and officially **registering** them, as and when appropriate. Our **Street Units**, formally **recognized by the Municipality of Milan and included in the network of active associations in the city**, always operate with the support of a veterinarian, thanks also to the pres-

ence of the Veterinary Association of the Province of Milan, which has supported us from the beginning. Our volunteer veterinarians ensure **continuous monitoring of the animals’ well-being**, a factor of the utmost importance for safeguarding the health of the individual dogs we assist as well as that of the community, through the prevention of zoonoses. A healthy animal population, indeed, is a guarantee for people who come into contact with them and for other citizens’ pets.

This project relies on the enthusiasm and dedication of the team of **volunteers**, who are properly trained and co-ordinated by our Foundation’s **staff members**, ensuring the optimal number of people in our street units. In addition to evening outings, the *Save the Dogs* staff maintains constant contact during the day with many beneficiaries, who have found our operators to be a reference point for all issues related to their animals.

## The beneficiaries

During the course of 2023, we assisted **124 couples** (meaning a person with 1 or more animals), an increase of **163.8%** over 2022. **151 animals were supported**, an increase of **155.9%** over the previous year.

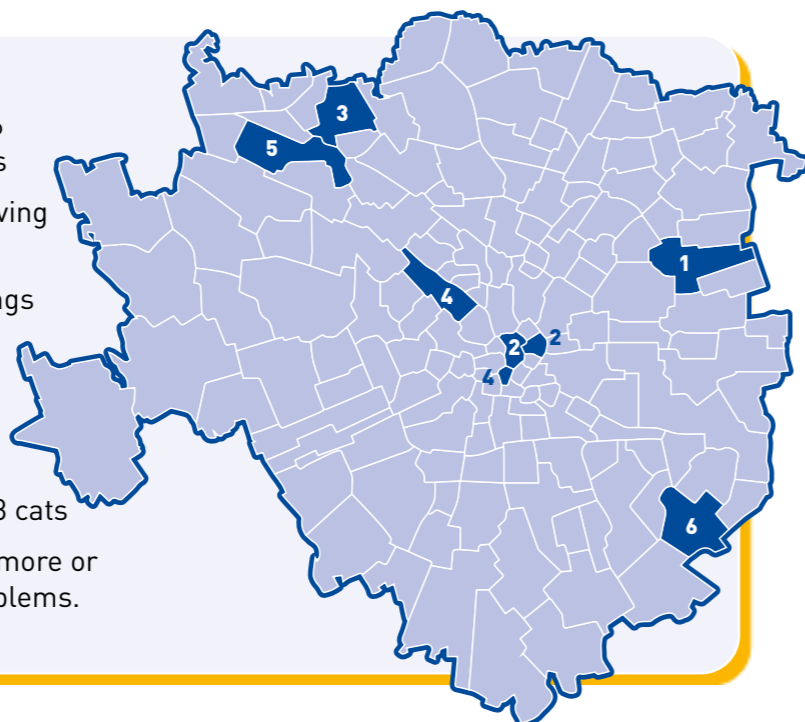
### The individuals supported by Save the Dogs ' street unit:

- live and sleep on the streets,
- live on the streets during the day but have shelter at night (a room, an abandoned building, are hosted by friends for a given period),
- live in abandoned buildings, both juveniles and adults,
- live in public housing.



### The beneficiaries and areas served:

- Lambrate:** individuals aged between 16 and 25 years old, mostly living in squats
- San Babila and Duomo:** permanently living on the streets
- Quartoggiaro:** living in occupied buildings
- Arco della Pace and Piazza XXIV Maggio:** permanently living on the streets
- Roma camp in Monte Bisbino:** we are assisting a family unit with 3 dogs and 3 cats
- Rogoredo:** individuals of various ages, more or less settled, dealing with addiction problems.



### 2023 In numbers



## Sterilizations, street and clinic visits

In 2023, **28 sterilizations** were performed, a substantial increase from the **2 performed in 2022**.



There is strong cultural resistance to neutering males, which it will require time to overcome in order to achieve higher results. However, on a more positive note, in most cases we tend to assist female dog owners whose animals are already sterilized or, if not, we manage to convince them to do so through patient persuasion.

In an effort to further improve our labors, in December we introduced a written agreement for all puppy owners, stating that in order to receive assistance (micro-chipping, deworming, vaccinations, food support, and veterinary care), they must commit to having their dog sterilized for free with *Save The Dogs*.

**The number of vaccines given increased from 12 in 2022 to 96 in 2023 (700% increase).**

**The number of microchips inoculated increased from 8 in 2022 to 23 in 2023 (187.5% increase).**

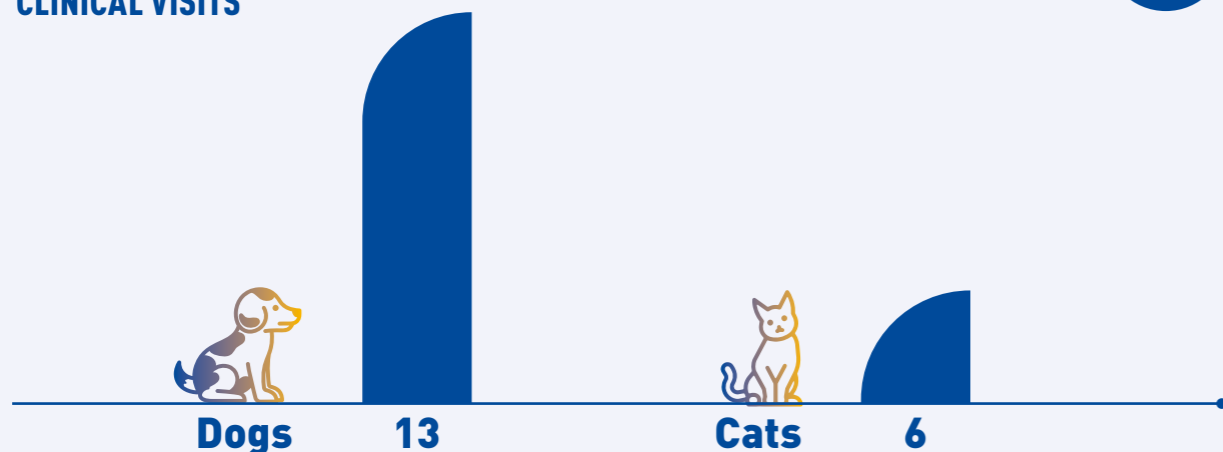
This significant increase has allowed us to provide all the dogs we assist with health records showing the animal's identification details, officially registering a good number of unidentified dogs and, in some cases, carrying out transfers of ownership. It was in fact fairly common to find dogs not registered under the name of the person who owns the animal, in which case it was necessary to regularize ownership. A large number of dogs were identified that had not been vaccinated for over a year. We therefore gave the puppies a full vaccination cycle so as to avoid any outbreaks of Parvovirus or other viruses. All these animals live in highly promiscuous situations and the risk of the spreading of viral diseases is high.



The number of clinical visits was 58 in 2023, an increase of 866.6% compared with 2022 (when 6 visits were made).



CLINICAL VISITS



THE MOST COMMON PROBLEMS EMERGING FROM THE STREET UNIT OUTINGS WERE:

- **INTESTINAL DISORDERS**
- **UNTREATED CHRONIC OTITIS**
- **VARIOUS EYE-RELATED PROBLEMS**
- **FLEA ALLERGY DERMATITIS**
- **BITE WOUNDS**
- **CYSTITIS**
- **CYSTS OF VARIOUS TYPES**

Collaboration with local associations

Living on the streets is extremely challenging whatever the season, and those who have pets face even greater difficulties due to existing limitations in accessing facilities that provide basic services such as showers, clothing, meals, and overnight shelter. *Save the Dogs* is dedicated to addressing the needs of both people and ani-

mals, which is why we collaborate with other humanitarian organizations to help homeless individuals with dogs access necessary services. To this end, we offer free consultations and essential supplies with the creation of temporary animal care support hubs.

Our collaboration with Fondazione Somaschi

One such example is our partnership with Fondazione Somaschi, an association which runs several aid services, with whom we are working to facilitate the lives of people living on the streets with a dog, who are often denied access to basic services like showers due to the presence of their pet. To overcome this obstacle, *Save*

*the Dogs* has provided the Fondazione Somaschi drop-in center with a cage, enabling owners to leave their pets securely inside while they use the center's services. We are also supplying the center with pet food, anti-parasitic treatments, and essential items like leashes and muzzles for proper dog care.

Essential goods distributed to our partners



Expansion of the Milan project

Thanks to a contribution of 72,000 Euros spread over two years received from the **Fondazione di Comunità Milano**, the "Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life" project was able to expand its activities from July 2023. It now not only aids homeless individuals living on the streets with their pets but also assists families facing severe financial difficulties who may not be able to care for their pets adequately

Expansion of the project

- Double the number of Street Unit outings.
- Establish a fixed presence and network with organizations that manage local services in Milan.
- Expand support to additional families and individuals in need who own pets.





# Fundraising

In 2023, we **consolidated our fundraising efforts**, thanks to the support and trust of individual donors, corporations, and foundations.

While total fundraising shows a **decrease of 20% compared to 2022**, which we consider a normal consequence of a year without a major emergency like the war in Ukraine, the consolidation of our growth is evident when compared to a typical year. Compared to 2021, a year not marked by other exceptional events, **fundraising has grown by 67%**.

The prominent role played by **individual donors** is confirmed: their donations represented

**1,026,180.00 Euros**, equivalent to **41% of the total fundraising**. This exceptional result confirms the solidarity of the *Save the Dogs* community.

Likewise, the confidence of **Italian and foreign associations, partners, companies and foundations** have guaranteed the continuity of our work in Romania and Italy, in addition to supporting the second year of our outreach program in Ukraine, with a total contribution of **1,452,390.83 Euros**.

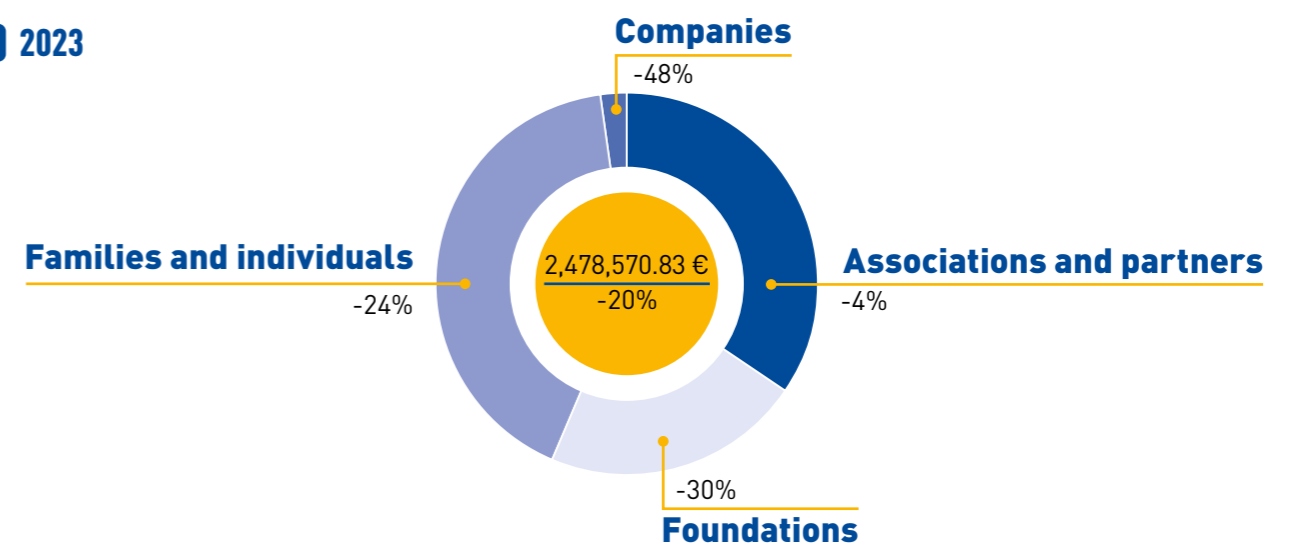
Every achievement and success is the result of the generosity of all those who believe in us, in our professionalism and in our expertise. We are deeply grateful to each and every one of them.

## ➔ How much we raised in 2023

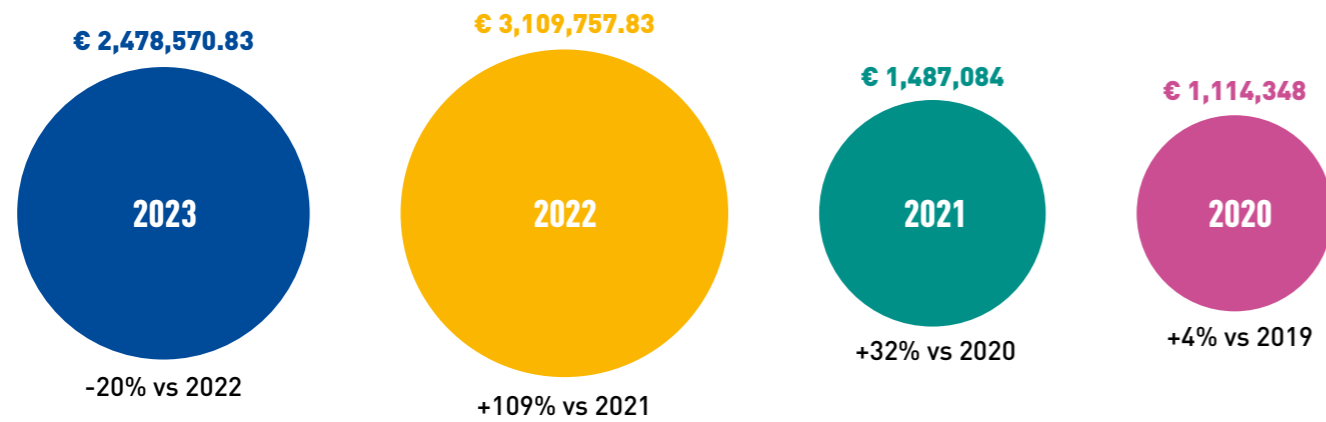
In 2023 we raised **€ 2,478,570.83**

	2023	2022	% Var. 2023 vs 2022	% tot revenue 2023
<b>1 Associations and partners</b>	€ 859,478.12 €	€ 891,341.34	-4%	35%
<b>2 Foundations</b>	€ 538,734.00 €	€ 771,002.23	-30%	22%
<b>3 Families and individuals</b>	€ 1,026,180.00 €	€ 1,342,908.11	-24%	41%
<b>4 Companies</b>	€ 54,178.71 €	€ 104,505.32	-48%	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 2,478,570.83</b>	<b>€ 3,109,757.83</b>	<b>-20%</b>	<b>100%</b>

■ 2023



### Variation compared to previous year



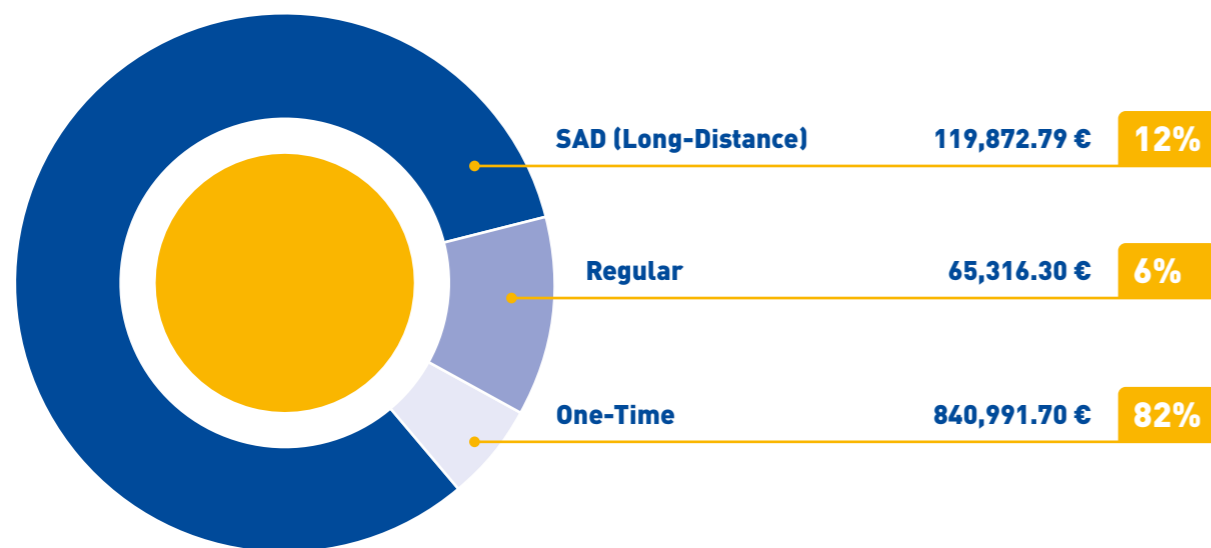
## ➔ Fundraising: private individuals

### Individual donors

Individual donors, single donators and families contributed **€1,026,180.00** or **41% of the total raised**.

One-time donors accounted for 82% of the total income, followed by Long-Distance Support (12%) and regular donors (6%).

TYPES OF DONORS	AMOUNT	%
SAD (Long-Distance)	€ 119,872.79	12%
Regular	€ 65,316.30	6%
One-Time	€ 840,991.70	82%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 1,026,180.79</b>	<b>100%</b>



### Save the Dogs regular donors

The donors who participate in our **Long-Distance** and **'Io ci Sono'** ('I'm at Your Side') programs enable us to plan our activities over the long term, making them more efficient, effective, and sustainable.

a cat, a donkey, or a horse, along with general updates on activities carried out at the *Save the Dogs* center. As of 31 December 2023, there were 482 active Long-Distance supporters.

The **Long-Distance Adoption project** fosters a unique and special connection with one or more animals residing at the Cernavoda shelter in Romania. Supporters receive regular updates on the health of their sponsored animal, be it a dog,

By joining the **'Io ci Sono'** program, the supporter elects to provide continuous support in Romania, Italy, and Ukraine, enhancing the sustainability of our projects. As of 31 December 2023, we had 444 active regular donors.



*Receiving photo and video updates is the most gratifying part of participating in the Long-Distance program. I really enjoy watching Giuliana's daily progress firsthand, and am looking forward to the day she will find a family to take care of her.*

*Over the years, I have had the good fortune of being able to visit the shelter in Romania, which has been one of the most moving experiences of my life. Being able to cuddle the dogs, play with them and go for long walks with them has made me realize the tangible impact that our support through the long-distance adoption program has.*

**Paolo, a Save the Dogs supporter**



### One-Time Donors

**One-time donors**, who support *Save the Dogs* with one or more non-recurring donations, have grown by 27% compared to 2022: this is a significant consolidation of the number of donors acquired during the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine. Throughout the year, these support-

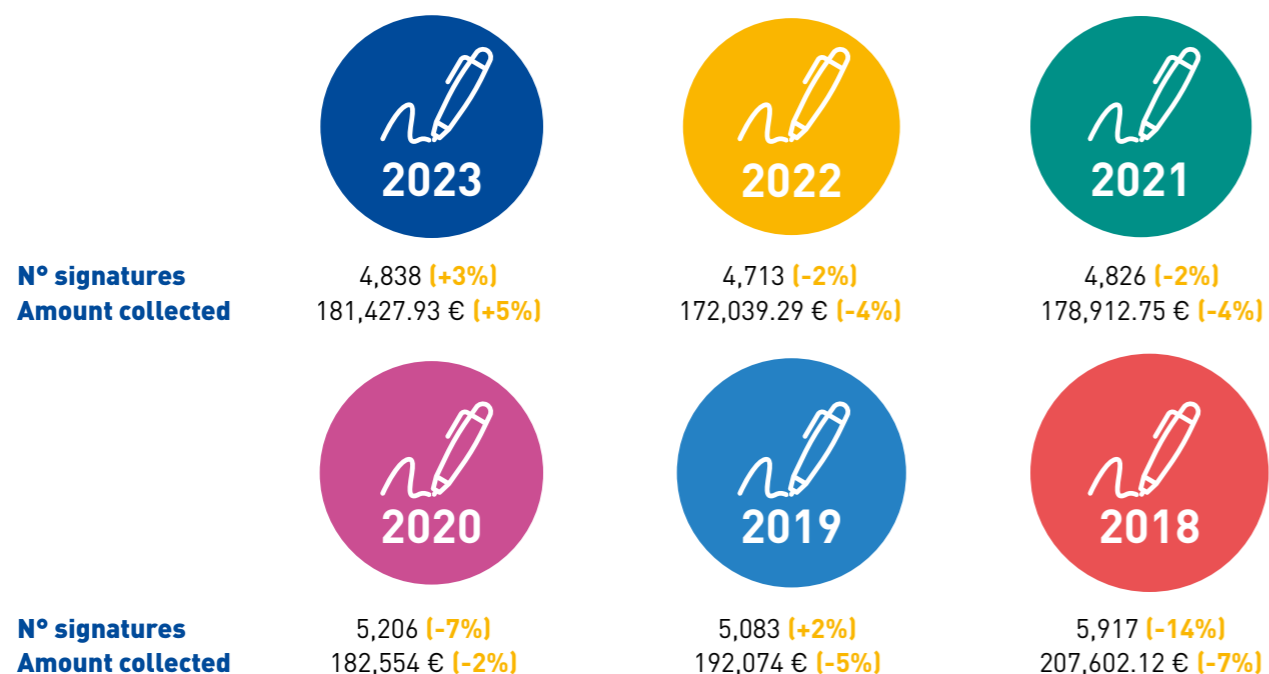
ers make a contribution to specific fund-raising initiatives, such as our President Sara Turetta's birthday or the summer doubling campaign. They all receive 'SAVE', our regular update newsletter. As of 31 December 2023, we registered 11,358 active occasional donors.

## → 5x1000 donations for *Save the Dogs*

In Italy, the “5x1000” enables every individual to allocate a portion of their income taxes to *Save the Dogs*, without them incurring any additional costs, by simply entering the Foundation’s tax code and putting their signature in the “Support for voluntary work and other non-profit organi-

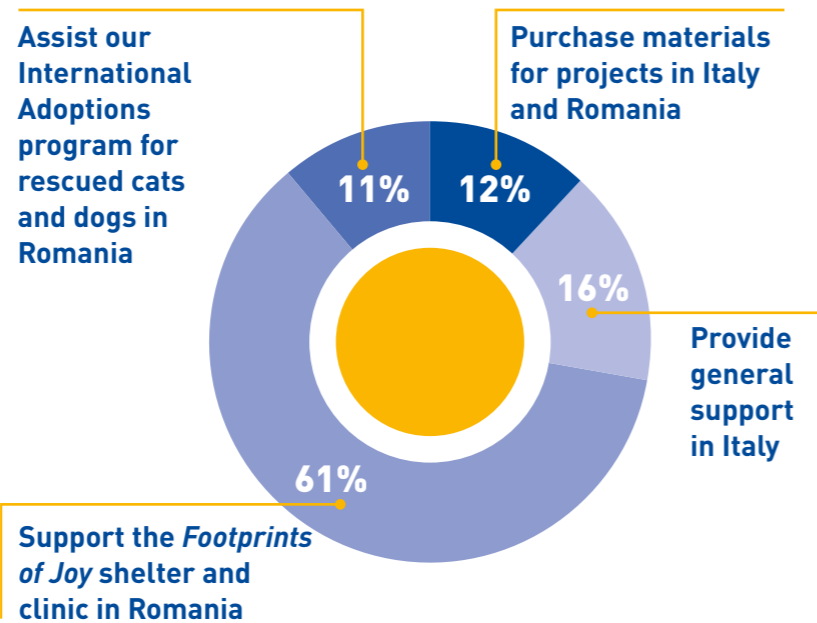
zations in the social sector” section indicated on the 730 tax form. For the first time in many years, there was a reversal of the trend in 2023, with a **3%** increase in the number of signatures compared to 2022 (4,838) and a **5%** increase in revenue, for a total value of **181,427.93 Euros**.

### Variation compared with the previous year



### The allocation of the 5x1000 funds

Behind every life saved from the streets, abandonment, and suffering, there is a team of dedicated professionals: dog trainers, veterinarians, and animal welfare experts. Every one has a specific job to do, but they all are united by the same goal: to **save lives, because every life counts!** Thanks to last year’s 5x1000 contributions, which so many Italians generously placed in our favor, we have been able to allocate funds to:



## → Fundraising: companies, foundations and partners

The contribution of **companies, foundations and partners** who supported our projects has been pivotal, totaling as it did **1,398,212.12 Euros**, or **56%** of the total amount raised. The decrease of the income from **Foundations (30%)** and **Associations (4%)** can be attributed to the

reduction of funds raised for Ukraine. We also witnessed a **46%** decrease in **support from companies**, whose contribution was instrumental in 2022 in addressing the needs of animals in the aftermath of the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine.



Care, social responsibility, and interdependence form the foundation of the Italian Buddhist Union’s support for various small initiatives across Italy, funded by the 8x1000 contributions. These projects originate from the visions of women and men who, with their minds and hands, diligently strive to create a more just, compassionate, and wise society. Thanks to their dedication, many people now have access to services that were previously beyond their reach.

The Italian Buddhist Union endorses these social projects, supporting them thanks to the funds raised by 8x1000 and based on their non-denominational nature, promoting diversity and social responsibility. In these projects, the Buddhist Union provides tangible assistance by reinforcing existing community networks. Each selection aligns with the fundamental Buddhist concept of interdependence and care: in our interconnected world, every sentient being—whether human or animal—is interlinked, and by positively influencing one area, we contribute to the well-being of the entire community.

**Filippo Scianna,**  
President of the Italian Buddhist Union



# → Communication

In 2023, we continued to integrate our use of **conventional and social media** to enhance our communication channels, creating original and

effective content to engage audiences and share the stories of the animals we've helped.



## Press, radio and TV releases

It is difficult to draw direct comparisons with 2022, when the conflict in Ukraine featured so prominently on the world news scene, which was

also reflected in the number of *Save the Dogs* press releases (219), immediately activated with the escalation of the conflict.

**WE PRODUCED A TOTAL OF 101 PRESS RELEASES IN 2023, A DECREASE OF -54%.**



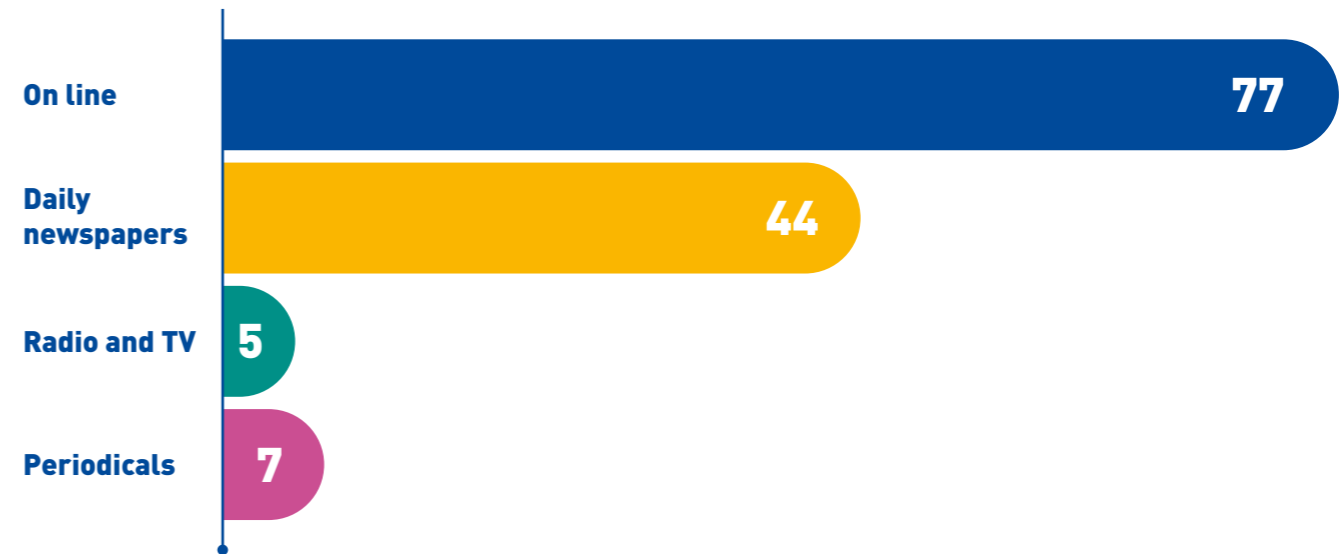
Despite the smaller number of Press Releases compared to 2022, we enjoyed **excellent results in terms of quality**, including many interviews and comprehensive articles. Given *Save the Dogs* ongoing engagement in **Ukraine**, the Foundation's work was featured in **15 articles**. The high interest in the "**Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life**" project in Milan contin-

ued with **37 articles**, following on from the wide attention it received in 2022, when there were 84 releases. Our intervention on the issue of **genetic maltreatment** also garnered significant attention, with **13 dedicated articles**. Additionally, **93% of the articles focused on *Save the Dogs*** and incorporated our statements and press releases.

## Type of media coverage

During the reporting period, *Save the Dogs* generated a total of **101 articles with comprehensive cross-media coverage** and high visibility in the **national press** resulting in **76**

**releases**, as well as **25 thematic releases in local press** with issues related to stray dogs in Calabria and presentations of President Sara Turetta's book.



## Social Media

In 2023, the social media community grew steadily across all existing channels. Leading the way in terms of followers was **Instagram, with a 74% surge in numbers compared to 2022**. This substantial rise built the groundwork for an editorial plan rich in quality content, further enriched

by our valuable partnership with Green World talent. **Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube** channels also showed a steady increase, and we also launched **Tik Tok** in December 2022 and had registered 4,876 followers by 31 December.

## Reports

In 2023, we continued our efforts to disseminate information through detailed analyses of the areas in which we are operative. Our publications are designed to engage, raise awareness, and inform the public. This year, we published two

reports: the first focused on our intervention in Ukraine one year after the conflict began, and the second was our Year II report on the "Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life" project".

## → Our supporters

Our deepest gratitude goes to the **12,270 individual donors** who have supported all the other interventions that *Save the Dogs* carried out in Italy, Romania, and Ukraine. We thank all those who chose to donate a **bequest in their wills** in support of *Save the Dogs*' activities.

## Partners

### Brigitte Bardot Foundation

For many years, this French foundation has guaranteed the annual supply of several quintals of food for the dogs in our shelters.

### Friends of Homeless Dog

Our Finnish partner financially supported our sanctuary for maltreated and abandoned equines in Romania.

### Hundhjalpen

The Swedish partner has been working with our association since 2004, when the international adoption program first began, and has made it possible for so many dogs to be happily adopted in Sweden. The funds raised monthly by Swedish volunteers to support our activities in Romania have been fundamental for our activities over the years.

Thanks also go to all the **Companies** and **Foundations**, and all the **partners**, who did their part in 2023 to ensure a better future for the animals who are most in need.

### Susy Utzinger Foundation

This Swiss foundation has been supporting us with materials for our shelters and targeted aid for specific projects since 2013, in particular funding the sterilizations of hundreds of cats and dogs.

### TASSO

TASSO is a well-known German organization that manages the largest canine and feline registry in Germany. Since 2018, it has fully sponsored the dog education activities taking place at *Footprints of Joy* in Romania. Since 2019, it has also significantly supported other activities of our veterinary clinic, particularly dog sterilization programs and outreach in Ukraine.

### The Donkey Sanctuary

Since 2008, the British foundation has funded 90% of the sanctuary's operations, which houses more than 50 donkeys within the *Footprints of Joy* center in Cernavoda.

## Italian Foundations

### Banca del Monte di Lombardia Foundation

The **Fondazione Banca del Monte di Lombardia**, a banking-origin foundation that exclusively aims to serve social utility purposes and promote economic development, allocated 5,000 Euros for the purchase of essential goods such as harnesses, leashes, collars, muzzles, dog bowls, accessories and food for the "Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life" project.

### Fondazione di Comunità Milano (Milan Community Foundation)

Fondazione di Comunità Milano, a charitable organization that supports socially beneficial interventions for the Lombard capital and 56 neighboring municipalities, allocated a grant of 72,000 Euros over the period 2023-2025, aimed at reinforcing assistance for the homeless in Milan and families in need who own pets.

## Companies

### EUROSERVICE

Euro Service is a company that was founded in Italy in 2003 with the aim of ensuring that man's most loyal friends could be offered high-quality, natural, organic, chemical-free, and untested products. In 2023, it actively supported the "Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life" project by supplying donations of premium quality food.

### IDEALISTA

Idealista, a leading real estate web company based in southern Europe, confirmed its support for the "Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life" project once again in 2023 through the involvement of its employees and by doubling the amount raised by the team in Italy.

### KIDULT

Kidult, which has supported and sustained non-profit organizations on social issues of care, research, culture and protection of the vulnerable ever since its establishment, confirmed its contribution to *Save the Dogs* projects for the sixth consecutive year, donating 20% of the proceeds from the sale of two pieces of jewelry from its Life Collection: the "Dog | Affection" bracelet and the "Perro | Cariño" necklace, both of which are distributed in the Iberian Peninsula.

### Dr. Fulvia Anelli Fund

Established in memory of Dr. Fulvia Anelli, the Fund has the objective of pursuing the philanthropic activities that were cultivated during her lifetime: namely, providing veterinary care for animals awaiting adoption and helping disadvantaged people who cannot afford to pay for essential health care for their pets. In 2023, the Fund allocated a contribution of 10,000 Euros to cover veterinary expenses and the purchase of medicines for "Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life" project.

### Italian Buddhist Union

Founded in Milan in 1985, UBI (Unione Buddhista Italiana) is a national religious body currently composed of 64 Buddhist centers in the Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana and Inter-buddhist traditions. In 2023, it awarded *Save the Dogs* a grant to carry out its project in Romania working with inmates at the Poarta Alba Prison.

### MIOMOJO

Thanks to their "**An Act of Love**" initiative, **Miomajo**, an Italian brand that designs accessories, bags and backpacks using sustainable and innovative materials with a cruelty-free perspective, **dedicated a one-year long-distance adoption of a dog and a donkey** to two of the three people who purchased a Miomojo bag and chose *Save the Dogs* at check-out, thereby donating 10% of the purchases to support our work. *Save the Dogs* is included among the Miomojo-friendly associations to which 10% of the purchase value can be donated at check-out.

### MORSO®

The MORSO® brand brings style to the pet industry while respecting dogs, people, and the environment, creating timeless products such as harnesses, collars, and leashes that do not compromise on functionality. The company reaffirmed its commitment to the community by donating essential goods for the pets belonging to homeless individuals in Milan.

**RINALDO FRANCO SPA**

Rinaldo Franco Spa is much more than a company selling dog products: it is a place where passion and a love for animals are at the heart of everything it does. In 2023, it actively supported the “Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life” project by making donations of high-quality products.

**SAVE THE DUCK**

Save The Duck, a Benefit Society and B Corp® certified company, was founded in 2012 with the aim of making 100% animal-free products that respect animals, people, and the environment. In 2023, it confirmed its now long-standing support for *Save the Dogs* projects with a donation to refurbish an area of the San Francesco Dog Shelter, a project partner of the “Too Many Puppies” project in Campania.

**TRIXIE ITALY S.p.A.**

Trixie Italia S.p.A., a company specializing in the pet industry and a distributor of TRIXIE products in the Italian market, pledged invaluable help in protecting the health of animals living on the streets in Milan, by donating bandanas and anti-parasite coats.

**UNITED PETS**

United Pets, a company that designs, manufactures, and markets designer accessories for dogs and cats, actively supported the “Friends on the Streets, Companions for Life” project with donations of top-quality goods.

**WEWARD**

WeWard, the app that has been motivating more than 3 million people in Italy to get walking, opened its platform to *Save the Dogs* for the collection of donations in support of the project, guaranteeing the distribution of 200 treatment kits for animals living on the streets of Milan with their human companions.

## International foundations and associations

**Blue Cross UK**

This British association provides specialist care, services, and support for pets and people, and generously supported *Save the Dogs*’ efforts in Ukraine to control new litters.

**Soi Dog Foundation**

The Soi Dog Foundation has enabled *Save the Dogs* to send hundreds of tons of dog and cat food to Ukraine, distributed among the local volunteers with whom we work and who have been feeding thousands of animals living on the streets and in shelters. Additionally, thanks to Soi Dog, we were able to provide several kennels to harbor strays from the snow and rain during the harsh Ukrainian winter months.

**Humane Society International (HSI)**

Humane Society International operates worldwide in promoting the bonds between humans and animals, saving and protecting cats and dogs, improving farm animal welfare, protecting wildlife, promoting animal-free experimentation and research, responding to natural disasters, and addressing cruelty to animals in all its forms. The organization supported *Save the Dogs*’ work in Ukraine for the second year running.

**World Animal Protection Nederland**

World Animal Protection Nederland guaranteed the purchase and transportation of food for animals that had been left behind in Ukraine, as well as the purchase of kennels and the coverage of renovation work. The association additionally supported the country’s sterilization program.



For their valuable contribution to *Save the Dogs* projects, especially in support of the intervention for the neediest animals in Ukraine, we would very much like to thank:

**A Kinder World Foundation**

**Ahimsa Foundation**

**Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)**

**Arukah Animal International**

**Boho Beautiful**

**Janis Rosenthal and Jeff Rinkoff**

**Leslie L. Alexander Foundation**

**Olsen Animal Trust (OAT)**

**SummerLee Foundation**

**Vets Beyond Borders Denmark**

**Wellbeing International**



2023 remained an **abnormal year**, due to the **lingering effects of the donations made for Ukraine** and the substantial financial commitment that ensued for our Foundation in assisting that country. The significant increase in revenues in 2022 and 2023 (compared to 2021) did not strategically help to consolidate the Foundation, given that these funds were principally linked to the emergency situation. When comparing this year's main indicators with those of 2022, **a revenue decrease of 20% was unavoidable** and this situation is set to continue into 2024, when it is likely that the funds for Ukraine will be exhausted.

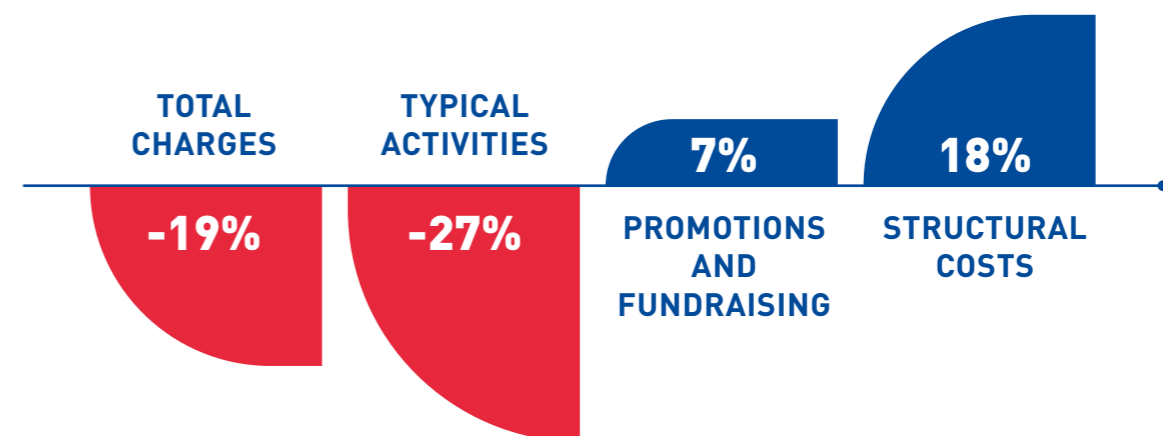
In 2023, fundraising expenses increased by 7%. This activity actually requires **greater investments** in order to make our projects more sustainable and help grow the organization organically. The absence of "extraordinary" income sources (such as bequests, insurance policies, etc.) has meant that we have not been able to **invest in strengthening our base of regular donors**, which is crucial for the sustainability of non-profit organizations.

This financial report closes showing a **small operating surplus**.

**Breakdown of charges: comparison of the last three years**

	2023	2022	2021
<b>Total charges</b>	<b>€ 2,661,515</b>	3,285,823 €	€ 1,676,277
<b>Typical activities</b>	<b>€ 1,849,033 69%</b>	2,549,858 € 78%	€ 1,198,770 72%
<b>Promotions and Fundraising</b>	<b>€ 551,954 21%</b>	515,959 € 16%	€ 324,915 19%
<b>Structural costs</b>	<b>€ 260,528 10%</b>	220,006 € 7%	€ 152,895 9%

**Variation 2023 Vs 2022**







# Balance Sheet Romania

In 2023, we faced a series of unique financial challenges. On the positive side, we received some substantial donations from multi-national corporations late in the year, which provided significant assistance. **From a revenue perspective, we remained roughly at the same level compared to 2022**, with a slight increase of 0.7%. In

terms of costs, however, our **total expenses increased sharply by 16.5% compared to the previous year**. Mandatory national wage increases and rising costs due to the current global economic context represented a real challenge for our shelter's operations in Romania.

INCOME 2023	RON	EUR
Save the Dogs Italy	RON 7,422,621	€ 1,508,663
Individuals	RON 53,147	€ 10,802
Legal entities	RON 422,876	€ 85,950
Other organizations (for Ukraine)	RON 1,768,263	€ 359,403
Other income (discounts, in-kind donations)	RON 489,195	€ 99,430
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>RON 10,156,102</b>	<b>€ 2,064,248</b>

EXPENDITURES 2023	RON	EUR
Administration	RON 1,267,921	€ 258,759
Clinic	RON 2,878,927	€ 587,536
Shelter for cats and dogs	RON 910,210	€ 185,757
Equines	RON 873,006	€ 178,164
International adoptions	RON 847,432	€ 172,945
Ukraine	RON 3,857,843	€ 787,315
'Urme de bucurie' promotion	RON 73,068	€ 14,912
Vieți conectate ("Connecting Lives")	RON 12,818	€ 2,616
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>RON 10,721,225</b>	<b>€ 2,188,005</b>



# Final Reflections

The world around us is changing at an impressive speed, and the **animal protection sector** is inevitably experiencing the **effects of a deeply and rapidly evolving society**.

We are convinced that only an organization that is outward-looking and capable of understanding this evolving world can take **full advantage** of all the opportunities offered by technology and adapt its projects to the emerging scenarios.

While waiting for scientific advancements to provide alternatives to surgical sterilization (an innovation that will eventually revolutionize the fight against canine and feline overpopulation worldwide), **artificial intelligence** could well offer new, innovative resources to facilitate our work. AI applications in fundraising and veterinary medicine could bring significant benefits, provided that appropriate usage guidelines and a strict ethical code are established.

The main concerns affecting us as we close 2023 – and look towards the future – had already emerged at the end of 2022 and have merely been confirmed over the course of this past year.

The disintermediation caused by social media, nearby conflicts, and the economic crisis taking place on our continent have all led to an **oversaturation of the “adoption market” and a collapse in foster care**, bringing shelters like *Footprints of Joy* to their knees right across Europe. Given the unsuccessful efforts to find new foreign partners for our beloved animals, the only viable future action will be to **intensify the search for adoptive families in Romania**. We are fully aware of the cultural limitations that will make this path extremely challenging and likely restricted to the larger cities.

**Second major theme: sustainability.** Rising inflation and overall price increases are making our projects increasingly difficult to finance. For this reason, all routine and extraordinary maintenance work scheduled for 2023 at our center in Romania had to be postponed to 2024, in the hope of securing the necessary resources to carry them out. Increasing fundraising efforts in

Romania will be essential if we are to maintain the current high standards at our center and the results achieved so far.

Additionally, we face **ongoing challenges in hiring specialized staff** in both Italy and Romania. Offering competitive salaries compared to the profit sector or other organizations is becoming increasingly difficult, with various job vacancies remaining unfilled for months in both countries. **The lack of tax relief on labor costs for the non-profit sector** further exacerbates this situation, compelling our teams in Italy and Romania to **operate at highly demanding levels to ensure proper management of all activities**. The risk of burnout is very high, particularly among senior staff, which is consequentially leading to increased turnover.

These **profoundly worrying concerns** highlight the need for us to develop a **multi-year strategic plan** in order to allow us to identify high-risk areas, analyze our strengths and weaknesses, and redefine our priorities.

Given the intensity of our workload, it will not be easy to make time for this, but we are committed to starting this process in 2024 and completing it by 2025, striving to identify shared moments of reflection between the Board of Directors and the team.

2025 will also mark the **20th anniversary of Save the Dogs in Italy**, and we hope to celebrate this milestone with both the Italian and Romanian teams in Cernavoda, together with all the animals residing at *Footprints of Joy*. The strength and energy to continue our mission comes directly from these animals, along with the trust and esteemed support of all those who care about us: our precious donors.

Sara Turetta



**Thank you!**





# Our work with the animals that need us most



**FOUNDATION SAVE THE DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS ETS**

via Pareto 36 | 20156 Milano - Italia  
T. +39 02 39445900 | F. +39 02 30133300

C.F. 97394230151 | IBAN IT48A0760101600000062998497