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**FCI-Standard N° 277**

**CROATIAN SHEPHERD DOG**

(Hrvatski Ovčar)



**TRANSLATION:** Christina Bailey / Original version: (DE).  
Revised by Renée Sporre-Willes.

**ORIGIN:** Croatia.

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICIAL VALID STANDARD:** 03.11.2014.

**UTILIZATION:** The Croatian Shepherd Dog is a breed with combined habits, which means it can be used for herding of livestock as well as a guard dog or companion dog. One hundred years of breeding the Croatian Shepherd Dog in the valley of east Slavonic, near house and yard, have formed a dog well adjusted to all conditions.

**FCI-CLASSIFICATION:** Group 1 Sheepdogs and Cattle Dogs  
(except Swiss Cattle Dogs).  
Section 1 Sheepdogs  
Without working trial.

**BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY:**

This breed was most probably developed over several centuries out of the descendants of the so-called "Pfahlbauhund" (*Canis Familiaris Palustris*) in the area of eastern Slavonic, which is a part of the Republic of Croatia. According to the hypothesis in the manuscript of Bishop Petar Bakic in the year 1719, which again refers to an earlier manuscript of the Bishop Petar of the year 1374, immigrants brought this breed into the homeland. Prof. Stjepan Romc started the systematic breeding of the Croatian Shepherd Dog in the year 1935. The breed was first publicly presented at the first state dog show on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1949 in Zagreb. Dr. Otto Rohr wrote the first breed standard in the year 1951. The standard was published by the FCI on 31<sup>st</sup> of January 1969.

**GENERAL APPEARANCE:** The Croatian Shepherd Dog is a medium sized dog with a spitz-type, rustic appearance and a head with a fox-like expression with a characteristic coat and colour.

He gives the impression of a proud, agile, strong, compact but on no accounts coarse dog.

**IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS:**

Rectangular body; length to exceed height at the withers. Females can be slightly longer than males.

Height to the elbow is 50% of the height at the withers.

The length of skull to slightly exceed the length of muzzle.

**BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT:** The Croatian Shepherd Dog has a lively temperament and balanced disposition; it is fond of and devoted to his owner. He must neither be aggressive nor nervous and has to be interested in everything that happens in his surroundings. This breed has an inherited sense for the work with domestic animals. The characteristics of this breed are astuteness, courage, liveliness, endurance, patience and level-headedness during work. The breed is easy to train.

**HEAD**

The head shape like a blunt wedge. The skull and muzzle lines are parallel.

**CRANIAL REGION:**

**Skull:** Seen from all sides it is harmoniously rounded. The width of the skull is not more than half of the whole length of the head. The oval shape of the skull is characteristic. The frontal furrow is not very pronounced. The superciliary arches are not pronounced. Occipital protuberance slightly pronounced.

**Stop:** Moderately developed in depth and length.

**FACIAL REGION:**

**Nose:** Must not be set higher or lower than the nose bridge. The tip of the nose is rounded. The nostrils have to be well open but not too pronounced. The nose and the inside of the nostrils have to be completely black pigmented.

**Muzzle:** Tapers towards the nose in the shape of a wedge. The nose bridge is straight and parallel with the line of the skull. The lower jaw has to be strong and harmoniously developed.

**Lips:** Of medium thickness, tight fitting to the jaw; the visible parts are pigmented black. The labial commissure is not visible.

**Jaws/Teeth:** The jaws are strong well developed and the teeth are white and placed evenly in the jaw. Scissor bite but a pincer bite is tolerated. The incisors are placed vertically into the jaws. A complete bite is desirable (42 teeth in accordance with the dental formula). The missing of premolars PM1 and molars M3 is not taken into account. The missing of other teeth is undesirable.

**Cheeks:** Not very pronounced but lean, rounded and well muscled.

**Eyes:** Of medium size, oval shaped, set in an angle of 30–40 degrees. The eyeball is neither bulging nor placed deeply. The eye colour varies from black to dark chestnut brown. The eyelids must not be loose and not show any signs of Entropion or Ectropion. The eyelids have to be completely black-pigmented. The expression has to be intelligent, lively and inquisitive.

**Ears:** Of an even triangular shape with slightly rounded tips. They are set on a line, which follows from the tip of the nose and the inner eye corner. The size of the ears must be well proportioned to the size of the head. The ears can be carried either pricked or semi-pricked. The semi-pricked ear should be erect to 3/5<sup>th</sup> of the length and the tip, the upper 2/5<sup>th</sup> should be folded down. A-symmetrically carried ears is a fault; the same applies to inadequate firm ears which bend more or less during action.

**NECK:** Of medium length, muscular, tapers towards the head, well connected with the body. Its upper and lower lines are straight. It is carried in an angle of 45 degrees to the horizontal line and has to be without wrinkles. The neck appears to be stronger due to the profuse mane, which is especially distinctive in males.

**BODY**: Strong, harmoniously developed still elegant. The body outline is of rectangular shape, which means that body length slightly exceeds the height at the withers, in males by 8-10% and in females by 8-12%.

**Withers**: Slightly prominent with a gradual transition to the neck.

**Back**: Straight, horizontal, well muscled. When moving the back should be firm.

**Loin**: Short, well muscled, well connected to the back and the croup, the transition to the top line is hardly visible. In females the loin is slightly longer than in males.

**Croup**: Well muscled, strong, broad, slightly rounded and slightly oblique.

**Chest**: Deep, broad, capacious but not barrelled. The ribcage to reach down to the elbow. The ribs are well sprung.

**Underline and belly**: Underline has a slight rise from sternum to belly, which has a slight tuck up.

**TAIL**: The tail is a continuation of the line of the croup, strong at the root, gradually tapering towards the tip of the tail, set moderately high. Stretched downwards it should reach the hock joint or be slightly longer, (ca 2–3 cm. longer. At rest it is carried below the topline and usually in the shape of a sabre or hook. When the dog is alert the tail is carried above the topline, either in a sickle shape, ring or rolled, in case of the latter it may lean on to the back. It is profusely covered with hair. There are also dogs, which are born tail less or with a short tail, which is permitted.

## **LIMBS**

### **FOREQUARTERS**:

**General appearance**: In good proportion to the body. The height of the forearms from the ground to the elbow is ca 50% of the height to the withers. The bone is strong but not coarse and with strong musculature. The imagine line which goes through the shoulders, the elbows, the axis of the forearm and the foot is parallel with the middle body axis of the dog and vertical to the ground.

Shoulder: Of medium length, rounded at the top, well fitted to the body, forming an angle of 90–110 degrees with the upper arm, which allows the elbow normal movements. The muscle tone is strongly developed.

Upper arm: Well connected to the body, well muscled and strong, sloping in an angle of 50 degrees to the horizontal line. Parallel seen from front.

Elbow: Well fitting to the body.

Forearm: Vertical and muscular. The elbow is placed on a parallel line with the middle axis of the body. Parallel seen from front. The bone is strong and has to be in proportion to the body.

Carpus (Wrist): In extension of the vertical forearm line, elastic; the pisiform bone should be well pronounced.

Metacarpus (Pastern): Short and elastic. Seen from the front, it should be on the same line as the forearm axis. In profile it is slightly sloping.

Forefeet: Oval in shape and with tight and well arched toes. The pads are firm, elastic and black pigmented. The nails are strong, curved and also black pigmented.

## HINDQUARTERS:

General appearance: Strong but not too heavy, elastic in action, with medium angulations.

Thigh: Long, broad, well muscled. The backside is slightly rounded.

Lower thigh: Muscular. It forms an angle of 55–60 degrees to the horizontal line.

Hock joint: Strong, firm and broad. The imagined vertical lines, which go through the tip of the hocks, have to be parallel.

Metatarsus (Rear pastern): Strong, elastic. In an angle of 80–90 degrees towards the ground.

Hind feet: Oval in shape but slightly longer than the forefeet. The pads are firm, elastic and black pigmented. The nails are strong, curved and also black pigmented. There might be single or double dewclaws. With or without either is permitted and of the same value.

**GAIT/MOVEMENT**: The reach is substantial and with a strong drive. The movement has to be harmonious; there must be no twitching. During action the back has to keep preferably still. The limbs neither to cross over nor be lifted high. The trot is the preferred gait, as it tires the dog the least when working with livestock.

**SKIN**: The skin on head has to be tight and must not show any wrinkles. Elastic and thin, especially in the area of the ears and the forearms. The skin has to be well fitting to the body and pigmented in a slate colour.

The eyelids, the nose leather, the inside of the nostrils, the outer area of the lips, the pads, the nails, the area of the anus, in females also the part of the vulva have to be pigmented black. The inside of the lips must also be well pigmented as well as the gum, the darker the better.

## **COAT**

**Hair**: Profuse, dense, relatively soft of good quality, this means that it is neither woolly nor harsh to the touch. It consists of a topcoat and an undercoat. The topcoat is wavy to curly with a length of 6–14 cm; it is a stand off and elastic coat. There must be no parting on the back.

The undercoat is dense, compact and soft; together with the topcoat it forms an excellent protecting cover for the dog. Long hair to be found on the neck (mane), on the back, on the croup, the rib area, on the back part of the forearms (fringes), trousers on the hind legs (culottes) as well as on the tail (flag), unless the tail is short. The longest coat is at the culottes and near the root of the tail. At the parting between the short hair on forehead and the longer hair on back of skull, length is around 3,5 cm.

The short hair is straight with a length of 1–1,7 cm. It is on the muzzle, the forehead, on the ears, around the eyes, on the cheeks, on the front part of the forelegs and also on Carpus and Metacarpus. On the hind legs the hair is short on the feet and from the Metatarsus to the hock. Females usually have slightly shorter hair and less profuse coat than males.

**Colour:** The colour is black. A few white hairs, evenly spread over the basic colour (provided they are hardly visible) are allowed. White strands as well as body or leg coat, which is completely inter weaved with white hair is not permitted. White marking on the chest is permitted, provided it is small (maximum 5 cm.). White markings on any other body parts are not allowed. The undercoat is definitely black. During the shedding of the coat, the undercoat often goes greyish or sometimes even shows a brown tinge, which is not a fault.

**SIZE AND WEIGHT:**

Height at the withers: Males: 45–50 cm.

Females: 43–48 cm.

Height difference of +/- 3 cm in males and females of excellent type and conformation is tolerated.

**FAULTS:**

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog and its ability to perform its traditional work.

**DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:**

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.
- Skull shorter than muzzle.
- Untypically short muzzle.
- Nose-bridge very concave or convex.
- Loose or short lips. Lips that is not covering the teeth when the mouth is closed.
- Un-pigmented nose (more than 20%): except in case of temporarily or permanently loss due to injury while working.
- Undershot or overshot mouth, wry mouth.
- Any form of strabismus. Blue eyes.
- Unpigmented eyelids (even when only slightly unpigmented)



- Completely dropped ears or signs of ear corrections.
- Body length shorter than the height at the withers.
- Low legged dog of achondroplastic type.
- Completely unpigmented skin.
- Hair on the withers shorter than 4 cm.
- Completely straight hair, woolly hair.
- Long coat, felted hair over the whole body (corded-like coat).
- White markings or strands on any other part of the body than the chest.
- With white completely interweaved hair on the body and the limbs.
- White markings on the chest which are larger than 8 cm.
- Height at the withers outside the standard.

**N.B.:**

- Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.
- Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

# ANATOMICAL FEATURES

