

PAVING THE WAY FOR 30 MILLION OF FRIENDS' LEGAL PERSONHOODS

Marine Lercier and Gabriela Chalkia*



We had the privilege of completing our internship with the amazing French NGO, “Foundation 30 millions d’Amis” (<http://www.30millionsdamis.fr/>). Having started off as a famous television program, it developed into a national web for rescuing animals by funding and opening its own shelters and relying on teams of volunteers to investigate, report and take care of the animals. Thanks to donors and sponsors across the country, they regularly launch campaigns raising awareness on animal welfare and different issues such as circuses, bullfighting and stray animals, in particular they sensitised French society to the harsh realities of animal abandonment.

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But one of their biggest achievements has been the launching of the manifesto signed by 24 French intellectuals and petitions signed by 775,000 French citizens to bring about the end of archaic legal view of animals as things that led to the revolutionary reform of the Civil Code in 2015, which recognised all animals as sentient beings. Since then animals are waiting for the next step; to be recognised as legal persons before the law and redefine their status. Having always been legally classed as property, it is about time we question the adequacy of this concept to describe our relationship with animals. Other legal constructions could award them better protection.

In this time of tremendous change, we were given the opportunity to propose a legislative amendment to the French Civil Code, to change the legal status of animals, which the organisation has been striving to achieve for some years. . We worked together with the help of the organisation's managing director, who provided us with useful materials to feed our thoughts and guidance to be able to elaborate the basis of a new legal regime for animals. We also had the opportunity to see another side of the company when we sat in on a meeting with their advertising team who presented us with different posters for the upcoming press release to promote the new animal law degree at the partnering University of Limoges.

Everyone in the company was very friendly and made us feel welcome. We got to meet some interesting people and learned a lot within these enriching 3 weeks. We admire all the work the organisation does for animals; we thoroughly enjoyed our time there and feel very lucky to have been able to closely participate on this promising project.