



## International Federation of Rottweilerfriends

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Ladies, Gentlemen, Members of the French Parliament,

To all who this concerns,,

We have taken knowledge of a legislative initiative in France to restrict or even ban defensive work in dog sport.

I am particularly surprised by this and I sincerely hope that we will succeed in changing the way the initiator is concerned.

In fact, much of my surprise is based on the paradox that such a restriction would be detrimental to the well-being of the dog and would therefore go beyond its purpose.

No animal is as domesticated as the dog. There are more than 300 recognized dog breeds and each breed has been created and defined according to its utility. This applies to pet dogs as well as hunting dogs and utility dogs.

The creation and preservation of these breeds required the thoughtful selection of breeding animals for the desired characteristics, which is only possible by verifying their presence and quality. In breeding, one can only highlight what one knows otherwise it will be lost and to know, one has to measure or test.

Regarding the characteristics of the utility dog, we have a perfect instrument for this: canine sport and I personally refer mainly (in respect of other canine sports programs) to the program of the FCI which is internationally recognized: IGP.

It is not a "biting program" or a program in which aggression has its place. On the contrary, every dog sports enthusiast will confirm that with an aggressive animal nothing can be done - aggression is usually based on fear - and such a dog will never have a place in the sport.

In fact, before the dog is allowed to participate in an IGP competition, it must first pass a social behaviour test and each competition also includes a character test in which the judge verifies the social nature of the dog.

The IGP is a sports program close to the original characteristics defined and preserved by the canine utility breeds, but with absolute respect for what is socially acceptable and necessary!

It is not a matter of teaching or letting the dog "bite", quite the contrary.

The program tests the dog against the characteristics of the breed and in general of the utility dog : high self-confidence, high manageability and a clear "will to please" are tested in the obedience part. Intelligence, natural drives and endurance are tested during the tracking. During the defensive work is then again tested: natural drives, taxability, resilience and courage, but above all the balance of the dog.

There is no aggression! Although there is a strong dominant reaction but this always and necessarily with a lot of self-control, discipline, obedience and balance to allow an immediate change of drives in the face of a situation that is no longer imminent. A lack of self-control and/or a lack of balanced reactions necessarily leads to the exclusion of competition, sport and breeding.

Also, keep in mind that the IGP program does not test dogs the way police and military services do. After all, training and purpose are purely sporty and are not aimed at effective deployment in a police or comparable setting. The sport defense of the dog is based specifically and solely on prey drive and on an object (the sleeve and no other part of the assistant's equipment, even under penalty of immediate disqualification) and certainly not on the person!<sup>1</sup>

The use of dog breeds in dog sport is therefore necessary not only to preserve these breeds, but it is also precisely this commitment that ensures that natural impulses are channelled and which proves precisely that the dog is socially responsible in all circumstances and deserves its place in human society.

In canine sports, as a judge, I come into very close contact with dozens, even hundreds of dogs that I have never met before and for which I do not notice any undesirable or unacceptable behavior.

A proposal to ban such tests can therefore only be based on a misunderstanding and I must advise the members of the legislator concerned to witness the training of the sports dog and its result: a dog which turns out to be a true friend of man, in all circumstances and which does much better than a dog without education.

The World Federation of Rottweiler Clubs (IFR) will organize in France in the following years several activities (world exhibition and IGP World Championship) in which this will be demonstrated and very strongly stressed: the complete Rottweiler that meets these sporting criteria is a healthy, confident and balanced dog: a dog that deserves its place in our human society!

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<sup>1</sup> The sleeve is a loose object that can be given to the dog as a reward and is considered by him as an object to play with.

A sports dog is also better than others able to tell the difference between what is an imminent situation and what is not an imminent situation, its reactions are not guided by fear or aggression, but by its intelligence and balanced orientation.

The use of these breeds in canine sport touches the animal at the heart of their being, their existence and their physical and mental health. This is why some breeds have been created and the practice of canine sport is a pleasure, gives particular satisfaction to dog and handler and prevents unwanted frustrations or reactions.

It is not without reason that sports defence work is part of many breeding aptitude tests: it guarantees that the dog meets the standard of the breed and for the Rottweiler:

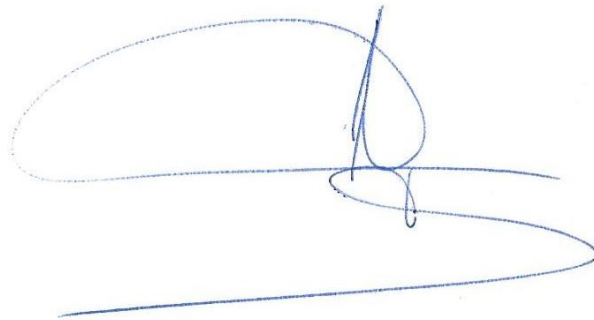
*“The Rottweiler is goodnatured, placid in basic disposition, very devoted, obedient, biddable and eager to work. His appearance is natural and rustic, his behaviour self-assured, steady and fearless. He reacts to his surroundings with great alertness and at the same time eventempered.”*

I sincerely hope, therefore, that you will be persuaded to ensure that this legislative initiative is abandoned. The alternative is too bad: the disappearance of several breeds and/or letting them undergo training that does not respect the nature of these dogs and that will lead to unwanted frustrations.

With the highest esteem,

Dirk Vandecasteele

President of the International Federation of Rottweilerfriends (IFR) )

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, sweeping loop on the left side, followed by a vertical stroke that loops back down and then a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.