

## Animal welfare in Spain



Not everybody knows that animal welfare in Spain is very poor. Culture and traditions play an important role, but for example few people know that during [bullfighting](#) the animals are sometimes drugged and the eyes are treated with an irritating substance. Tourists can see numerous stray dogs and cats, but mistreatment of Galgo's, Podencos and other hunting dogs is not commonly known.

In Spain dogs are generally used for:

- Hunting small game
- Dog races
- Hare coursing
- Dog fights

Especially Galgo's and Podenco's suffer a centuries-old "tradition", of torturing and killing dogs cruelly after the hunting season (September to February).

Galguero's (hunters) and Gitano's (Roma gypsies) breed many dogs and use them for hunting, racing and coursing. One third of pups are used and the rest is dumped or killed. They live under deplorable conditions in dark holes, cages or on a chain and most of the time food consists only of a piece of bread.



*Hunting with Galgo's*



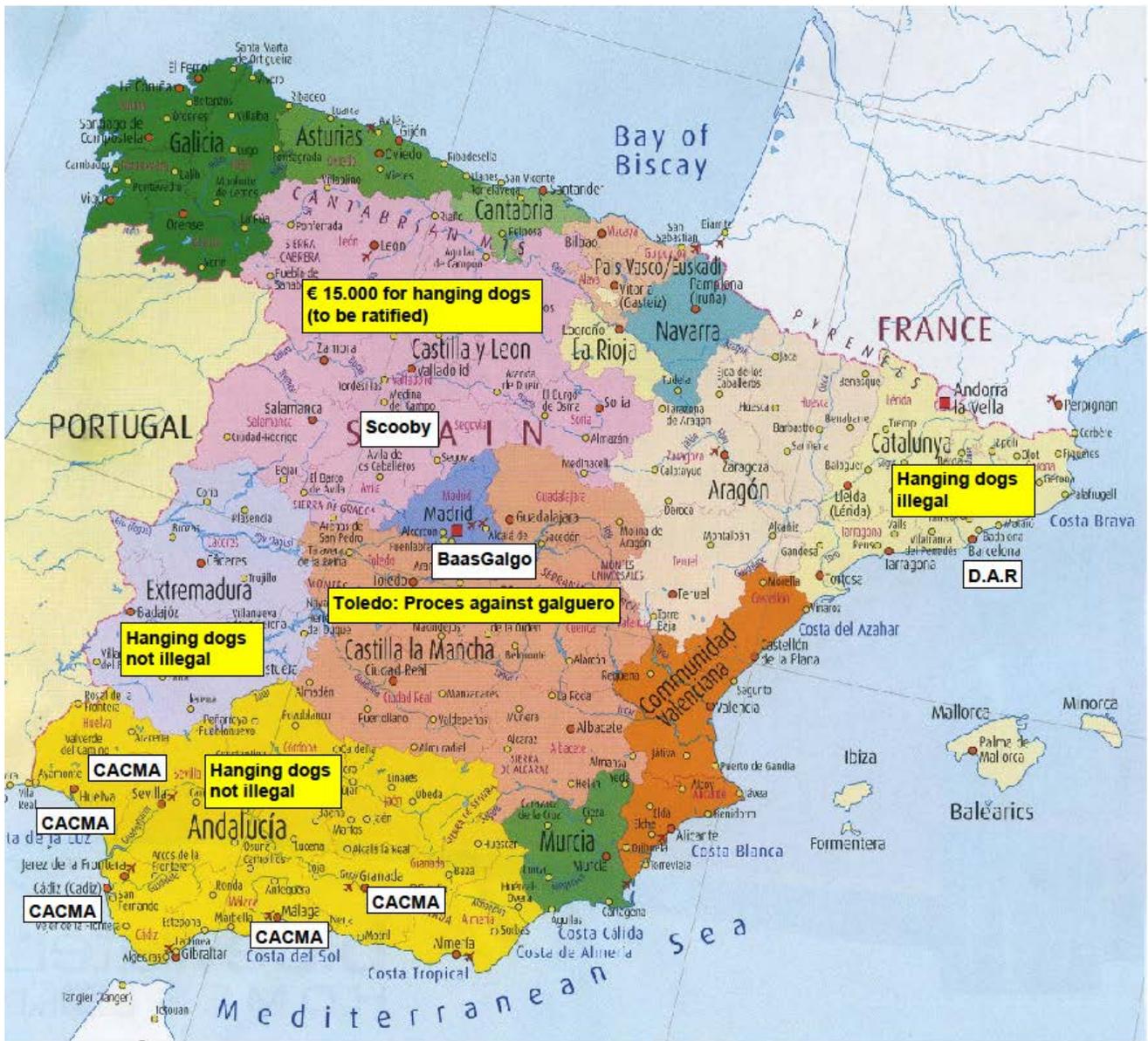
*Dog racing*

As soon as they do not perform well enough they are killed in large numbers in a "traditional way" after the hunting season, for example by hanging them with a rope around their neck from a tree, so that they can just reach the ground with their hind legs ("playing piano") and after exhaustion they die horrible and slowly. Sometimes they are poured with petrol and set on fire or dragged behind a vehicle. "The more the dog suffers, the better the next hunting dog will be". Lucky dogs are just dumped. If these street-dogs are not overrun by cars they may sometimes be caught and brought to a shelter.

Fortunately more and more hunters bring their discarded dogs to shelters, but often they end up in "killing stations", where they will be gassed in packed, narrow containers, beaten to death or injected with some kind of illegal substance, that paralyzes them so they choke to death.



*Hare coursing*



17 autonomous region's in Spain

## Legislation

There is a lot of [legislation](#) against mistreatment of animals in Spain, but compliance and control is a problem and offenders are hardly punished.

In Spain there are 17 autonomous regions and 2 autonomous cities, divided into 52 provinces.

There is national legislation, but every region has its own rules.

Spanish Penal Code Article 337 is about companion animals.

An amendment as of December 22nd 2010 makes harder punishment of animal cruelty possible in Spain.



*The fait of Galgos in Spain*

Article 337:

*"Those who maltreat with cruelty pets and unjustifiably causing death or injuries that occur causing a serious physical impairment, will be punished with imprisonment of three months to one year and disqualification special one to three years for the exercise of profession , trade or commerce which has a connection with animals."*

In fact the amendment is only replacement of the word "**cruelty**" by "**maltreatment**".

Due to this loophole offenders avoided their punishment for the worst cruelties.



In Spain the [SEPRONA](#) (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza), part of the Guardia Civil (Spanish Constabulary) is a department that functions as environmental Police that deals mainly with investigating environmental offences. Sometimes one can read [messages](#) about the Sprona handling cases of animal cruelty.

Numerous shelters take care of the many stray dogs and whwn those are full the dogs are often housed in "dog-hotels". This sounds luxurious, but it is not more than a concrete kennel that costa 6 Euros per day.

*Seprona, environmental department of Guardia Civil*

Perrera's (killing stations) should be shelters set-up, maintained and controlled by government, where dogs are killed in a "humane" manner. However, often [kennels and so-called shelters](#), that are paid, but not monitored by government. Often illegal killing methods are used, where dogs are put in bags and set on fire without prior sedation. Sometimes dogs are injected with [Mioflex](#), that paralyzes the dogs so they choke. This is all done to save money.

Killing stations are not permanently manned and poorly secured, so dogs are stolen and presumably used in dog-fights or just tortured and killed for fun. Sometimes this also happens in shelters, because there are no means for proper security.

Training methods for hunting dogs are often inhumane. They are tied in front of or behind a vehicle and forced to run. This method was illegal but in Andalusia it is now [legalised](#).

Valencia wants to amend [stray animal legislation](#) in order to privatize and commercialize the collection and housing of abandoned animals.

The [FEDENVA](#) (Animal Protection Federation in Valencia) has protested against this plan.

Success is mostly achieved by citizen initiatives. People and organizations for animal protection go out in the streets to protest. In stead of money signatures are collected. The required number of signatures to start a political cause varies per region. Only genuine signatures (not digital, with passport number) are valid. Such actions must be organized through the local citizens and not from abroad.

## Politics

Animal welfare is covered by the Spanish Minister of Environment, Rural Development and Meritime Affairs. In 2008 minister Cristina Narbona has made plans for implementation of a national law for animal welfare. In spite of [protests](#) there still is no such national law.



The [PSOE](#) (Spanish Socialist Labor Party), currently part of the government works on a national animal protection law.



The [PACMA](#) (Spanish Animal Party) has participated in the national elections on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2012.



In October 2011 European Member of Parliament Kartika Liotard has presented [Parliamentary Questions](#) to the Committee. Unfortunately the answers to these questions are very disappointing:

“The welfare of dogs is not governed by EU rules and this matter remains under the sole competence of the Member States...”

## NGO's

Besides numerous shelters there are many Non Governmental Organizations fighting for animal welfare in Spain:



Colectivo Andaluz Contra el Maltrato Animal is an association of 32 animal welfare organizations in Spain. There are five departments in Andalusia ([Cadiz](#), [Huelva](#), [Malaga](#), [Granada](#) en [Sevilla](#)). Zij zijn eveneens lid van WSPA.



Centro Legal is a non-profit organization of lawyers committed to animal welfare.

[Daliel Dorado](#) is a lawyer, who supports animal welfare organizations in the Madrid area.



Defensa Animal rescue is mainly active in the Barcelona area and endeavors to become the first [Spanish Society for the Protection of Animals](#).

[Equanimal](#) is active worldwide for animal welfare but also for stray dogs.



Foundation for Adoption, Sponsorship and Animal Defense is part of the WSPA and fights for animal welfare in Spain. On their website there is a lot of information about [national and regionale legislation](#).

[Huellas Cantabria](#) is active in Cantabria (North of Spain)

## [Noalmaltratoanimal](#)

Iniciativa Popular para Cambiar el Código Penal endeavors to:

- Improve legislation in the Spanish Penal Code concerning animal abuse
- Have Spain sign the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals ([CETS 125](#))

On their website many [contacts](#) of animal protection societies can be found.

[Scooby Medina](#) is one of the largest shelters in Spain an also educational center.

Together with WSPA they have conducted an extensive [investigation](#) about the abuse of Galgos back in 2002.



[WSPA](#) has offices all over the World.



[Yoquiero Galgos](#) focuses especially on Galgo's

## Famous Spaniards

In Spain several [celebrities](#) who commit themselves to animal welfare.

[Mariano Alameda](#) (actor)

[Sandra Barneda](#) (journalist/TV host)

[Alexandra Jiménez](#) (actress)

[Rocío Madrid](#) (actress/TV host)

[Monica Naranjo](#) (singer)

[Malu](#) (singer)

