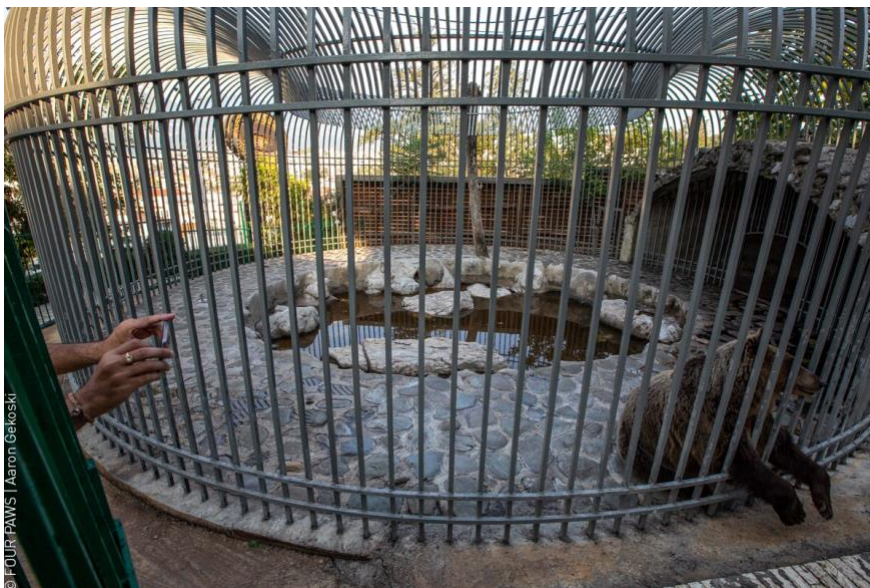


**Mark, Albania's 'Last' Restaurant Bear is Rescued
From FourPaws
December 2022**



We are celebrating a huge milestone in Albania's sad chapter of restaurant bears. After 20 years of suffering in a concrete cage, Albania's last restaurant bear finally got to start over, thanks to your support.



This is going to be a longer update but I wanted to share some personal experiences with you.

Let's start straight away with Mark's rescue diary, where you will get a unique look behind the scenes.



The first visit

On Monday, we visited Mark in the restaurant in Tirana. His cage was so much smaller than it seems in the pictures! For more than 20 years Mark never felt anything soft under his paws. For more than 7000 days he had to sleep on hard concrete floor, can you believe that?!

Generally Mark seems to have a really calm, friendly and relaxed personality. What really surprised me was his special friendship with the cats living at the restaurant. While he was eating the bread, a cat was going inside the cage, nearly stepping on his paw.

First, I was worried about the cat but Mark just let her pass. She even stole some bread from him! In the end, they were having their lunch next to each other, just a few centimeters between them.



Mark's big day

On Wednesday, we arrived at the restaurant in very early morning. Journalists gathered around and watched every step closely. Then, the first critical moment came and Julia darted Mark.

I have observed the darting of bears in rescue missions countless times. It isn't very painful but some react aggressive and others are scared but never have I seen a reaction like Mark's.

He didn't react at all. He was lying on the floor calmly and just briefly turned his head around. All of us watched him closely to make sure he would be ok. We observed how he got tired and soon he fell into a deep sleep.

After a short vet check, Mark was ready to finally leave the cage he has spent the last 20 years in. It took 8 people to carry Mark. He weighs about 240kg! It was a long way to the transport crate, including some steep stairs but in the end, Mark was carefully loaded into the transport crate.



Nearly 50 hours on the road

We passed through seven countries and traveled around 44 hours but all the time we were in a good mood and just happy that Mark would soon start a new life. We made several stops to check in on Mark and provide him with some snacks.

You have no idea what a gourmet Mark is! Even though he had been fed with a diet consisting mainly of old bread for years, and we offered him a variety of tasty treats like apples, carrots and cucumbers, he just wanted to eat grapes.



Mark's new forever home: BEAR SANCTUARY Arbesbach

On Friday, very early in the morning, we arrived at BEAR SANCTUARY Arbesbach in Austria. We all couldn't wait to see how he would react to his nature-like outdoor enclosure! How would he

react to the snow? How would he feel walking on soft floor for the first time?

Then, the moment finally came and we opened the transport crate to his new home. Slowly Mark sat up, looking at the snow with big eyes. Sniffed the cold air. But he was too shy to leave his crate and he lay down again to take another nap.

We gave him some time to get used to the situation but after two hours, he finally gathered all his confidence to walk the first steps into his new home.