

EMBRACE A DIVERSITY OF IDEAS.

Anaële Genet, Marine Lercier, Sophie Peutrill (*)

Firstly, it is an honor to have the opportunity to speak in front of all of you. We are not only speaking to you today as students on this masters, but as individual members of a global animal protection movement.

We would like to thank Marita for giving us this amazing opportunity to participate and involving us in research and publication, and fundamentally for making this masters possible.

And of course thank you to Begoña for being hardworking and for always answering our questions or worries, for always being available, patient and understanding.

Thank you to the cameraman for recording this extraordinary adventure. We hope you've been inspired!

Thanks also to the UAB for hosting us and being a platform for animal law in the world.

Thanks to the professors for sharing with us their lifelong work and crucial expertise and experience and for teaching us their knowledge and initiatives to build a common, just future for humans and animals.

And how could we forget to thank the cafeteria for our long breaks filled with iced coffees and vegan burgers. This is an achievement!

But seriously, without this masters, never would we have met such extraordinary people from across the globe...

All our friends from south and central america, raising our awareness to global issues and broadening our knowledge through sharing your experiences.

(*) Anaële Genet, Law Degree in Strassbourg, Master in Animal Law and Society, Legal Correspondent for France for the web derechoanimal.info. ; Marine Lercier, Law Degree, Master in Animal Law and Society ; Sophie Peutrill, Graduate Diploma in Law, BA in Philosophy in Leeds, Master in Animal Law and Society

Mariant - thank you for raising our awareness of global issues - there are tough ongoing situations and long journeys ahead. It shows us that animals' and humans' destinies are linked - for better or worse.

Our friends from Portugal for demonstrating that we can bring this fight into party politics in such a meaningful and productive way.

Raffaella - thank you for your kindness and support, and global open mind - and free coffee. you're a citizen of the world!

And Vanya, for always sharing your insights about the Brazilian culture and the environmental way of protecting animals.

Thanks also to the vets for bringing some scientific knowledge in the masters, because law can never be enough to understand the animal's world.

To my fellow brits: historically, we have led the way in the animal welfare movement, from the earliest legislations in the 1800s to the creation of the RSPCA. However, in the wake of Brexit it seems that animals have taken the back bench in national interest. Despite this, I feel positive and confident that national adoration of animals will continue to help drive us forwards, and hopefully we will be in a stronger position to protect animals than we ever have been previously. Our work and collaboration with people of all backgrounds will be imperative in the coming decades to keep progressing forward.

Much work still has to be done to make veganism and animal rights more accessible, regarding the fact that in 2017 our prime minister can be confident in laughing about the ethical lifestyle of over half a million of the UK population without acknowledging the lives of the animals, the environment, the health.

It has been a delight to be enrolled in the first master in Europe to be dedicated to the cause of animals and to live in the most advanced region of Spain regarding animal protection, where there is a « no kill » policy, management of cats colonies supported by the authorities, in a city where pets are welcome everywhere and animals in circuses forbidden, and where we could keep our bellies full of delicious vegan food. However, the decision of the Constitutional Court regarding bullfighting reminds us that we have to stay vigilant of stepping back.

In these sometimes dark events, it is important to see the glass half full rather than half empty: we choose to look at the bright side and celebrate any and every achievement that can minimize to the greatest possible extent the everyday suffering of animals, even though the broad picture still has to be painted in the

colors of animal liberation. We have to keep pouring our heart and efforts in the big animal rights factory.

Thanks to everyone for all your differing opinions and backgrounds for it is what makes us richer, stronger, and more open-minded as uniformity of thought never led to any change. we should look at what makes us similar and brings us together, and in the end we all want the same thing. we are like a puzzle that can never be complete without being all different but together.

Learning the context of every country is important, as much as being tolerant and understanding what other issues they can be facing. we have to stay aware that even though we are here for animals, people suffer other predicaments and might not at times welcome our arguments that easily. It shouldn't be humans against humans in defense of animals.

Our role is to be loyal to the idea of reconciling human and animal rights: to show that if you care about animals, you care about humans as well - we must not forget who we are and respect everyone's opinion.

Whatever our disagreements, we all agree on the most important: animals' interests have to be taken into account to rebalance our relationships to animals - we cannot any longer know that they are sentient and in the meantime keep treating them as mere objects.

Finally, a word about France - we place our hopes in the politics future that has seen recently the creation of the Parti Animaliste and for the first time ever was the sake of animals discussed during the presidential elections as a topic of interest thanks to the increasing work of animal protection organizations. The civil code reform is not enough, and we count on the judges to use their power wisely to interpret and defend an ethical treatment of other living beings and advance equality.

Finally, we are all here for something far bigger than any of us. the lives of billions of individuals are being exploited and sacrificed on the alter of human greed and interests every year. we must finish with the idea that animal suffering is necessary for human life. The current suffering globally faced by animals daily is unthinkable, however we must do all in our power to put this kind of discrimination firmly in the history book. In doing this, law is not the only key, and this is our every day duty to stay tolerant.

We might be a minority today, be laughed at or misunderstood, but we became a recognized movement that is deemed to be taken seriously in the battle for social change. We are a force to reckon with.

To conclude with, we found the words of lawyer *David Boies* very inspiring. Let us share them with you:

« Embrace a diversity of ideas. Embrace the fact that you can disagree with people and not be disagreeable. Embrace the fact that you can find common ground - if you disagree on nine out of 10 things, but can find common ground on that 10th, maybe you can make progress. If you can find common ground, you can accomplish great things. »

LIBERTE, EGALITE, ANIMALITE !