

Final Report – AKTION Project 2025

Title: Contested Moral Framings: Human and Animal Life

Participating Institutions:

- Centre for Ethics as Study in Human Value, University of Pardubice (Czech Republic)
- Messerli Research Institute, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna (Austria)

Project Duration: January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Project Partners: Dr. Silvia Caprioglio Panizza (UPCE) and Prof. Herwig Grimm (Vetmeduni Vienna)

List of all Project Participants:

Czech Republic – University of Pardubice (Centre for Ethics)

Researchers

- Dr. Silvia Caprioglio Panizza – Docent in Moral Psychology
- Dr. Niklas Forsberg – Head of Research, Conceptual Ethics

Students (PhD and MA)

- Nina Collin – PhD student
- Lisa Hall – PhD student

Austria – Messerli Research Institute (Vetmeduni Vienna)

Researchers

- Prof. Herwig Grimm – Professor of Veterinary Ethics
- Dr. Konstantin Deininger – Postdoctoral Researcher in Alternative Animal Ethics
- Carlo Salzani – FWF Senior Researcher

Students (PhD)

- Erich Linder – PhD student
- Anna Rademann – PhD student

1. Summary of Activities

The AKTION project was structured around three in-person research workshops, supported by guest lectures, collaborative research, and strategic planning for future grants. These activities effectively fostered interdisciplinary cooperation between moral psychology and animal ethics scholars from both institutions.

Workshop 1 – “Orthodox Framings”

Venue: Pardubice

Date: 19–21 February 2025

This event explored traditional approaches in animal ethics, such as utilitarianism, rights-based theory, and Kantian frameworks. Discussions focused on implicit assumptions within these traditions and how they shape moral questions. A keynote by Professor Jeff McMahan (Oxford University) added depth to the exploration of status-based ethics. The workshop initiated a shared conceptual framework for subsequent collaboration.

Workshop 2 – “Unorthodox Framings”

Venue: Vienna

Date: 15–16 May 2025

This workshop examined underrepresented approaches to moral thinking, including relational and Wittgensteinian ethics, with particular focus on the work of Iris Murdoch, Mary Midgley, Cora Diamond, and Alice Crary. This workshop also included guest presentation by the Czech partners at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna.

Workshop 3 – “Ethical Framings: Sources and Critique”

Venue: Pardubice

Date: 1–3 October 2025

The final workshop investigated the psychological and social sources of moral framings—such as perception, intuition, and institutional influence—and considered how these framings might be ethically evaluated. The workshop included a joint session dedicated to developing the structure of the project’s collaborative research paper and future project applications.

2. Research Outcomes and Results

The project successfully achieved its three formal outcomes:

1. Completion of three in-person workshops with guest presentations.
2. A joint academic paper is in progress. All project participants are listed as co-authors, and the PI is in charge of overseeing the paper. The paper offers a conceptual and normative analysis of dominant and alternative framings in animal ethics and is being prepared for submission to the peer-reviewed Q1 journal ‘Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics’.
3. A Lead Agency Grant proposal was submitted with GAČR (Czech Science Foundation) as the lead and FWF (Austria) as the partner institution in March 2025. The proposal built on the AKTION project’s results and aimed to extend this research collaboration.

Additional outcomes include:

- Identification and critique of dominant moral frames (e.g. anthropocentric hierarchies, moral replaceability, the “moral circle” paradigm).
- Development of new conceptual framings grounded in relational ethics, attention, affect, and shared life.
- Close interdisciplinary collaboration that merged moral psychology, conceptual ethics, and applied animal ethics.
- Full engagement of junior researchers: all four MA/PhD students from the core teams contributed as authors and presenters.
- A pathway toward future joint PhD supervision, Erasmus+ exchange, and shared teaching initiatives.

3. Assessment of Cooperation

The cooperation between the University of Pardubice and Vetmeduni Vienna was highly productive. All planned activities were completed on time and at a high academic level. The in-person workshops were instrumental in generating momentum, cohesion, and shared understanding among participants. The integration of external keynote speakers and internal teaching exchanges further enriched the experience.

The partnership now moves into a new phase, including:

- Finalisation and submission of the co-authored academic article.
- Joint pursuit of funding via a new Lead Agency Grant application.
- Further academic exchange and future grant planning (including Erasmus+ and potential EU Synergy grant application).

The cooperation successfully brought together two research groups with complementary expertise and laid the foundation for long-term institutional collaboration.

Annexes

To be submitted along with this report:

- Overview of use of the CZK subsidy (submitted separately by Czech partner).
- Photos, workshop posters, or other documentation.

We thank the AKTION Programme for enabling this collaboration and supporting interdisciplinary research on pressing ethical challenges.



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