

## **If you are thinking of rescuing a foreign dog, here are a few things to consider:**

1. These are not pet dogs being sent over - many are semi-feral and are not socialised to what we are used to in the UK. They are often street dogs used to fighting to survive and this aggression is not going to go away when you bring them into your home.
2. There are diseases present in these countries that may be brought into this country and have the potential to affect you or other dogs in the UK. The worst being rabies which is NOT always visible when the dog is checked and if already incubating, the vaccine will fail to prevent a disease which may kill you or your family.

There are a number of dog diseases not present in the UK but which are common on the continent - tick borne diseases such as Babesia, Ehrlichia and Lymes may have a successful outcome if the vet recognises and can get the medication to treat in time. Leishmania is a fly transmitted disease present in the Mediterranean countries which causes a long term debilitation, losing weight and the treatment is prolonged, expensive and needs to be imported and worst of all the treatment only suppresses the disease - the dog is not cured. A 28 day course to start treatment costs about E100.00 if you can get it.

3. By taking on a foreign rescue, the supply is often a van at a motorway station. You may have in fact helped an industry of very dubious origins where there are already reports of vans stuffed with dogs from 'puppy' farms coming over and then the un'rescued' dogs being ditched along the road before the van returns for another load.

The need to help may have started for the best of reasons but the worst of care is already taking place.

4. If you wish to help the plight of dogs in foreign countries, please support charities trying to improve the situation in the indigenous country. Many vets go on 'spay' holidays organised by charities to help get the unwanted breeding under control and there are ways to support similar projects to get diseases under control and basic care in place.

5. Our own UK rescue dog picture is not much better - most rescue centres are overflowing and are desperate for dogs to be re-homed. Many dogs in rescue are the result of family break-ups or losing of accommodation so are closer in temperament to what you would expect and if you are working the reputable rescue organisations such as Battersea or Blue Cross, proper checks for health, aggression and suitability for rehoming will have been done. Even if you cannot take on a local dog needing rescue, most rescue centres welcome volunteers to help with fundraising, walking, fostering and socialising of the dogs.