



Minutes of Half Day Event in Denmark 31st March 2018

Call to order

A Great Dane specialty clubs meeting was held at the offices of the Dansk Kennel Klub in Solrød, Denmark Saturday 31st March 2018.

Attendees:

Mrs. Ane Marte Bjornerem, President
Great Dane Society of Queensland Inc. (Australia)

Mr. Kim Pensdal, Chairman
Mr. Per Tøjberg, Treasurer
Mrs. Mona Mønster Hauge, Secretary
Mr. Flemming Rickfors, board member
Grand Danois Klubben i Danmark (Denmark)

Mrs. Teija Salmi-Aalto, President
Mrs. Netta Keyriläinen, Vice President
Ms. Olga Toppinen, Secretary
Suomen Tanskandoggi ry (Finland)

Mrs. Monica Stavenborn, board representative
Svenska Grand Danois Klubben (Sweden)

Mr. David Simpson, Treasurer
The Great Dane Club, United Kingdom

Mr. Bo Lasthein Andersen, Chairman of the Committee for National breeds, the Dansk Kennel Klub

Keynote Speakers:

Mr. Jørgen Hindse, Chairman of the Dansk Kennel Klub (the "DKK") and member of the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (the "FCI") General Committee.

Mrs. Maria Gkinala, FCI Group II judge and breed advisor of the Great Dane Association of Ireland

Invited but unable to attend:

Mr. Jason Hoke, President
Great Dane Club of America

Mrs. Heidi Lund, Chairman
Mrs. Nora Skotaam
Norsk Grand Danois Klubb (Norway)

Mrs. Kärt Ojamaa, board member
Mrs. Mirjam Kangur
Estonian Great Dane Association



Agenda Topics

- The country of origin of the Great Dane – history and FCI actions and responsibilities.
- The dogge-type (“hyper-type”) breeding in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe – history, where are we, what can be done.

Summary of Speeches and Presentations

Mr. Jørgen Hindse, Chairman of the DKK and member of the FCI General Committee, on this occasion representing himself, confirmed that the Great Dane has always been a national breed of Denmark. This was also the case at the FCI until about 1961. In 2010 the DKK once again raised the issue of the country of origin of the Great Dane at FCI level. Despite several written requests from the FCI General Committee, the German national kennel association, Verband für das Deutsche Hundewesen (the “VDH”), has refused to comply with the FCI’s request that Germany explains to the FCI how and when Germany were handed the breed standard from Denmark. The latest request to the VDH was issued in 2014.

In October 2014 the VDH moved to prevent Mr. Jørgen Hindse from getting re-elected to the General Committee of the FCI because of the Great Dane origin issue. The VDH failed and Mr. Hindse was comfortably re-elected. 22nd December 2015 the FCI invited a representative from the Great Dane Club in Denmark to the headquarters of the FCI in Thuin, Belgium to review its archives. This invitation enabled the Great Dane Club and the DKK to collect copies of the minutes of all FCI Annual General Assemblies from 1933 to 2015. The evidence collected allow the DKK and the Great Dane Club to state categorically that there has been no subsequent annual general assembly at the FCI that changes the decision made in July 1937 where the country of origin of the Great Dane was confirmed as being Denmark, and where Germany furthermore waived the right to the Deutsche Dogge as a national German breed.

However, despite indisputable evidence having been presented to and understood by the FCI General Committee, it remains a political reality that the VDH/Germany has political clout to prevent the FCI from returning the country of origin to Denmark. This is the reality facing the Great Dane at this point in time.

Flemming Rickfors, board member of the Great Dane Club presented The Great Dane Booklet and briefly reviewed the Great Dane’s historic origin as the hunting dog for big game and a hunting dog that could only be owned by the Danish royal family.

The foundation for the present day Great Dane began at the royal Danish kennel in 1585 with the breeding of a new “blending” to partake in the newly introduced Par Force Hunt at the royal Danish court. The “blend” was the original large sighthound from Denmark blended with a small mastiff imported from England (today’s Broholmer FCI-Standard N° 315). It is for this reason that the first modern standard for the Great Dane in English from 1887 starts out by explaining that “The Great Dane is not so heavy or massive as the Mastiff, nor should he too nearly approach the Greyhound in type”. The first Danish standard from 1886 furthermore adds that the Great Dane “shall be bred somewhere between the two mentioned breed types”. The first and only standard ever to be approved by the FCI was submitted by the DKK in 1937 and approved at the AGM of the FCI in Paris in July 1937.

The transformation of the Great Dane from being primarily a hunting dog for big game to primarily being a companion dog during the 19th Century, and at the same time ceasing to be the proprietary right of the Danish royal family to now becoming a sought-after dog by private citizens meant that a race for breeding



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ever taller dogs began. We can document that the Height at the withers of the Great Dane increases by about 18 cm (7 inches) or by 26% during a very short time span. We suspect this increase in height may have come at the expense of a decrease in longevity. This is an important issue to discuss further.

Mrs. Maria Gkinala, FCI Group II judge and breed advisor of the Great Dane Association of Ireland addressed the subject of the advance of the dogge-type (“hyper-type”) breeding in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe – how did it emerge? What is the current situation and what can be done to address the unfortunate development?

The present FCI-Standard N° 235 describes the Great Danes in the past tense as “midway between the strong Mastiff of English type and the fast, handy Greyhound”, implying that this important distinction is no longer applicable today in outlining a clear and precise type range. Post-WW2, breeding has been increasingly focused on size, substance, amount of bone, strength, stop, lips and other such parameters that are pushing the DNA towards the mastiffoid end of the spectrum, while “elegance of outline and grace of form”, as eloquently defined in the British standard (and in the Danish FCI-Standard from 1937), have been steadily going out of fashion in continental Europe, emphatically so during the past three or four decades.

The seeds of the hyper-type deviation were sown by Madame Micheline Pincemin Mérat, President of le Club français du Dogue Allemand from 1958-1986. Her husband, veterinarian and professor of zootechnics Yves Pincemin authored and published his “Morphologie et esthétique canine” (Canine Morphology and Esthetics) in 1965 and his work became the raison d'être for the hyper-type as he described the Great Dane as a “dogue” like the Boxer and Bullmastiff. Due to Madame Mérat's 28 year reign and continuous promotion of hyper-types in Central and Southern Europe, subsequently adopted by Eastern Europe, the hyper-type deviation managed to get a foothold in many countries.

In 1981, Prof. Raymond Triquet, member of the FCI Scientific commission, set out to propose a new classification and this became the new FCI nomenclature in 1987. Note that the classification system arose and was developed in France and hence why the Great Dane is today misplaced in Group 2, section 2.1 “Molossoid breeds, Mastiff type”. It is also worth pointing out that in the long history of the Great Dane, it was only recently at the 1987 AGM of the FCI in Jerusalem that the Great Dane was transferred into a subsection of “Molossoid breeds, Mastiff type” dogs. Not surprisingly, it is at this time that the surge in selection pressure towards a more mastiffoid Great Dane gets a decisive boost.

The VDH's deliberate attempt to re-write the Great Dane's history and it's FCI monopoly allowing it to get away with it, has led to a general lack of knowledge about the breeding evolution of the Great Dane as a “blend” of a large sighthound and a small mastiff. From being a fully understood breed up until WW2, the Great Dane post-WW2 entered in to the Dark Ages. With lack of clarity in the breed standards, a new interpretation of the wording of the standards emerged, with judges and breeders either ignoring the standard or reading it to fit their own image of what they would like a Great Dane to be.

Other factors that have allowed the hyper-type to flourish include:

- Lack of sufficient judges' education
- Breeding to win rather than breeding to the standard
- Rewarding the most mature-looking young exhibits. Potentially catastrophic for a giant breed.
- Possible recent cross-breeding to Neapolitan mastiff (Mastino Napoletano)
- Fabrication of false pedigrees
- Isolation of breeding populations: Minimal exchange of stock and inbreeding



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- Transformation from an athlete to a couch potato
- Winning by differentiation to allow for puppy mills and economic considerations as the main driver, common in Southern and Eastern European regions
- Mismanagement of the breed by deficits in communication, democracy and participation
- A lack of effective monitoring of the assessment process. Who is judging the judges? Who is judging the breed wardens?
- Failure to implement a rational evaluation & selection process.

In 2016, we petitioned the FCI and presented the very serious hyper-type threat to the Great Dane. The petition gathered 3191 signatures from Great Dane breeders, judges, exhibitors, owners and supporters worldwide.

What can be done? Mrs. Maria Gkinala believes we need to return to the original breed definition and characteristics.

The classic type, the one we recognize as a Great Dane, still exists in many countries and remains the majority. But we need to clean up our act in Europe and return to moderation. The breed standard needs changes. The classification is an issue. A directive must be sent to all the FCI countries condemning the hyper-type specimens as non-typical and instructing judges to disqualify them. We know who these breeders and judges are. They must be black-listed by all the speciality clubs that serve the classic Great Dane.

Plenary Discussions and Closing Statement

Flemming Rickfors moderated the subsequent plenary debate. There was universal agreement that the only way to preserve the Great Dane is to split the breed into two breeds:

The classic Great Dane FCI-Standard N° 235 Standard to be revised.	The hyper-type (dogge-type): New FCI Standard to be written and N° to be allocated.
Den danske Hund (Great Dane, Grand Danois/Chien danois, Dänischer Hund, Gran Danés, Cão dinamarquês)	Deutsche Dogge (German Mastiff, Dogue Allemand, Dogue alemão)

With the formation of an international alliance, the Great Dane Alliance (the "GDA") during the course of 2018, this solution will allow the classic Great Dane to be protected by its country of origin Denmark and worldwide.

The solution will also allow for the dogge-enthusiasts in all countries worldwide to continue down the path they have already embarked upon away from the Great Dane, in pursuit of a large mastiff-like companion dog.

The GDA will ask the FCI to approve this split as it was done with the Akita in 2015 when the Akita (FCI N°255) and the American Akita (FCI N° 344) standards were approved. The Akita split took two years to complete.



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The first step will be to invite specialty clubs in countries who share the GDA's values and visions to join the fellowship. The Great Dane Club of Denmark will assume leadership and coordinate this global effort to preserve Great Dane's breeding for future generations in accordance with its historic working function and historic standards.

Once the like-minded countries/specialty clubs have been identified, whether part of the FCI or not, the Dansk Kennel Klub on behalf of the GDA will be tasked with requesting the FCI to split the breed into two breeds.

The GDA has tasked itself to seek to ensure a physically and mentally sound Great Dane, fit for their Original Function. To further this cause a Great Dane presentation will be prepared by the GDA for all FCI judges that will guide the judges as to how they are expected to judge the breed. To the extent that a judge fails to comply with judging in accordance with the standard, the judge is to be excluded from further shows. The presentation made by Mrs. Maria Gkinala is to form the basis for this brochure.

Further down the line the GDA will explore if DNA testing can be done to identify if cross breeding to Neapolitan mastiff (Mastino Napoletano) has taken place.

Action Items

Action	Specialty club responsible for making contact	Deadline
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Specialty clubs in the following countries should be sounded out for interest in joining the GDA.

Estonia (Eesti Kenneliit /Estonian Great Dane Assoc.) Iceland (Hundaræktarfélag Íslands) Norway South Africa The Netherlands (Nederlandse Duitse Doggen Club)	Grand Danois Klubben i Danmark	1 st half of 2018
India Japan New Zealand	Great Dane Society of Queensland Inc. (Australia)	1 st half of 2018
Israel Italy Latvia Lithuania Russia	Suomen Tanskandoggi ry (Finland)	1 st half of 2018
Gibraltar Malta Scotland	The Great Dane Club, United Kingdom	1 st half of 2018
Mexico USA	Svenska Grand Danois Klubben (Sweden)	1 st half of 2018



Brazil Canada France (l'Association des Amis du Dogue allemand) Greece Ireland Switzerland	The Great Dane Association of Ireland	1 st half of 2018
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Reports

- The Great Dane Booklet (March 2018, the Great Dane Club of Denmark, 104 pages) handed out during the meeting.
- Maria Gkinala: Keynote address (see attached pdf file).

Mrs. Mona Mønster Hauge

Secretary

Friday 6th April 2018

Date

Half Day Event by the Great Dane Club of Denmark

31st of March 2018

Keynote speaker Maria Gkinala

The advance of the dogge-type (“hyper-type”) breeding in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe – history, where are we, what can be done

First we examine how the hypertype trend was even possible – or what I call:

“How to break a breed in 20 steps”:

Part 1

The background

- a. The genetic make up of the breed, being a mastiff x sighthound combination and with a definite LGD type heritage (see below)
- b. The admixture with bullenbeissers which continued for the duration that the stud book was open, including the post WWII “foundlings” – and via this, to the pug / bulldog influence.

Part 2

1. **The phrase “neither a mastiff nor a greyhound but balanced between the two extremes” has been deleted from the Breed Standards.** This was essential breed type definition. The breed, being a composite that consists of contrasting components, relies on a critical balance, in the middle ground between two fundamentally opposing morphological forces which coexist in its genetic make-up – the compression (endomorphism / power) trend pulling it towards the mastiff/bulldog and the elongation (ectomorphism / speed) trend pulling it towards the sight hound. The Great Dane contains traces from several hunting, guarding and herding landraces that were added to the ‘melting

pot' when various populations of boarhounds and other big game hunting dogs were unified in Germany under the Deutsche Dogge identity. **The brief historical summary of the current breed standard No. 235 refers to the midway between the Mastiff and the greyhound solely in the past tense, as if this important distinction were no longer applicable today in outlining a clear and precise type range.** Emphasis, since breeding resumed after the WWII, has been increasingly being put on size, substance, amount of bone, strength, stop, lips and other such parameters that are pushing the DNA towards the mastiffoid end of the spectrum, while "**elegance of outline and grace of form**", as eloquently defined in the British standard, have been steadily going out of fashion in continental Europe, emphatically so during the past three or four decades.

The seeds of the hypertype deviation were sown when an influential French breeder decided to part ways with the breed standard and her spouse provided the theoretical "justification": veterinarian, professor of zootechnics Yves Pincemin published his *Morphologie et esthétique canine* (Canine Morphology and Esthetics) in 1965. In this book he partly analyzed, borrowed, copied and expanded from previous authors on classification of dog breeds (Méglin & Baron in particular), as an introduction to his treatise of the Great Dane: this includes commentary on the Great Dane standard and a detailed analysis of the breed's morphological traits. Pincemin classified the Great Dane as type "dogue" like the Boxer and Bullmastiff.

With the theoretical basis for the mastiffication of the Great Dane thus provided by her spouse, Madame Michelin Pincemin Merat, from the position of life-long President in the Club Français du Dogue Allemand, became the absolute guru in all things "doggen" in France and beyond.

Let us take a pictorial journey how type has evolved in that kennel. It is a virtual tour of the continental Great Dane metamorphosis in the last 40-50 years [see images]. That kennel flooded the continent with popular sires and the fashion caught on quickly in Italy (kennel Baia de Azzura is a prime

example). In that country, the much rumored Mastino Napolitano crosses can be proven, if the ENCI ever orders DNA testing: they are certainly quite evident on the phenotype of many prominent specimens, especially the mastino – hallmark vertical ridges of skin descending from the outer corner of the eye to the lip corner.

In 1981, Prof. Raymond Triquet, member of the FCI Scientific commission, set out to propose a new classification and this became the new FCI nomenclature in 1987. (Worth noting again that it was again born and carried out in France, and based on Mégnin & Baron's classification systems).

In Germany the most extreme promoters of the hypertype split from the DDC and formed their own Club, KyDD, in 1988, under well known hypertype-proponent, FCI judge and breeder Heiko Wagner.

In 2003, Dr Bernard Denis, then member of the Scientific Commission of the FCI, gave a seminar at the Cynotechnic School in Nantes, France and within this lecture he outlined the "Drift towards the Hypertype" problem. In a nutshell, the treatise condemned the hypertype specimens as a-typical, non-typical. This was instrumental for the adoption by the FCI of the "Dogs Fit for their Original Function" policy document. But it was too late. The deviation had been established and taken hold in many European countries, Germany itself, the South and the East, and beyond Europe, in other FCI – member countries and the US pet market. The problem has spread like a virus and is now global.

2.The term "Dogge". Dogge (from Old English [dogca/dogga](#)) translates as Dogue, as in Dogue de Bordeaux-a mastiff type breed. The English translation from "Deutsche Dogge" is "German mastiff". No breed could hope to escape the predictable consequences of such a misnomer upon its physique. Classification of the Dane within the mastiff subsection of the molosser group was therefore inescapable.

3. Classification in the mastiff type subsection of FCI Group

II. After errors one and two were committed, it follows that the Dane would be erroneously classified in this section. When fanciers visit an FCI dog show, open a catalogue and find the Great Dane in the mastiff section, next to breeds as the English Mastiff, the Mastino, the Bullmastiff, the Dogue de Bordeaux etc, what are they supposed to think ? They are practically pseudo-educated, that the Great Dane is a molossoid and a mastiff. This classification informs perception and opinion.

It's worth stressing again that this specific restructuring of the FCI groups is quite recent: it was 1987 and the General Assembly in Jerusalem which moved some breeds between groups and created this particular section and subsection, as well as the new standards template. Not surprisingly, the surge in selection pressure towards a more mastiffoid Dane gets a decisive boost around that point in time.

4. **"Bigger / more is better"** mentality and machismo, typical plight of the mastiff – type breeds. When a breed is transformed into a "head breed", it's the beginning of the end for moderation and logic in dog breeding.

This kind of artificial mass that the hypertype "greeders" are so enamoured with, belongs to beef cattle bred for consumption, not for survival. The typical flat, smooth, endurance-gallop type muscle of the Dane is quite different. Dogs in many breeds including our own are undoubtedly artificially 'enhanced' by anabolic aids during their growth stages, something absolutely criminal. The use of these poisons in dogdom is rife among show dogs.

5. Misrepresentation/misinterpretation of the evolution, the original function and the type of breeds that contributed to the Gt. Dane.

Some people, even experts, do honestly seem to believe (or perhaps just *pretend* they believe) that the Gt. Dane is supposed to be a bull- or mastiff type breed, with the strength necessary to kill a boar by itself, which is ludicrous; a little

research would reveal that was never required from the Great Dane. Since the “historical summary” (a required feature in all FCI Breed standards) has appeared in the Great Dane Standard, the way it is phrased could lead a reader to believe that the breed is but a modified bullenbeisser, which essentially is a bull- or bull & mastiff type breed. There is no mention of the Danish contribution whatsoever, yet we learn from the documented history of the breed in Denmark that the Dane (or Danische hund) was essentially a ‘blending’, a modified large hound with a dash of the old type, working, hunting English Mastiff blood (therefore nothing like its modern re-constructed and heavily exaggerated namesake).

The Great Dane proper came into existence as the par force medieval hunt declined and big game hunting changed from a princely pastime with huge packs of various different landraces (some for finding, some for the chase and some for the gripping & holding) to a more practical affair for the ordinary man with a few good dogs; these boarhounds were required to perform a combination of the tasks previously allocated to a variety of breeds, therefore it was necessary to ‘fortify’ the pure sight hounds with some mastiff strength. And the Great Dane proved to be superior at this hunting. Neither as a mastiff nor as a greyhound, but as a combination of these two types and their hunting skills.

6.Lack of clarity of the breed standard(s) in key areas results in lack of clarity in goals and that has the dire consequence that breed type becomes ‘optional’ instead of upheld by consensus.

For example, the standard warns against ‘refined elegance’; that can be easily misconstrued as if implying that ‘elegance’ was somehow undesirable, or that it had a negative connotation; “over-refinement” would have been a more accurate and correct term; the description of the lips allows for personal interpretation as to how much lip is correct; the use of the word “flews” in the English translation (it doesn’t exist in the German original nor in any other standard) is rather misleading, as “flews” is a term borrowed from the

bloodhound and refers to that breed's rather pendulous lip corner with open 'pockets', something dysfunctional, unseemly and breed-inappropriate for the Great Dane; the use of that term is in direct contradiction with the next phrase which calls for lips that are not too pendulous: this is bound to create confusion as to what exact degree of pendulous (verging on the ridiculous) is desired or allowed; how long is a piece of string? It's purely a matter of personal preference – and that leaves the door open for excess. Those who favor the mastiff interpretation will argue for more lips.

Hancock makes a very succinct point about verbose standards that create more confusion than not, using the Greyhound [standard](#) example which is the 'very soul of brevity' as he puts it – yet that laconic standard has not served that breed too badly.

7. Abandonment of the classic ideals of moderation, adoption of a more compromised model of excellence, misinterpretations of the standard by some national breed Clubs. The current illustration of the FCI standard that replaced the previous, more elegant ones, the illustrated standard interpretations that allow for the muzzle to be 1.2 times deeper than long, and the eyes to be 'diamond' in shape, published and circulated by some European clubs (France and elsewhere), are steps towards the mastiff direction.

To use a very succinct quote "***De novo opinion that has no origin in the History, Normal Anatomy, or Origin and Purpose of the breed is not a valid standard interpretation***"; these inconsistencies, however small, some caused because of a certain "loss in translation", have been increasingly appearing in the various standard revisions, while other important phrases have been inexplicably removed (the warning against the dog being too coarse, with excessive lips, for example, has been removed. Why?).

8. Lack of sufficient judges' education. Newcomers are often not well informed about the history, function and correct conformation. Important educational Club documents should be circulated to all FCI judges that are

approved for the breed, in every FCI country. Not just to the DDC members ! How else are they supposed to be informed, educated & kept up to date about what is expected of them? I am an FCI Breed Specialist for the Great Dane and an FCI International judge for the breed. I was never sent any documents, judges' education booklets or indeed any "interpretation" of the breed Standard. Is that how all the thousands of Great Dane judges are supposed to be educated by the parent club ? I have been dismayed on occasion when talking with colleagues, who dismiss the breed's original function with a flick of the wrist as "ancient history"; yet the FCI [directive](#) calls for Dogs Fit For Their Original Function!

9. Breeding to win rather than breeding to the standard. An advancing trend in dog breeding is to breed in order to have 'something to show' rather than breeding only when it is advisable and wise to do so. When people are breeding to win it follows that they will breed not to the standard but to the predominant fashion and to the dogs that they see winning in their region. Substandard judging makes things worse.

10. Rewarding the most mature-looking young exhibits. Potentially catastrophic for a giant breed that is supposed to be slow maturing, breeding selection for faster and faster maturing youngsters that pile on 'substance', look like adults and earn their championships quickly, with the added body mass to keep them in "show condition", loading them with weight and fat onto their immature growth plates, joints and ligaments, has been an increasingly common occurrence – so much so that it represents a real selection pressure; Danes are maturing faster nowadays. As a result, in contrast to some countries where we regularly see Danes in veteran classes, in other regions the breed looks almost terminally geriatric at six and seven years of age as a result; this was not the case twenty or thirty years ago.

11. The Harlequin factor: it's possible that at some point in the breed's history, some strains had more than their fair share of influence from the

(harlequin or piebald coloured) landrace/type depicted by [Buffon](#) as "Dogue de forte race" which was a heavy mastiff / dogue landrace.

Interesting and must be stressed that Dr. Bodinus (the man in charge for the unification of German breeds and the Danish dog as "Deutsche Dogge", in the 1878 committee meeting in Berlin) proposed only a couple of years later to separate the Great Dane (Danische) from the other, heavier type mastiff & bullenbeisser dogs; sadly it was too late and his proposal failed.

Today, the harlequin family by far outnumbers all other colours on the continent: some of these dogs are heavyweights, different in type, with thicker skin, bigger heads, bigger bone, bigger body mass and different expression, much more Dogue de forte race in type than Great Danes.

12. Possible recent cross-breeding to a mastiff? This has been suggested, as some extremely overdone individuals, of the blue / black variety in particular, look suspiciously similar to Neapolitan mastiffs, especially in the characteristic formation of skin folds on the side of the head. DNA testing could have prevented this happening, and it's not too late to implement it. A French association of Great Dane lovers (Association des Amis du Dogue Allemand), opposing the official Club, have exposed a lot of pedigrees as false. Random DNA testing at shows or as a prerequisite for litter registration would unearth many closet skeletons and serve the breed well.

13. Isolation of breeding populations: minimal exchange of stock. Inbreeding. Long distance is not the only factor that discourages importation or use of dogs of standard type. Suspicion, prejudice and even open hostility, over-zealous provisions and regulations & attempts to discredit and ridicule Great Dane breeding in other parts of the world have been at work, sometimes even fanned by isolationist attitudes and nationalistic bigotry that have no place in breeding or dog competition. Typically, breeders / judges who are, for example, calling the style of Danes in North [America](#) "greyhounds" or used to deride the [British](#)-bred dogs as "that Great Dane type", are self-

serving & self-promoting facilitators and agents of Hyper-Type. The breed as a whole suffers as a result from these antiquated "cold war" attitudes and short-sightedness. We should be breaking down walls, we need a different example of leadership. In the interests of maintaining fitness for function and genetic diversity, international exchange of breeding stock should be encouraged.

14. The color code: Related to the 'harlequin factor', popular sire effect and isolation parameters mentioned above, and further compacting the effects of very high coefficients of inbreeding and ancestral loss within separate Great Dane families, which result in the desirable extremes of phenotype that are favored by some breeders becoming easily achieved, fixed and maintained; but such traits come at a high cost in soundness, breed type, health, longevity, as well as mental equilibrium and drives, affecting temperament. It's very pertinent here to take a look at the real reasons the Color Code was [adopted](#) in the US (see link below). It was not done to serve the breed but to serve personal agendas. The color code needs to be revised scientifically, with sound genetic principles.

15. Transformation from an athlete to a couch potato. As is common with breeds that are no longer working, the total lack of some requirements for a breed-appropriate function, in the form of aptitude tests, has taken a heavy toll on the propensity for fitness, muscle development, joint & ligament elasticity and strength as well as health and longevity of the Great Dane overall.

The most efficient gait for the breed is the sustained endurance gallop that is impossible to judge in the confines of the show ring; as is the courage, the mental equilibrium of a type of dog that combined the ability to be a pack member, a house companion and a watch dog, the game sense, the chasing instinct and the self control that ensured the breed's perfect behavior around livestock, farm stock and other house pets. In North America and the Nordic

countries the breed is far more active in various sports, as it is of a more athletic phenotype, more fit for function.

The Great Dane is primarily and essentially a big game hunter, so in the absence of field trials that for practical reasons are impossible to be held for this kind of work without being banned as blood sports, we have to substitute and simulate: a lure coursing test, in combination with the superior Nordic style "mental aptitude assessment" (MH) or / and a Canine Good Citizen/BH type evaluation, perhaps even a breed-appropriate Endurance Test (subject to successful results in relevant health tests for joints and heart conditions) would go a long way in the goal of restoring some moderation and functional soundness in the breed.

The dog is an apex predator. A failed predator is a failed species, destined for extinction. The Great Dane should be bred with that always in the back of our minds, aiming for a canine athlete. Truly muscular, sound, fit and dry, not a fat caricature. Fit for its original function, as FCI requires.

16. Winning by differentiation. The desire to win for the sake of winning and of course for the sake of becoming successful, rising high in positions of power and influence in the sport, gaining recognition, committee positions and respect – and in case of some, selling *loads* of puppies and making *loads* of money from stud fees, especially in regions where breeding *loads* of litters annually and keeping a large facility housing dozens or even hundreds of kenneled dogs is not frowned upon (common in the southern and Eastern European regions), are factors sadly all too present in our sport; for some – many- people dog breeding is sadly not a hobby but their main source of income and a shopping window of their produce.

For this mentality and business angle, being different is essential, as it helps to attract attention and grasp that all important first glance of the judges and the attention of misinformed puppy buyers. And being different simply means that the exhibit must 'stand out' – i.e. be unlike most others in the ring –

something that cannot be achieved if the puppy producer adheres too closely to the same standard that everyone else strives to achieve.

And what attracts attention better than a dog that is bigger, heavier, exaggerated and visibly different in proportions (i.e., with a far bigger head for its body) and more “expressive” in wrinkles and folds of skin than everybody else’s? the first to achieve this will always be a winner – at least for some time – and as the trend catches on the pioneers would just have to up the ante a bit to stay ahead, and export puppies under the ‘original’, ‘authentic’ ‘Euro’-label.

17. Breeding for bits & bobs: in other words, breeding for parts and breeding for money. Many breed standards include a safety warning against exaggeration and breeding for individual features, stressing the importance of breeding for the total dog and for balance and soundness. The Great Dane standard must include the same strict precautions.

18. Mismanagement of the breed by deficits in communication, democracy and participation.

The country of origin has absolute power over a breed – its breed club, that is. Some of these clubs, depending on their statutes, do not even require a public vote by their membership to approve any decisions the committee may take regarding changes in the Standard –it’s the experts (or perceived as such) sitting on the committee who decide alone or can easily sway the vote. When the same person is the chief breed warden for decades, he has assumed the position of God or the Pope and similar claims to infallibility...

19. A lack of effective monitoring of the assessment process. Who is judging the judges? Who is judging the breed wardens ?

20. Failure to implement a rational evaluation & selection process. As I have shown above, breeding selection has been allowed to focus disproportionately on morphology (and not even faithfully to the

breed's essence and standard, at that) rather than serve the dog in a holistic manner, catering equally to temperament, genetic health, function and longevity. We need EBVs in place. We need a scientifically sound revision of breeding.

Also, if the situation in the UK is an indicator (effective population of merely 166,8 dogs, according to The Kennel Club's own study), genetic diversity seems precariously low: we need a world-wide, whole-genomic population study of the Great Dane and we need it now. We can't afford to let the breed slip below sustainability levels. (See link below for a recent study indicating that the Great Dane is already sitting at average homozygosity of over 25% COI – which is detrimentally high!)

“We are where we are now”

In 2011, the president of the DDC, Mr. Gügel (breeder of the famous Heiko von der Burg Thann, the dog selected as the model of excellence for the Club's centenary figurine), had this to say:

***“The (standard) of the Great Dane stayed the same in most of its parts, even if sometimes with different wording, especially the definition of the general appearance hasn't changed. But if one compares the Champions of earlier times with the Champions of today one can see obvious differences. The bodies are bulkier today and the heads heavier. We haven't paid enough attention to the angulations and the movement. So faults appeared which we don't recognize anymore today. That's something we have to change together: the officials of the clubs, the judges and the breeders. It is not our task to only manage the breed. We have to preserve and promote it and protect it from an over-interpretation of the standard. Expertise and sound judgment is therefore recommended. It was the goal of the founding of the EUDDC Club in 1981 to join all friends of the Great Dane for a uniform interpretation of the standard. (...)*”**

Judged objectively we haven't managed to achieve this goal in the last 25 years. Some countries still prefer very different phenotypes."

The above reads like an open, honest and stark admission of failure on behalf of the DDC, to achieve it's objectives...

In 2016, we petitioned the FCI and presented the very serious hypertype threat to the Great Dane to the FCI President, and to the Standards and Scientific Commissions. The petition gathered 3191 signatures from Great Dane breeders, judges, exhibitors, owners and supporters worldwide.

I personally sent the petition, list of signatures and an extended file containing dozens of photographs of major winners, World Champions, European Champions, International Champions, multi-champions, Best of Breed winners, Breed Club winners, approved for breeding stud dogs and popular sires, recipients of the "excellent" grade at FCI shows, who are grossly hypertypical and with obvious disqualifying faults, to the FCI Secretariat.

The petition was very well received by the Scientific Commission of the FCI. The President, Kirsi Sainio wrote back to me in very categorical terms (please see the letter in the images file). We were given assurances that the matter will go further. We need to make sure it will not be forgotten.

So right now we are petitioning the FCI again – and I want to urge you all to read, sign and share this new petition (details below). We must keep up the pressure on all fronts. **The Very Important Phrase "neither a mastiff nor a greyhound" must be restored in the standard and the breed must be declassified from the mastiff section – these are major priorities.**

There is an official dispute into the country of origin in process (lodged by the Danish Kennel Club to the FCI in 2012), but whatever the outcome of that, whoever is going to be the 'manager' of the breed tomorrow or the day after, whether there is change or sharing or not, one thing is not going to change: **the breed is an international entity.** The FCI is a global federation

with some 80+ country members and has agreements in place with all the other major registries, like the AKC & TKC and the Australian NKC. The breed's problems are universal and they need effective co-operation and communication, honesty, inclusiveness, democratic functions and above all, transparency and education, to tackle these problems on a truly global basis.

What can be done?

We need to return to the original.

Thankfully the classic type still exists in many countries and remains the majority. But we need to "clean up our act" in Europe, particularly on the continental mainland, and return to moderation. The breed standard needs revision and changes urgently. The breed standard illustration is inadequate and misleading and needs to be changed immediately to a much better one depicting a typical specimen. The classification in the mastiff section is a huge problem-generator issue. A directive must be sent to all the FCI countries condemning the hypertype specimens as non-typical and instructing judges to disqualify them. We know who these breeders and judges are. They must be black-listed by all the Breed Clubs that serve the typical Great Dane. They must be brought to task or have their judging licences revoked.

Furthermore, in my opinion, we urgently need a **worldwide, unified Great Dane pedigree database** to realistically and scientifically estimate the Great Dane's genetic status and viability. We need a **World Congress** for the breed and we need it yesterday. **We need to protect the hobby breeder** and eradicate the commercial breeding for profit. Kennel Clubs can very easily put a limit on the number of litters they register per year from individual breeders and from individual sires. These measures are indeed already in place in other breed clubs. Qualzucht (breeding for excess) is a crime in several European countries. Hypertype breeding is in effect, cruelty and must not be tolerated by the FCI. It's time we got tough on this because it claims many innocent dogs' lives and has innumerable thousands of long-suffering victims.

Dog showing has evolved from being a means to an end to being a self-serving goal per se, a tool for commercialization and a trophy hunting ground, exploited by the 'dual-purpose' 'professional breeders' who juggle showing, working competitions and puppy factories. It has been allowed to become an enabler of puppy farming in vast regions of Europe. Yet we can't technically call them back yard breeders – their dogs are FCI-registered and FCI – titled and they are pillars of dogdom themselves, officers and leaders in their countries. They or their agents keep multiple addresses in several neighboring countries to register litters, they falsify pedigrees, they show 'ringers', they harm or even poison competitor's dogs, they dye and surgically correct and implant (from missing teeth to missing testicles) and participate in dog fighting and none is the wiser. People are afraid to report because they will be ostracized, face retribution in the show ring by corrupt judging or they might even find their own dogs poisoned. These glorified puppy farmers have friends in high places or are themselves elevated in high places.

Scandinavian countries are blissfully ahead on a different level of dogdom, Britain is balancing between tradition and pragmatism, America is a different continent and some Great Dane lovers there care very little about what's happening beyond their own borders (unfortunately, as they too are in danger from the hypertypicity trend); where does that leave Brussels? Is the FCI just a federate ivory tower?

There are sound examples of a better [breeding strategy](#) out there, like the Nordic model and we need to emulate them. I don't have all the answers. But I hope that today can be a very important day in our efforts to restore the Great Dane. All together in unison, we can plan a better way forward. Thank you for reading and thank you in advance of making a choice and taking a stand for the breed we all love so much.

Maria Gkinala, Ireland, March 2018.

PETITION: FCI, VDH, DDC: Restore the Great Dane !

<https://www.change.org/p/federation-cynologique-internationale-fci-fci-vdh-ddc-restore-the-great-dane>

Links:

Inbreeding of purebred dogs determined by DNA, Carol Beuchat PhD, Institute of Canine Biology (The Great Dane sits just above the red line which represents over 25% inbreeding COI – see chart in files) <http://www.instituteofcaninebiology.org/blog/inbreeding-of-purebred-dogs-determined-from-dna>

Genomic Analyses of Modern Dog Breeds, Heidi G. Parker, 2012

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3559126/>

Population structure and inbreeding from pedigree analysis of purebred dogs, Calboli FC¹, Sampson J, Fretwell N, Balding DJ.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18493074>

Whole-genome sequence, SNP chips and pedigree structure: building demographic profiles in domestic dog breeds to optimize genetic-trait mapping, Dayna L. Dreger, Maud Rimbault, Brian W. Davis, Adrienne Bhatnagar, Heidi G. Parker, Elaine A. Ostrander ; Disease Models & Mechanisms 2016 9: 1445-1460; doi: 10.1242/dmm.027037

<http://dmm.biologists.org/content/9/12/1445>

Reflections on the Genetics of pure bred dogs and the essential maintenance of genetic variability, Prof. Bernard Denis, 2003

www.azawakh.fr/groupe/groupe_denis_variabilite_gb.html

Current FCI breeds nomenclature: who, when, how?

<http://frenchwaterdog.org/2014/09/16/current-fci-breeds-nomenclature/>

The proper FCI group for the Dogo Argentino – Dr Otto Schimpf

<http://www.easypetmd.com/proper-fci-group-dogo-argentino-dr-otto-schimpf>

FCI: Protect the Great Dane ! An open letter to Rafael De Santiago (August 2016)

<https://greatdanegnosis.wordpress.com/2016/08/26/fci-protect-the-great-danean-open-letter-to-rafael-de-santiago/>

The Great Dane Story (video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xW5widN1gvQ>

Association des Amis du Dogue Allemand

<http://www.amidal.fr/>

Winners of the French Club for the breed:

<http://www.doggenclub.com/resultats-d-expositions.html>

Effective population size of the Great Dane in the UK

https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/686040/great_dane.pdf

Using EBVs to breed better dogs

<http://www.instituteofcaninebiology.org/using-ebvs-to-breed-better-dogs.html>

All the following articles are to be found in my blog: Great Dane Gnosis

<https://greatdanegnosis.wordpress.com/>

and they contain information pertinent to this document.

Great Dane Gnosis : The Great Dane and the pseudo-danes (part II)

 The FCI Classification of the Great Dane: Highly Illogical

 The First German Standard, 1891

 The Dane, The Suliote and other relationships

The Dane and the pseudo-Dane

The Great uro Horror Show

Spanish bull

Canis Bovinus Hypertypicus

“nothing wrong with their eyes”

The Great Dane and the “molosser” malarkey

Quo Vadis, Deutsche Dogge?

The “Ignominious beginning of the Great Dane Color Code of Ethics”

No Good Dog Goes Unpunished

Breeding dogs better (the Nordic model)

What does a boarhound look like?

How to destroy destruction

History