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16 juillet 2009 - *Lettre n°8*



Réouverture du CENTRE CARAPAX

Reopening of CARAPAX CENTER



EDITORIAL

Chers collègues et amis,

Je donne la parole à nos amis de Carapax, sur cette réouverture :

Le 16 juin,

"Cher Alain,

Le 4 juin, le juge a levé la saisie de l'immeuble, à la Comunita Montana et à son Président. Une autre saisie a été levée : l'inspecteur CITES de Rome (beaucoup mieux) nous a directement redonné toute la gestion au Centre. Donato est reparti en Belgique, directement le soir du 4 juin et les clés du Centre m'ont été remises de façon officielle le 6 juin.

Nous avons travaillé très dur la première semaine pour contrôler tous les animaux qui sont encore ici, comme les cigognes et nous avons remis le parcours en ordre. Ce dernier week-end, nous avons rouvert au public mais naturellement avec un circuit plus court, concentré sur le Centre Cigogne et le Projet Cistudes. Il y a un peu de *T. graeca* à voir mais PAS de tortues exotiques. Nous donnons 2 euro de réduction aux prix d'entrée. Ce n'est pas facile de recommencer parce que TOUT le monde est convaincu que le Centre est fermé définitivement. J'ai écrit à toutes les agences info touristiques et plus!

Déjà notre perte financière est ENORME après ces 2 mois de fermeture, qui n'étaient pas nécessaires et qui étaient un abus de pouvoir de la part du Président de la Comunita Montana.

Nous sommes de nouveau sur place mais cela ne veut pas dire que tout est fini. En janvier 2010 nous aurons la première audience sur la propriété de l'immeuble (qui est naturellement un prétexte pour la Comunita Montana pour prendre le tout). Il faut continuer à faire du lobbying pour la cause CARAPAX !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Cela va rester VIF pour tout les mois à suivre.

Je sais que Marco Zuffi et son collègue Barbuti n'ont eu aucun sentiment pour les tortues, il ne leur a jamais donné à manger, (1 fois les gardiens de la Comunita Montana ont jeté 40 kg de croquettes pour chat dans le lac Louisiana RIEN POUR LES CISTUDES, RIEN POUR LES AUTRES AMERICAINES DANS LES AUTRES LACS, RIEN POUR LES TERRESTRES! Il semble que pour cela ils ont reçu une très coquette et confortable somme, mais qui ne semble pas avoir été dépensée pour les animaux. Et nous, par contre, à cause de cet abus nous avons déjà perdu plus de 30.000 Euros, à la différence près, que NOUS devons travailler DUR pour gagner un peu d'argent, quelques subsides pour pouvoir acheter de quoi faire vivre le Centre et nourrir tous ces animaux.....

Nous continuons avec passion, courage et détermination comme nous avons toujours fait ces 20 années.

Amicalement et MERCI pour ton aide à travers ta newsletter,

Veerle"

Puis le 24 juin,

"Notre situation est critique, ayant déjà perdu au moins 40 000 Euros d'entrées à cause de la fermeture du centre. On a dû annuler 15 opérateurs touristiques et plus de 30 écoles. Xavier dans cette période s'est montré très courageux, avec son amis Thomas (également ancien de la SOPTOM) car ils ont été mis littéralement "à la porte" par la Comunita Montana, menacés avec une arme ! Pendant des semaines ils ont été harcelés constamment par les vigiles de la Comunita Montana. Grâce à nos avocats nous sommes rentrés dans le centre trouvant 38 animaux morts. Heureusement nos 250 animaux exotiques ainsi que 300 cistudes et 400 testudos avaient été évacués auparavant et mis à l'abri hors de Toscane, voire hors d'Italie et soignés par les administrateurs de RANA.

Maintenant CARAPAX est sous tutelle de l'inspecteur national ONF de la CITES et toute l'activité reprend. Mais le trou de 40.000 Euros reste et nous avons du mal à payer les dettes et les salaires. Trois personnes ont été licenciées hélas.

La moitié du Centre CARAPAX reste fermé. Les structures des exotiques sont démontées maintenant et nous devons prévoir un déménagement. Ce sera très dur.

Merci pour votre aide,

Veerle Vandepitte
Centro Carapax"



EDITOR CORNER

Dear colleagues and friends

To resume in english, informations from our CARAPAX friends :

On June 6th, the CARAPAX Center reopened. It was very difficult to reorganize the Center after two month closure. We've limited the tour to the area of the storks and the Emys terrapins. There is no exotic animal to see, and very few Testudo greaca. We've lowered the entry price (2 Euros off) and it's not easy to start again because a lot of people are convinced that the Center is closed for good.

This closing was not at all a necessity but a power abuse by the president of the Comunita Montana. In January 2010 the first hearing on the property of the building located in the Center will take place: it will be for the Comunita Montana the pretext to take all and the debate will be heated.

Our situation is critical, we lost at least 40 000 Euros from entries, we had to cancel our partnership with 15 tour operators, 30 schools. Two French boys, Thomas and Xavier (who used to be members of the SOPTOM) were very courageous, they were harassed by the security guards of the CM and threatened with a weapon. When we entered the center again, we found 38 dead animals.

Marco Zuffi and his colleague Barbuti had no regard for the animals, only once they threw a bag of 40 Kg of cat's food in the Louisiana lake for Trachemys, nothing for the Emys, nor for the other Americans, or the land turtles. Yet, they were given a large amount of money to feed the animals, but in reality they haven't used it for that. And now we do have to work hard to earn some grant to feed the animals and make the Center live.

Now the Center is under the supervision of the national inspector of Forrestral and CITES and all the activity takes off again, but the deficit of 40000 Euros still exists, and it's difficult to pay the debts and salaries : we were unfortunately forced to lay off three persons !

Half of the CARAPAX Center remains closed. Structures of the exotics are now dismantled and we provide for relocation. That will be hard !

We continue / keep going with passion, courage and determination as we always did these last twenty years.

Thanks for your help and support through the newsletter.

Kindly,

Veerle,
Centro CARAPAX



LIBRE DEBAT 1/3

From: **marco a.l. zuffi**
To: Alain Veyssset
Sent: Friday, June 05, 2009 9:42 AM
Subject: Re: Edition Speciale LLNÂ°07

Dear Alain,
thanks for the letter. A bit surprising reading such misleading information on my self, without having had the polite idea to ask me a private comment or deliver your main text according to a public debate (alternatively hearing from my side the version of my activities), before sending the document to all Emys colleagues and friends.

Nothing true on my self. I have no need of it for my career. It should be a strange situation.
May have not to consider me a turtle "expert"? This does not mean a captive turtle manager. I have not been asked to do such a task, do not forget. But nobody asked me why I have been involved in such possible future activity.

My position, at the time of the pictures taken, was a survey of still living animals, due to the need of the ComunitÃ Montana to verify the amount of actual individuals at the Carapax centre.
Really a few tortoises (about 200 terrestrial and 1600 freshwater ones) with respect the declared 13'000 or more. I suppose the number referred and refers to the whole amount of animals that have been hosted at the Carapax in the last 20 years.

A last thing: I have no stolen any one turtle or tortoise. I do not need them, nor I have in museum any structure to breed captive animals. So why?

However, as you see, we are in whole and full democracy and anybody has the rights to say and write what he decides and likes.

Unfortunately I am unhappy in reading such unidirectional statements without the formal possibility to reply.

Wish you feel free to present on your newsletter my formal answer and comments (no polemy, at all, simply facts for my position).

If you will decide not to do as requested (you have all the rights) I will do on my self in next days on public forum and herp news letters, just to present also my point of view.

Hoping to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Other things are as follows:

My position is as technician of the university to perform a long term survey, under the control of the legal owner, the ComunitÃ Montana (CM). Each time I entered the CARAPAX centre I was with one to two responsible(s) of the CM.

The aim of the partnership between CM and our University is the management of future (from 2010 on) centre, with or without animals.

I have the aim to call several experts for the management of captive animals, indicate and suggest the CM president all necessary items to perform from food to vet cares, to genetical analyses, to mathematical models to perform headstarting projects and to reintroduction projects. Finally, to manage around 1'500 Trachemys sensu latu species at CARAPAX.

A bit different from alternative hypotheses Alain published.

I will forward tomorrow several reports I sent Anders GJ Rhodins and British Chelonia Group asked me for.

LAst thing: at CARAPAX are not more than 2'000 individuals, surely not 13'000! This number refers to all animals passed throughout the carapax since 1987. I received more than 750 printed pages with more than 13'500 records of turtles and tortoises in that period.....

best,
marco

Marco A.L. Zuffi
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LIBRE DEBAT 2/3

From: **marco a.l. zuffi**
To: Cornelius C. de Haan
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2009 3:33 PM
Subject: Re: [HerpNet] appeal

Dear Cornelius,
here it is my first answer to the big amount of stupid things Alain accepted to publish:

From : **Cornelius C. Haan**
To : Marco Zuffi
Cc : Alain Veysset
Sent : Thursday, June 18th – 5:43 PM
Subject : Re: [HerpNet] Appeal

Grazie, Marco, for your quick answer !

Your role in the sudden new Carapax Centre management seems strange to me, but you obviously are convinced of doing your best. If so, I'm pleased to give you the benefit of the doubt as I equally do so to Alain.

I hope for you you may convince me that the legal owner of Carapax Centre is really the Comunit  Montana, and even if so, that it was a good idea of the CM's president to throw out from the Centre the normal managing crew of diversely skilled people who were preserving correct conditions for the animals in the Centre.

I meanwhile also read the website of Carapax *de dato* 4 giugno 2009, as it seems. Do I understand well that you now have already lost your special CM-role in the Centre, since at least last June13th ?

Thanks for a possibly rapid reply again !

Best regards, best wishes,

Cornelius

From: **marco a.l. zuffi**
To: Cornelius C. de Haan
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2009 9:42 AM
Subject: Re: [HerpNet] appeal

Dear Cornelius,

nothing so strange.

My position is not changed at all. The partnership between university and CM is valid. The Court in Grosseto has simply delayed the activity of the Carapax up to 30th October, under a provisional management by a Corpo Forestale dello Stato (servizio CITES) functionary. The ownership is still of the CM. Property I refer to is of the buildings and some of the structures and the terrains. The debate about animals is not strictly a "problem" of mine. My charge is to define in the future the new centre with remnant (if any) tortoises or completely new stocks. Obviously, the new Centre shall not be called CARAPAX: it is a logo of RANA and, I suppose, of other people and/or insitutions (TORMED, BCG, RANA, others).

I do not, obviously, take care about storks: I am not an "expert". I presume that other people shall be involved.

Extra best,
Marco



LIBRE DEBAT 3/3

Dear Marco,

Thanks again.

This time I learned that what I felt as being unfair in the Carapax Centre affaire has nothing to do with your current position. So, for more information to explain the - to me very strange - CM's hostilities against Carapax, as well as the "simply" delayed Carapax activity up to 30th October by Court, I will wait and see what hopefully you and/or other sources will bring me by e-mail.

Extra best wishes so far, and best regards,

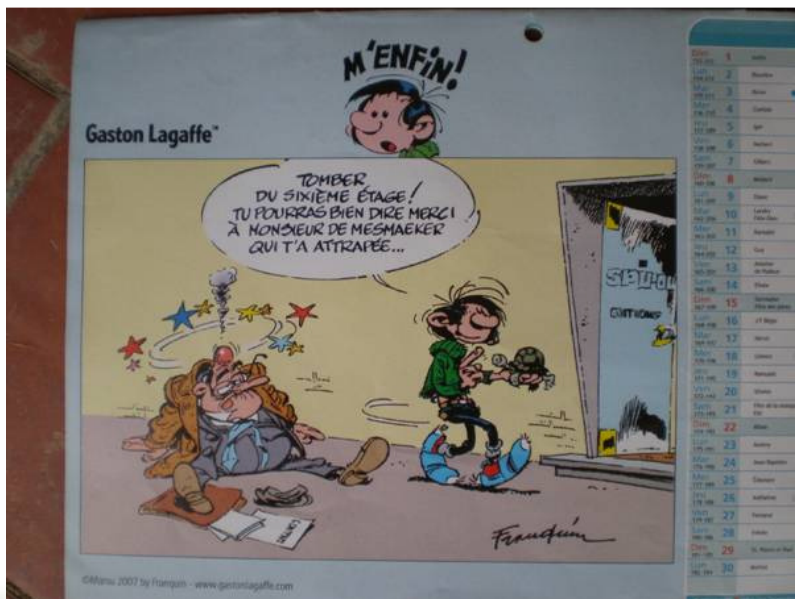
Cornelius



There are probably no turtles or tortoises in this bag, maybe stones ?



Marco, what a joly great jumper with good supporters only.



No, it's not Marco, but Mr De Mesmaeker who received CARAPAX Center falling from the sky.

(Gaston : "falling from sixth floor ! You can say thank you to Mr De Mesmaeker who succeeded in catching you").





RETRAITE

Apart from that : Alain Veysset's retirement as a teacher :



My beloved teachers wrote about me that I was a "legend pillar" of my secondary school community.



Very well known herpetologists : the Servans' and the Duprés' and members from my school staff : an english teacher a history teacher and a french and classics teacher.

Herpétologues connus et enseignants.





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Remerciements :

Logo : Pierre DEOM, rédacteur de La Hulotte
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