



International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation
Annual Report 2025

2 | Content

3 Editorial

4 2025 in pictures

7 A vision that lives on

8 Our global network

10 Responding worldwide

15 Working as one

16 Your donation makes a difference

18 Financials

20 Reading the signs

Stronger together

In 2025, search and rescue dog teams from our member organisations proved the value of professional collaboration in a variety of operations. They searched for missing or buried people, supported other emergency responders, and provided vital information – even when rescue was no longer possible. Every operation is driven by individuals who take responsibility, share their expertise and collaborate across borders. Common standards and shared knowledge strengthen search and rescue dog work worldwide.

My heartfelt thanks go to our donors, partners, and everyone who stands alongside us. Thanks to your support, we are able to strengthen search and rescue dog teams around the world and ensure that professional assistance is available wherever it is needed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Balog'.

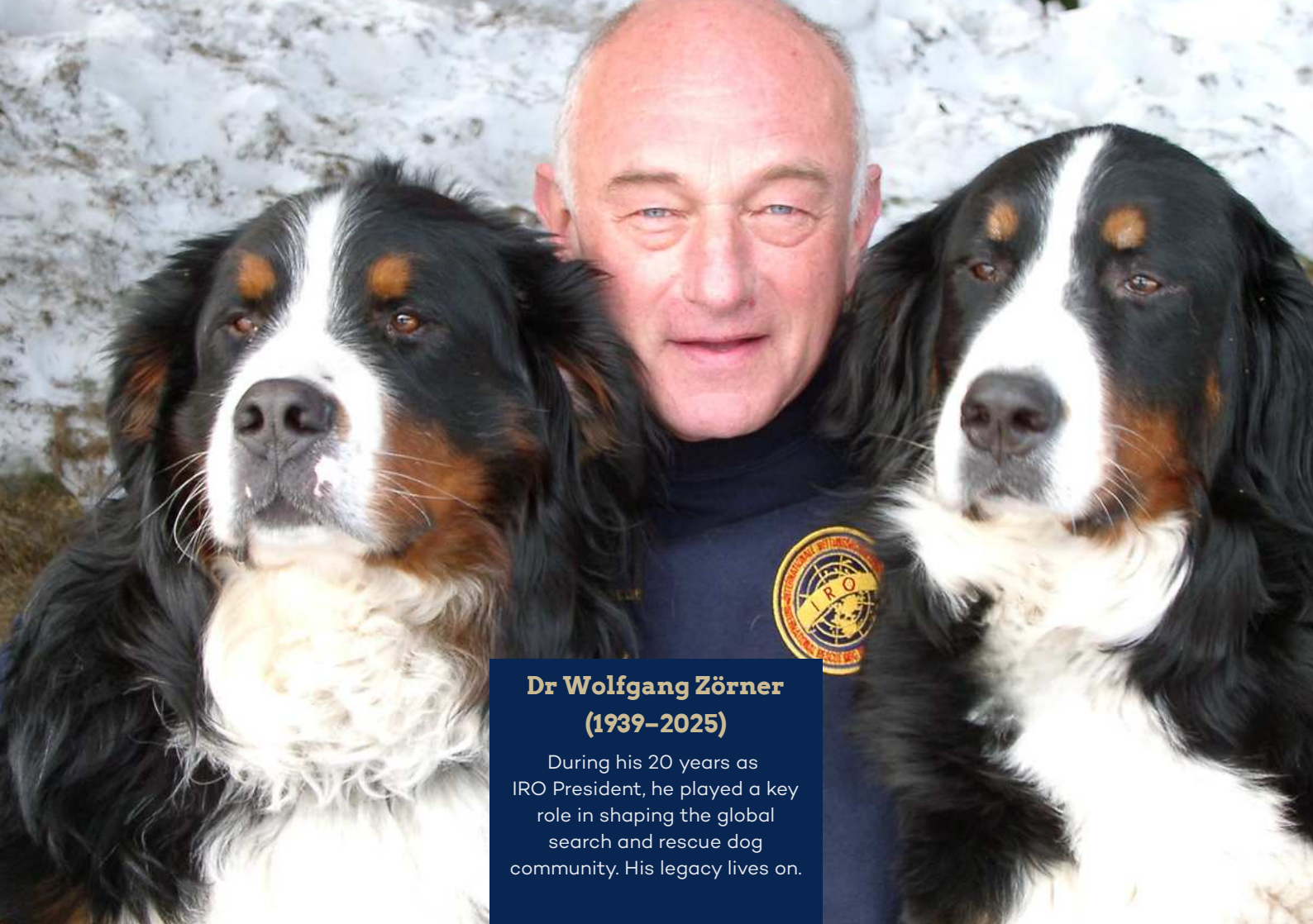
Alois Balog

President of the International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation

Moments that stay with us







**Dr Wolfgang Zörner
(1939–2025)**

During his 20 years as IRO President, he played a key role in shaping the global search and rescue dog community. His legacy lives on.

What still unites us today

Shared values at the heart of an international community

Dr Wolfgang Zörner was a founding member of the International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation (IRO) and its first president. From 1993 to 2013, he led the organisation, fostering close cooperation between search and rescue dog organisations across national borders. He dedicated much of his time as president to building and developing the IRO.

He was a firm believer in bringing organisations together to share knowledge and establish common standards. Central to this approach were international training and the exchange of knowledge and experience, enabling organisations to learn from one another and develop their work on a shared foundation.

From its early beginnings, the IRO has grown into a global network spanning more than three decades. Dr Wolfgang Zörner played a defining role in shaping that journey.

IRO members worldwide

Across four continents, the International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation connects institutions of different sizes, from small associations to state-run organisations.

Professionalism is essential in search and rescue dog work – together with our 137 member organisations*, we ensure this is achieved in training and deployment.

* As at: December 2025





137

member organisations

43

countries

You can find a detailed
overview of all our member
organisations on our website.
www.iro-dogs.org/en/about-us



No two searches are the same

Each year, our member organisations' search and rescue dog teams respond to around 2,000 incidents worldwide. They search for missing or buried people following building collapses and major disasters. Three operations from 2025 demonstrate the variety of their work.



Vienna, Austria

Building collapse

On 13 November 2025, a building collapsed in Vienna. Our member organisation, Feuerwehr Wien Rettungshunde, sent search and rescue dogs Arvi and Flori to search the unstable rubble. They found no signs of anyone being buried beneath the rubble. This gave the emergency responders the certainty they needed to continue their work.

A professional search can provide vital reassurance.

Bangkok, Thailand

Earthquake-related building collapse

On 28 March 2025, a 30-storey building under construction collapsed following a major earthquake in Bangkok. Sixteen search and rescue dog teams joined the search. The heat, unstable ground and aftershocks made conditions particularly challenging. The dogs helped to locate people and provided vital information.



Seoul, South Korea

Tunnel collapse

On 11 April 2025, a metro tunnel under construction near Seoul collapsed. Several search and rescue dog teams joined other emergency responders in searching for two missing workers. One of them was rescued alive after 13 hours. Despite intensive efforts, the second worker could not be saved.

When every indication counts

In late August 2025, a search operation was triggered in Mae Chaem district, Thailand, due to flash floods and a landslide. A young mother and her two children were missing. Six search and rescue dogs from our member organisation, the Thailand Rescue Dog Association, joined the police, the military, and other emergency responders in the search.

During the search, Lilly showed particular interest in a muddy pond. A second dog, Sahara, was brought in to verify Lilly's indication, and she also alerted at the same spot. The rescue crews then focused their efforts on the area and recovered the missing mother from the mud.

The search for the two children continued. Several dogs repeatedly alerted in the surrounding area. However, due to unstable ground, heavy debris and a lack of specialist equipment, recovery was not possible during the operation.





Trust grows with every training session

During a search, Fjiero works independently, relying on his sense of smell. Meanwhile, Jurgen needs to read Fjiero, stay aware of their surroundings, and make decisions. This requires trust and many hours of training for the dog and handler to learn to understand each other.



A true partnership between a dog and its handler does not develop overnight. It is formed through dedication, trust, and countless hours spent working together.

Jurgen Vliegen, operational dog handler

Over the years, Jurgen and Fjiero have learnt to work together seamlessly. They have passed exams and mission readiness tests, growing in knowledge and skill with every challenge. This has built the reliability that matters when they are called into action.

Our global activities

Dogs are not born heroes

Saving lives with the help of dogs! This is the vision that unites all members of our organisation. With our globally recognised training programme, we ensure that dogs become lifesavers under the guidance of highly qualified, dedicated professionals:

38

training events took place
around the world.

22

countries covered by our
training activities.

668

dogs completed an
IRO Test.

61

search and rescue dog teams
were certified as mission-ready.

Together, we strengthen teams

Mission readiness takes time

Growing as a team

Regular training builds trust and develops the skills of both dog and handler.

Preparing for deployment

Realistic exercises prepare teams for changing conditions and challenging search scenarios.

Ensuring quality

Exams and mission readiness tests show whether the dog and handler are well prepared for the demands of a real operation.



Your donation will support search
and rescue dog teams as they
prepare for deployment.

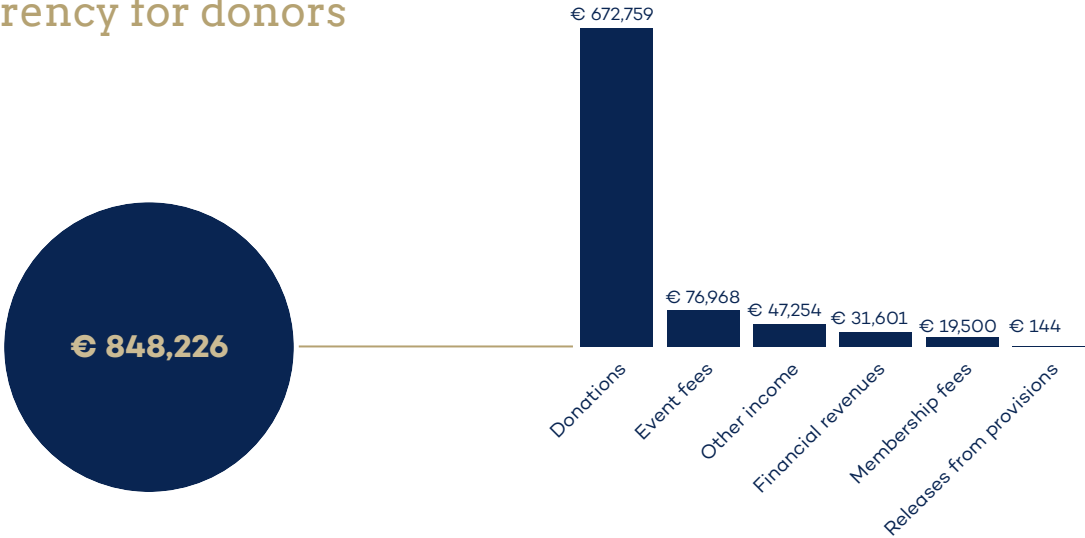
www.iro-dogs.org/en/donate



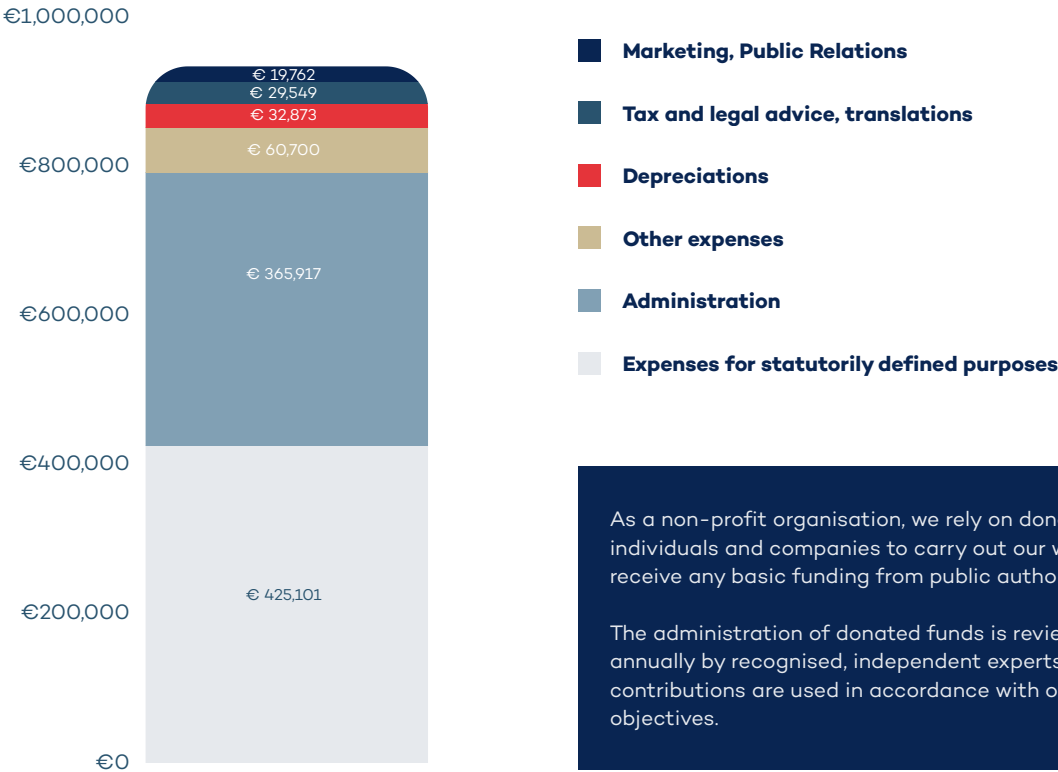
Financial report 2025

Transparency for donors

Income



Expenditure



As a non-profit organisation, we rely on donations from both individuals and companies to carry out our work. We do not receive any basic funding from public authorities.

The administration of donated funds is reviewed and disclosed annually by recognised, independent experts, ensuring that all contributions are used in accordance with our statutory objectives.

What dogs tell us

Understanding a dog's body language

Dogs communicate in many different ways. Their posture, ears, eyes and tail can all provide clues as to how they are feeling. By observing them carefully, we can learn to notice even the subtlest changes in their behaviour.

The whole picture matters

A single signal rarely tells the full story. For example, a wagging tail does not necessarily mean that a dog is happy. What matters is the overall picture. What is the dog's posture? Where are they looking? What is happening around them?



Understanding builds trust

For search and rescue dog teams, it is essential to know their dog's signals. Handlers must closely observe how their dog works and be aware of any changes in behaviour. Are they focused? Do they need a break? Have they picked up an interesting scent?



Knowing a dog well makes it easier to understand their signals and respond appropriately, both on deployment and in everyday life.

Give them space

Take signs of uncertainty or stress seriously. Keeping your distance and giving a dog enough space can help to ease the situation.

Don't force interaction

Not all dogs want contact at all times. If a dog looks away or backs off, it is better to respect this than to force an interaction.

IRO

International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation
Moosstraße 32
5020 Salzburg, Austria

T +43 662 82 65 26 10

office@iro-dogs.org
iro-dogs.org

Donations

IBAN: AT45 3444 2002 0000 1354
BIC: RZOOAT2L442
Donor service: +43 662 82 65 26



iro-dogs.org/facebook



iro-dogs.org/instagram



iro-dogs.org/x



iro-dogs.org/linkedin



iro-dogs.org/youtube

**Setting standards.
Saving lives.**