10 (2019): A Commemorative Volume

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Abstract

The dA. Derecho Animal (Forum of Animal Law Studies) journal celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. We have dedicated volume ten of the journal to the commemoration of an initiative that has profoundly and persistently changed the reader’s perception of other living beings with which we share the world: animals. We are the first journal in our country to deal with the legal treatment of animals from an interdisciplinary and global perspective. Also this year, the journal has reunited experts from various disciplines: jurists, veterinarians, biologists, ethologists, philosophers, journalists and other professionals. They are authors that belong to institutions and countries throughout the world, which adds a pinch of cultural cosmopolitism to the journal.

Key words: Animals and Law; new legal field; interdisciplinary and global vocation; investigation; academic debate; mistreatment; legal status of animals; lawyers; veterinarians; biologists; exchange of knowledge.

Resumen - 10 (2019) : un volumen conmemorativo

La revista dA. Derecho Animal (Forum of Animal Law Studies) ha celebrado este año su décimo aniversario. Hemos dedicado el volumen 10 de la revista a la conmemoración de una iniciativa, que ha cambiado profunda y duraderamente la percepción que los lectores tienen de otros seres vivos con los que compartimos el mundo: los animales. Somos la primera revista de nuestro país, que se ha ocupado del tratamiento jurídico de los animales, desde una perspectiva interdisciplinaria y global. También este año, la revista ha reunido a expertos de varias disciplinas: juristas, veterinarios, biólogos, etólogos, filósofos, periodistas y otros profesionales. Son autores que pertenecen a instituciones y países de todo el mundo, lo que añade una pizca de cosmopolitismo cultural a la revista.

Palabras clave: Animales y Derecho; nuevo campo jurídico; vocación interdisciplinar y global; investigación; debate académico; maltrato; estatuto jurídico de los animales; abogados; veterinarios; biólogos; intercambio de conocimientos.
As our readers probably already know, the dA. Derecho Animal (Forum of Animal Law Studies)1 journal celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. I founded it myself in 2009 in order to give a voice to certain forgotten living beings: animals. When I started to work in this emerging field of law, the expression “Animal Law” was not accepted in the academic realm, because it was novel and seemed strange. It was not easy to start this project, but it was worth it. In effect, I confirmed that the attitude of lots of people towards animals has been changing with the passing of time. Little by little, the expression “Animal Law” is becoming a reference for calling this new legal field by a name that encompasses all the complexity of the modern world. For this reason, from the first moment, I decided to look further than the Law Faculty to involve colleagues from other Faculties of the UAB, and from other universities in Spain and abroad.2

In this volume, commemorative of our first ten years, we reproduced an old academic custom, typical of the most recognised journals. Specifically, in each of the four volumes we published in 2019, we incorporated some members of our distinguished Advisory Council as Guest Members, which turned out brilliantly and highly satisfactory: David Fave, State University of Michigan (vol.10/1), Alex Bruce, Australian National University (vol 10/2), Riccardo Cardilli, Università di Roma “Tor Vergata”, Martí Pumarola i Batlle, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (vol 10/3) and Anne Peters, Max-Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law. Heidelberg (vol 10/4).

We have celebrated the tenth year of life for our journal that follows this interdisciplinary and global vocation. Also this year, the journal has reunited experts from various disciplines: jurists, veterinarians, biologists, ethologists, philosophers, journalists and other professionals. They are authors that belong to institutions and countries throughout the world, which adds a pinch of cultural cosmopolitanism to the journal. Through external peer evaluation, we exert ourselves to ensure the quality of what we publish. The dialogue between authors and editors has always been fruitful for advances in investigation: we have both attended and embodied genuine debate on external evaluations, which, for precisely this reason, has provided us with great intellectual wealth. It has all happened within the spirit of genuine respect for the freedom and labour of each investigator, which, it must be said, can sometimes be complicated; questions are not as clear and reliable as one would think, and there are great nuances between the black and white of a statement. This is the essence of academic debate!

This commemorative volume is dedicated to certain relevant questions: the use, abuse and legal status of animals. The main topic that runs through and unifies it is what position animals should have in the legal world. After many years of investigation, I am convinced of the urgency and need to adopt legislative reforms that bear in mind the interests of animals themselves, who are not “things”, but living beings, sentient beings, as recognised and affirmed by science. A simple statutory change correctly positioning them according to law, awarding them a fair position in line with the law (jus), could help to advance the work of those who act to protect them from mistreatment and change or improve their condition within our families and within society.3

While Austria, Germany and Switzerland led the movement that has contributed towards improving the legal condition of animals,4 the two most relevant advances of this decade have been the modernisation of the French (2015)5 and Portuguese (2016)6 Civil Codes, which have changed the legal position of animals, who belonged to the category of things in property – indistinguishable from inert things until this point – to be recognised as sentient beings. These reforms are coherent with art. 13 of the TFEU,7 which, despite its limitations, obliges Member States of the European Union to incorporate the principles of animal sentience into their legal frameworks, based on scientific evidence that implies a revision of the principle of property, which, despite what one might think, has never been static or unmovable across the centuries, but flexible and adaptable to social needs.

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1 Promoted by ICALP (International Center for Animal Law Studies), it is an OJS journal, with indexed peer review (LATINDEX, DOAJ, Carhus Plus, Mirar, JournalTOCS, Redib, Dialnet, CBUC, DDD, Rebiun, Worldcat) : https://revistes.uab.cat/da/index
3 This volume has also permitted me to call attention to the reader regarding the spectacles in which animals can suffer and die. For this reason it is important to strengthen investigation of this topic in countries where animal mistreatment continues to be practiced as entertainment. Vid. GIMÉNEZ-CAENDELA, M., Culture and Animal Mistreatment, dA. Derecho Animal (Forum of Animal Law Studies) 10/3 (2019) 7-14. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/da.453
I’ve named this movement the “de-objectification” of animals, which the ruling on 27th May 2019 of the Court of First Instance no 9 of Valladolid had in mind for the first time, as is mentioned in this very volume. Even though in our system the work of judges cannot substitute that of the legislator, it is, however, worth recognising and publicising the efforts of lawyers and judges to resolve problems of marital crises and their effect on companion animals, and for advancing the application of the law for the benefit of these animals. For this reason, it is also necessary to modify the Spanish Civil Code as soon as possible. With this change, we will also have to account for aspects of International Private Law, as conflicts between laws could arise.

In this sense, one must not forget the legislative proposal that tried to change the consideration of animals in our Civil Code to recognise them as “sentient beings endowed with sensibilities” instead of as things. This was unanimously approved by the Congress of Deputies (2017-2019), but the reform was interrupted by the calling of General Elections on 28th April 2019, which continues to be essential, despite all the uncertainties that arise from the new political scene.

This interruption does not change the analysis on the need to reconsider the notion of legal person and its possible extension to animals; a very current question that is being discussed in international academic fora and is also, I am happy to say, in consonance with my initial training as a Romanist. In this regard, it is interesting to discover the form in which roman jurists developed reasoning on the human being and on animals, which leads us to reflect on the coming together of these ancient jurists and the loss of property of captured wild animals, as well as of enslaved captives of war.

The discussion on the status of animals continues to be present in other legal systems as well. In the United States, state legislations are changing, clearing a path for the search for the recognition of rights for companion animals. In Poland, pioneering animal protection regulations have been adopted, but they lack the jurisprudence analogously applies the regulations for children to establish shared custody of pets in the case of ending non-conjugal cohabitation. In effect, despite the adoption of laws pioneered in criminal and administrative areas, the Italian Civil Code continues to consider animals as moveable property, which produces inconsistencies in the system. For this reason, it would be necessary to reform it bearing in mind animal subjectivity already present in other laws. In France the Civil Code is still difficult to understand, even though it was modified in 2015. In 2018 a non-official Animal Code (“code de l’Animal”) was published as a tool for clarifying the plethora of legislation related to animals in France. Furthermore, a group of academics, led by the University of Toulon, is contributing towards building a new concept of the animal as a nonhuman person. In Mexico, the concepts of legal person and subject of rights
are being though over to see whether the latter is more appropriate for awarding rights to animals. This commemorative volume has published commentaries on problems that can arise in a multicultural society and that are related with the slaughter of animals without stunning, in accordance with the requirements of certain religious traditions. In the countries where they establish stunning before slaughter and, at the same time, protection of religious freedom, there exists a conflict between legislations. The decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European union demonstrate the complexity of these questions. On this topic, volume 10 (2019) of the journal also publishes two excellent case commentaries. The first refers to the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union on 29 May 2018 (Case C-426/16). According to European Union legislation, religious slaughter without stunning the animal can only be carried out in authorised slaughterhouses. In the case under examination, the legislation did not infringe religious liberty and did not discriminate against anybody, although other observations may be made in terms of the rights of religious minorities and animal welfare. The second commentary refers to the ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union of 26th February 2019 (Case C-497/17) which held that the ecological label of the EU must not be used for the meat of animals slaughtered without prior stunning, given that it does not guarantee that it in any way reduces the suffering of the animals.

We have seen that a inconsistency can exist between the treatment of the same animals destined for different human uses. This is the case with celaphopods, which are considered sentient beings by Directive 2010/63/EU on experimentation. This Directive was transposed into Spanish law by Royal Decree 53/2013, recently modified by Royal Decreto 1386/2018. Despite the consideration of sentience for experimentation, the same level of protection is not afforded to these animals in the field of human consumption. The debate is also present in other systems. In 2017 the Italian Supreme Court ruled that keeping lobsters on ice is mistreatment. In 2018, Switzerland prohibited cruelty towards crustaceans, introducing the obligation of stunning them before boiling them.

Animals are used for veterinary education. For this reason, the journal has published the legal and ethical viewpoints adopted by professors and students of the UAB, as well as from other investigation centres elsewhere. Concerned for the welfare of animals, Dr. Pumarola, Professor in the Veterinary Faculty of the UAB, proposes specific actions for improving their conditions, making particular reference to her own teaching experience.

This commemorative volume has published investigations of great scientific value: the evaluation of biological security of medical devices, with the aim of carrying out laboratory tests without animals; a study on the Australian caged rabbit meat industry and the consequent need for reform; a study on the animal welfare certification for laying hens in Brazil; an investigation on the sexual abuse of animals in Spain and Portugal - a little known topic – carried out with surveys and corroborated data; a study on the relation between domestic violence and animal mistreatment, the social plague that affects the aggressors

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they occupy and other vulnerable subjects, which can be both human beings and animals;34 the proposal for a universal definition of the phenomenon of scientific domestication;35 the proposal of a practical protocol that aims to guarantee the welfare of animals involved in activities;36 the study of a protocol by which veterinarians evaluate animal abuse.37

We have offered our readers the opportunity to find out more about other novel topics: Animal Law in South Africa;38 the welfare of animals involved in sporting competitions;39 freedom of expression and activism for animal welfare in Europe and the United States;40 the relationship between the bullfighting and patriarchy;41 recent Mexican jurisprudence on cockfighting42 and on the subject of the environment.43 We have addressed questions related to the limits on fishing to ensure the sustainable exploitation of marine resources,44 with the application of the principle of precaution on the subject of fishing,45 considering that not only endangered species deserve protection, but common species also.46

This year we will also present, as an initiative born of the Veterinary, Science and Law Faculties of the UAB, a topical dossier on the welfare of fish that includes peer-reviewed papers from the day conference organised in June 2019 in Barcelona. This is a novelty, as these animals are spoken about little in an interdisciplinary context. Although legal regulations exist, the contributions of biologists specialised in different species of fish is indispensable for applying and improving existing legislation. The dossier starts with a global focus, a legal analysis and the controversy on the fish sentience; it continues with the welfare management of fish used for experimentation, in the Barcelona Aquarium and from the perspective of an NGO; it concludes with the welfare of aquaculture, environmental enrichment and an analysis of the complexity of the question of shark and ray fishing in the northeast of the Mediterranean.47

As well as the investigative works revised by external evaluators (which, as required, constitute the
vast majority of publications), reviews of recent books and chronicles of events relevant to the field of Animal Law can also be found in this commemorative volume. With these sections we provide a service traditional of academic reviews; publicising news of scientific production in the realm of Animal Law and how it provokes discussion and the exchange of knowledge in an emerging legal subject that is already beginning to write its own story and to which we already been contributing with our own pages for ten years.

We have dedicated volume ten of the journal to the commemoration of an initiative that has profoundly and persistently changed the reader’s perception of other living beings with which we share the world: animals. We are the first journal in our country to deal with the legal treatment of animals from an interdisciplinary and global perspective. I would like to express my thanks to the Editorial Secretariat, directed with courage and professionalism by Raffaela Cersosimo and integrated by Oliver Wookrey, Nuria Menéndez de Llano and Melanie Montenegro Pérez; also to the authors that have participated in this volume; to the reviewers, for their diligent and accurate work; to the Advisory and Editorial Councils that always offer us intellectual aid and fresh motivation for moving forward; to the technical secretary, Marga Barrera, who contributes towards creating a perfect synergy between everyone; to the communication director Krizia Said Castagno, for her speed and creativity in publicising what is published in the journal; to the webmaster, Andrés Montilla, without whose dedication and experience each number would be deprived of a beautiful aesthetic, which is what we’ve been aiming for. Everyone has been a great help, with their broad knowledge, ideas and technical knowhow.

These days, cultural and moral progress incorporates animal as vulnerable beings that must be defended through the approval of better laws and the obligation of their compliance. As well as legal progress, I am convinced that this debate can help to build a more compassionate and inclusive society.

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