

Press Release: Global Animal Law Project

The GAL Project sets out to give animals a better life through the law

Zurich, November 2014 | The Global Animal Law (GAL) Project, an initiative that focuses on using the law to create a better world for animals, is now online at www.globalanimallaw.org.

The GAL Project is the brainchild of the Swiss lawyer Antoine F. Goetschel (President) and the French lawyer Sabine Brels (Manager). This project is aiming to unite all animal lawyers and animal lovers, to bring their ideas together for the benefit of all the animals globally.

One major feature of the GAL website is the Matrix. It's a new framework that contains numerous proposals for a better treatment of animals through the law. Everyone is invited to submit new suggestions. These can range from realistic to "utopian" ideas (or recommended changes that may seem far-fetched in today's world, but can become normality in due course). Simply working through the Matrix can be beneficial for all, as it contains a wealth of experience in the fields of law making, implementation, lobbying and scientific knowledge. At every level (local, district, national, regional and universal), 4 goals are identified in order to: *Adopt* new legislation, *Improve* current legislation, *Enforce* legislation better and *Educate* on animal legislation.

A major innovation of this website is the first exhaustive, actual and reliable database on animal legislation worldwide. Called the Animal Welfare Legislation Database (AWLD), it has been realized by the French lawyer and co-creator of the GAL Project, Sabine Brels. Direct links to the official texts of national animal laws are provided for almost one hundred different countries from around the world, as well as all the listing of European, international and universal instruments dealing with animal welfare.

The President Antoine Goetschel and Manager Sabine Brels, are assisted for peer-reviewing the most relevant proposals from contributors by the Steering Committee, composed of influential animal law experts from around the world: Birgitta Wahlberg (Finland), Tom Kelch (US), Jean-Marc Neumann (France) and Alex Bruce (Australia). A number of prominent persons are also supporting the GAL Project, including the Australian philosopher Peter Singer, the President of the Nonhuman Rights Project Steven Wise, the biologist Professor Marc Bekoff, and the Buddhist author Matthieu Ricard.

The GAL project is calling for animal lovers to support this project worldwide, in every way they can. Apart from using the matrix proposals and suggesting others, animal lawyers – from students to professors – can pool their knowledge in joining the GAL expert group. Others can make financial donations themselves, or assist in the collection of funds for the project and receive a commission for their help.

In sum, the GAL Project is a constructive innovation as it stands for a modern approach and new attitude towards animals in the law and in society worldwide.

About Antoine F. Goetschel

Antoine F. Goetschel is a Swiss lawyer and a consultant of international animal law and animal ethics. His work and research is mainly related to animal law and animal ethics at local, national and international level. He studied at the Faculty of Law & Political Science at the University of Zurich. In 1986, he received the title of Attorney at Law. After writing two scientific books on animal rights and welfare, he graduated in 1989 as a Doctor of Law (J.D.) from the University of Zurich with a thesis on animal welfare and basic rights. He has dedicated his career to animal issues in national/international law and ethical practice, and works as a lecturer at the Law Department of the University of Zurich. From 2007 to 2010, he was the official animal lawyer for the canton of Zurich – the only position of its kind throughout the world. He has been involved in providing better legal protection to humans, animals and the environment for thirty years. His views have been published in various books and articles worldwide.

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About Sabine Brels

Sabine Brels is a French lawyer with a specific background in international animal law. Following her first degree in ecology from Cadiz University, she graduated with a law degree in her home city of Montpellier. She then completed her LL.M (Masters in International Environmental Law) at Laval University in Canada where she is currently finishing her J.D. (Doctorate in International Animal Law). Sabine has also worked as a legal consultant for intergovernmental organizations (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP), and the Ramsar Convention), non-governmental organizations (WWF International) and research centers (CIRAD for the IMoSEB Project, and the University of California Berkeley for the Moorea Biocode Project).

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