

DOGS AND MONKEYS CONFISCATED FROM APTUIT EVOTEC'S EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORIES IN VERONA. LAV APPOINTED LEGAL GUARDIAN FOR THE ANIMALS, WHO ARE NOW SAFE.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION CLOSED: APTUIT OFFICIALS INVESTIGATED FOR ABUSE AND 'UNNECESSARY' KILLING OF BEAGLE DOGS, MACAQUES AND MARMOSETS

LAV: A GREAT SUCCESS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS, NOW WE AWAIT THE DEFINITIVE CONVICTION OF THOSE WHO COMMITTED THESE CRIMES

The Public Prosecutor's Office has concluded the preliminary investigation against the multinational pharmaceutical research company Aptuit, entering the veterinarian and the company's former president in the register of suspects. The charges are very serious: mistreatment of animals and unnecessary killing, offences respectively sanctioned by the Criminal Code with imprisonment of up to 18 months or a fine of up to 30,000 and imprisonment of up to two years.

"The seizure of 25 animals, including dogs and monkeys, from the largest multinational pharmaceutical company in Italy is historic news: they have been rescued from a fate of suffering inside these walls, where, together with thousands of dogs and monkeys, they are subjected to injections, withdrawals, toxicity tests that lead to death after long agony, and the implantation of telemetric probes, all in darkness and in unacceptable conditions," said Valeria Albanese of LAV. *According to the results of the preliminary investigation carried out by the Public Prosecutor's Office, the company failed to comply with even the minimum criteria of animal management required by law, causing serious physical and psychological damage to the animals."*

In fact, the animals were kept in inadequate spaces and lacked basic elements such as a simple kennel for resting. They were left on the cold tiled floor of a laboratory with no sunlight, subjected to painful experiments, inadequate care, surgery to insert electrical implants that could not be removed, and finally destined not only to be killed unnecessarily, but to be killed, causing further suffering.

"The news of the closure of the preliminary investigation following the seizure of the 25 animals comes two years after our first report on the arrival of a shipment of several beagles at the Aptuit company, a multi-million-euro multinational based in Verona (177 million in 2022) that carries out animal testing on behalf of international pharmaceutical companies. Why do so many beagles arrive in the city of Verona if the use of dogs and monkeys for experimental purposes is only authorised by the Ministry of Health in exceptional circumstances? And how are they used and cared for by the company? And what happens to the dogs and monkeys at the end of the project? To answer these questions, we asked the competent authorities, the Municipality of Verona and the Carabinieri Forestali, with whom we had filed two complaints, to carry out thorough checks and inspections. Public opinion was not indifferent either: we organised a national demonstration in which many animal rights activists took part, and we managed to get a motion signed by the city council committing the mayor of Verona to 'demand the release of the dogs currently being used for research' at the Aptuit farm," added Lorenza Zanaboni of LAV.

At the end of October 2021, thanks to LAV's requests and the pressure exerted by the Carabinieri Forestali of Verona, the Public Prosecutor's Office ordered inspections of the company, which in April 2022 led to the seizure of 7 beagle dogs, all the marmoset monkeys who were held at Aptuit at the time of the inspection, and 7 Java macaques, as well as the opening of the investigation.

In 2022, LAV became the legal guardian of 7 beagles, 7 macaques and 11 marmoset monkeys, which are currently being cared for and looked after by competent staff in veterinary clinics that have plenty of space

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and staff who have been following dogs from abuse and mistreatment for years. The primates are at the Animatura Wild Sanctuary Rescue Centre in Semproniano (GR), which specialises in exotic species and has for years been home to more than 50 primates rescued from laboratories, who are undergoing complex rehabilitation to make up for years of physical and psychological abuse.

"If these very serious irregularities were found in what is considered 'excellence' in pharmaceutical research, what is happening now, at this very moment, in the more than 500 Italian laboratories? We trust the authorities and hope that this is the beginning of a process that will discover what has been hidden until now." concludes Gianluca Felicetti of LAV.

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