



## PAWSITIVE IMPACT: SOLIDARITY TOURISM AND ANIMAL THERAPY

PAWSITIVE IMPACT PROJECT KICKS OFF IN ITALY

The Pawsitive Impact: Solidarity Tourism and Animal Therapy project officially launched with a successful kick-off meeting held in Bologna, Italy, on 25–26 October 2025.

Hosted by our Italian partner Igor Vitale International, the meeting brought together all project partners: Edupals (Germany) as coordinator and Mykonos International Initiative (Greece). This first transnational meeting marked the beginning of a two-year collaboration focused on innovation in vocational education, animal welfare, and sustainable tourism.

### PARTNERS

EDUPALS



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During the first day, project partners came together to align on the project's objectives, define roles and responsibilities, and plan the upcoming activities. This initial coordination ensured a shared vision and a structured approach for the implementation phase, setting a strong foundation for effective collaboration among all partners.

The second day was dedicated to a workshop titled "Animal Assisted Therapy: A Symbiotic Healing Space – Transferability in Solidarity Tourism." The session explored how animal-assisted therapy can be integrated into ethical and socially responsible tourism practices, highlighting its potential to create meaningful experiences for participants while supporting animal welfare and community engagement.





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As part of the programme, participants visited Mačja Preja, a small animal rescue and cat shelter located near Koper, on the Italian-Slovenian border. The visit provided valuable insights into the shelter's operational model, particularly in terms of animal care practices and the interaction between animals and visitors. This hands-on experience helped bridge theory and practice, offering inspiration for the project's future activities.



Over the next two years, the project will focus on developing a practical handbook for trainers and professionals, creating a digital training pathway to support the ethical integration of animal-assisted therapy into tourism, and designing an AI-based matching system to connect individuals with animals for adoption or therapeutic engagement.



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Reflecting on the progress made since the kick-off meeting, the partnership is confident that Pawsitive Impact will generate meaningful and innovative outcomes, benefiting both communities and animals while promoting more responsible and inclusive tourism practices.



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