

Candy

Iva Pleše

A gift from God, a world phenomenon, a source of fear and trepidation, an expert on illegals, the pride of the Croatian police, these are some of the expressions used in the media for a mixed-breed dog that wandered into the Bajakovo border crossing at the end of 2016 and was named Candy by the local policemen. The dog, without any previous training, was used in discovering **illegal migrants** hidden in trucks. For these services, Candy earned a medal that was placed around her neck by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Davor Božinović, in the Vatroslav Lisinski concert hall in Zagreb at the celebration of the Croatian Police Day in 2017. The PR move of using sympathy and affection for animals and a personified figure to promote border police activities proved to be successful: media comments ranged from expressions of benevolence to delight and completely omitted mentions of those who had to hide in the truck, more specifically, that these were people who found themselves in this situation because of hardship, not some explosive devices or drugs sniffed out by police dogs. In addition to thunderous applause during the awarding of the medal, the dog Candy (and thus indirectly the Croatian police) also earned compliments on social networks such as “little darling” or “smart girl” and wishes for a “successful and long career”. The shrewdness of the PR service of the Croatian Police is revealed by a comment from a reader who not only finds nothing dehumanizing in this situation, but, on the contrary, says: “Such a nice story, I'm glad that there is still some humanity and love in people”. According to police officers, Candy also knew how to precisely recognize migrants, as she distinguished them from, for instance, truck drivers “from the same region”. One of the “theories” offered as an explanation for this, which further dehumanizes and demonizes, even profiles people on the move by “species”, is that “migrants beat her up and now she somehow senses their fear, adrenaline, smell or something”. This is a case of using animalistic (and, in a broader sense, naturalistic) elements in the production of anti-migrant discourses (cf. **wild animals**) but also of using nature/animals as a weapon in the fight against **illegalized migration** (cf. **weaponized landscape**).

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