

Asturias hosted the first Course of Animal Law at the Oviedo Bar Association

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Abstract

On 14 June, at its headquarters in Asturias, the Illustrious Bar Association of Oviedo gave its first Course of Animal Law, with six experts on the subject as teachers and over a hundred assistants. Subjects such as the evolution of Animal Law, its criminal and administrative branches, requesting precautionary measures and the final modifications that affect the subject, were key to the course that ended with overall success.

Keywords: animal law, criminal animal law, course on animal law, legal status of animals, sanctioning administrative animal right

Resumen - *Asturias acogió el I curso de Derecho Animal en el Colegio de Abogados de Oviedo*

El Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Oviedo, en Asturias, impartió, el pasado 14 de junio en su sede, el I Curso de Derecho Animal con seis expertos en la materia como docentes y más de un centenar de asistentes. Materias como la evolución del Derecho Animal, sus ramas penal y administrativa, las medidas cautelares a solicitar y las últimas modificaciones que afectan a la materia fueron objeto del curso, que finalizó con un éxito total.

Palabras clave: derecho animal, formación, derecho animal penal, estatuto jurídico de los animales, derecho animal administrativo sancionador, curso de derecho animal

Highlighting the dedicated work of the members of the Animal Law Commission and in the presence of almost a hundred students, Mr. Ignacio Cuesta Areces -Head of the Oviedo's Bar Association -, flanked by Mr. Pedro Paulino Sánchez Sánchez -Coordinator of the Center for ICAO Studies - and by Doña Nuria Menéndez de Llano Rodríguez - on behalf of the Animal Law Commission -, inaugurated the 1st Course on Animal Law that was held last 14th of June at the Oviedo's Bar Association, Asturias.

The specialty of the subject matter of the course as well as the absolute novelty of its teaching in the territory of the Principality of Asturias, meant that the newly opened training room of the Oviedo's Bar Association was filled with expectant, interested and attentive attendees. Among the audience were not only various professionals from the world of law, but also there was the presence of biologists, veterinarians, philosophers, agents of authority, members of SEPRONA and various animal protection associations.



Inauguration of the 1st Course on Animal Law at the Oviedo Bar Association

The Animal Law Commission of Oviedo's Bar Association was created in 2017 at the initiative of a group of lawyers interested in the field, ready to enforce all the objectives proposed in its foundation. Thus, the aforementioned Commission does not only consider the study of the Animal Law, but also strives to promote institutional agreements on the matter, promotes the legal reforms necessary for the evolution of Animal Law in Spain, but rather Commits to disseminate and train in Animal Law. Within this last objective arises the initiative to offer the first Animal Law Course addressed to both collegiate and anyone who is interested in learning more about the rules that regulate the current status of animals.



Members of the Animal Law Commission of the Oviedo's Bar Association after teaching the 1st Course on Animal Law. From left to right: Mr. Benito Aláez Corral, Ms. María Jesús García Gutiérrez, Ms. Nuria Menéndez de Llano Rodríguez, Ms. Carmen Alegre Jiménez

Ms. Alicia Paredes Ramos¹ was in charge of opening the course with her first presentation as an introduction to Animal Law, dedicated to laying the foundations of the origin of Animal Law, as well as the legislative evolution that gives rise to the Animal Law in force in Spain. Moreover, she was in charge of analyzing the concepts of animal welfare and animal sentience as principles and questions prior to the more detailed study of the substantive Animal Law.

In the second place, Mr. Benito Aláez Corral², in charge of imparting Criminal Animal Law, detailed the classification of the crimes of animal abuse, animal sexual exploitation and animal abandonment as they appear in the Spanish Criminal Code. He also integrated in his explanation the filing of a criminal complaint for the commission of the aforementioned crimes.

To close the morning session, Ms. Nuria Menéndez de Llano Rodríguez³ focused her

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² Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Oviedo, professor and university researcher since 1991, first at the University of Bochum (Germany) until 1993 and since then at the University of Oviedo, doctor of Law from the University of Oviedo since 1999, has been Francisco Tomás y Valiente National Award for Constitutional Studies 2003 and Deputy Magistrate of the Provincial Court of Asturias and the Superior Court of Justice of Asturias, he is also a member of the Animal Law Commission of the Oviedo's Bar Association, co-founder of the Observatory of Animal Justice and Defense and advisor from the Non Human Right's Project.

³ Lawyer of the Bar Association of Oviedo, PhD student in Law in the Department of Public Law of the University of Oviedo, predoctoral collaborator of the research group on the Legal Status of Animals of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, member of the Editorial Board of the Animal Law Magazine of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, member of the Animal Law Commission of the Oviedo's Bar Association, director of the Observatory of Justice and Animal Defense since 2012 and associate

presentation on updating the attendees of the main developments in Animal Law that form the new regulatory framework that we must follow after implementing the European Convention for the protection of pet animals. The update of the civil legal status of animals (as it implies the modification of the Civil Code, the Mortgage Law and the Law of Civil Procedure), after a detailed exposition of the path that involved the legal consideration that animals are not things, it left time for an advance in the proposal for reforms in criminal matters that are in process at present time.

Starting the afternoon session, Mrs. María Jesús García Gutiérrez⁴ delved into the administrative-sanctioning matter with special emphasis on the regulation of animals considered potentially dangerous, as well as the national and regional regulation of the Principality of Asturias of shows with animals, from circuses to private parties where animals are used as an attraction for the event.

Continuing with the administrative-sanctioning Law, Ms. Jhésica Álvarez González⁵ presented the second part of the topic, focusing now on the regulation of the Principality of Asturias on tenure, protection and defense of animals, analyzing the current regulations in the province as well as in their multiple municipalities. To complete the block, a brief reference was made to the steps to follow in order to file a complaint for breach of the aforementioned administrative regulations.

Lastly, and thus closing the course, Mr. Pedro Rivas Sánchez-Arjona⁶ dedicated his presentation in full to the precautionary measures, both those that can be requested in a criminal procedure, as well as one administrative-sanctioning. Where, how and when to apply were some of the issues that were resolved in this paper.

Once the multiple and undoubtedly interesting questions of the assistants were resolved by the teachers, a warm general applause ended a day in which we can highlight, at least, three fundamental aspects: firstly, the training in Animal Law is not only a pending task of our institutions and an essential value for our society, but it is a subject with an increasingly higher demand, which grows with the feeling of society; secondly, precisely this feeling and this awareness for animals base the reforms in process and predict a future for the Animal Law of our country in constant growth and improvement, being increasingly respectful and aware of the animals with which we share the planet in which we live; and lastly but not least, Animal Law exists, and although its needs for updating are evident in some aspects, today it offers mechanisms and appropriate measures for the fight against animal abuse and exploitation. We only need to know them and put them into operation in the most efficient way possible. For us, but also - and above all - for them.

member of the Oxford Center for Animal Ethics.

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