



## International Workshop

### “A Dog Loving Society: Best Practices and Perspectives”

Vilnius, Lithuania

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#### Don't Blame the Dog – the City Campaign

Annika Klang, Sweden

**Annika Klang** representing the Swedish Kennel Club (SKC) delivered a presentation on the city campaign entitled „Don't Blame the Dog“. The speaker started by the origins of the campaign with citizen complaints about the dogs and their owners, as well we business and politicians call for regulations to combat dog attacks being in the background. One could feel a greater tendency in fear of and insecurity towards dogs in the society.

Though facing a growing intolerance of dogs in the society, dog owners wanted to be treated with understanding and respect. To represent the interests of its members, the SKC undertook initiative aimed at improving the situation as a result of which a project “Don't Blame the Dog” was developed in 2013. Since SKC held the view that these are problems of people rather than their dogs, the aims of the campaign were to get more responsible dog owners and to show that the SKC is a socially responsible organization proactively working for all dogs and dog owners. An overall objective of the campaign was to minimize restrictions and prohibitions for dog owners while the main message for dog owners was responsible ownership and proper conduct in the society as they are the best ambassadors of them and their dogs, and this responsibility is beneficial to all parties.

A definite media plan was drawn up and various communication channels were kept open, including regional dog clubs, special magazines for dog breeders, newspapers, websites and social media. Series of commercials was developed and a list of 12 smart rules for dog owners was made and promoted. There were banners made for the websites, lots of information on the project website and social media, stands and free printed materials at the regional clubs and at the train station. All these activities were concluded by celebrating the Dog Day on 13 April, which attracted plenty of people and featured a variety of involving activities including quizzes, free veterinarian advice, dog breed presentations, etc. All the activities carried out within the frames of the campaign conveyed the main message – a proper dog owners conduct leads to fewer restrictions.

