



EU DOG & CAT ALLIANCE

Calling for EU action to build a better Europe for dogs and cats

About the EU Dog and Cat Alliance

The EU Dog and Cat Alliance was launched in 2014. Our members are organisations from across the EU which are working to protect dog and cat welfare. Together we are calling for EU action to build a better Europe for dogs and cats.

The secretariat for the Alliance is provided by the UK charity and founding member, Dogs Trust, with a dedicated European Policy Advisor based in Brussels.



The Current EU Situation

There are around 61 million owned dogs and 66 million owned cats in the EU. Cross-border activities involving dogs and cats can therefore have a huge impact on human and animal health and welfare, consumer protection and the functioning of the internal market. Despite this, there is currently very little EU legislation to protect dog and cat welfare. This means that national standards can vary widely across the EU, with welfare issues arising as a result.

The EU only has competence to legislate in certain areas, such as consumer protection, public health or on the functioning of the internal EU market. The EU Dog and Cat Alliance therefore focuses on issues which can impact these areas, and which also affect the health and welfare of millions of dogs and cats in the EU.



Dog and Cat Welfare issues in the EU

Commercial Breeding and Sale

When puppies and kittens are bred for commercial purposes, welfare standards can vary widely between breeders. This can result in serious welfare issues and, in many cases, high costs for 'consumers'. Puppies and kittens bred in poor conditions can also experience certain health problems. They may also not be given enough experience of different environments, people or other animals to allow them to develop into confident adult animals. When dogs develop fear-related behaviour problems, this can be a long term threat to their welfare, being a problem for owners and one of the top reasons for animals being handed over to rehoming organisations. Adult breeding dogs which have been removed from commercial breeding establishments and rehomed as pets have also been reported to have health and behaviour problems.

Puppies and kittens in the EU may be sold online, or through a trader other than a breeder. This means that the new owner may be unaware of where and how their new pet has been bred and the experiences they have had.

Another concern is the effect of selective breeding practices on the welfare of dog and cat breeds. Different breeds have been bred separately from each other for many years. In general, for a dog or a cat to be registered as a pedigree animal, both of its parents must be registered members of the same breed. The lack of genetic diversity which this creates can lead to high incidences of specific inherited conditions in certain breeds, such as cancer or epilepsy. Dog and cat breeds may also be bred to have specific, often exaggerated body shapes. Extreme physical features, such as very flat faces or very wrinkled skin, can be associated with welfare issues such as breathing difficulties or skin conditions.

We are calling for:

- EU legislation requiring the compulsory permanent identification and registration of dogs and cats on an appropriate database, which is linked to an EU database.

This would allow traceability to help protect animal health and welfare, public health and improve consumer protection.

- EU legislation requiring the licensing of dog and cat breeders by Member States.

This would improve the functioning of the EU internal market by ensuring minimum standards across all Member States, as well as improving animal welfare and ensuring consumer protection.

Movements across Member State borders

Dogs and cats may be moved between EU Member States or imported from third countries for trade purposes. They may also be moved for other reasons such as rehoming, participation in shows or exhibitions, holidays with their owners or relocating with their owner to another country. Movements over country borders in this way can pose a risk to both animal and human health if measures aren't taken to prevent diseases from being transferred between countries. Although existing EU legislation aims to minimise the risks of rabies, there are many other diseases which aren't covered by EU legislation but which are of concern, such as leishmaniosis.

Without a system for the identification and registration of dogs and cats, which is accessible across the EU, there is currently little traceability when animals are moved over borders. Where animals are transported in poor conditions over long periods of time, this is also a welfare concern.



We are calling for:

- EU legislation requiring the compulsory permanent identification and registration of dogs and cats on an appropriate database, which is linked to an EU database (see previous page).
- The proper enforcement of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations. This Regulation applies to dogs and cats which are transported in connection with an economic activity. Animals must be fit to travel and not transported in a way likely to cause them injury or undue suffering.

Veterinary Medicines and Medicated Feed

Over this parliamentary term, the EU legislation on Veterinary Medicines and Medicated Feed will be reviewed. The current licensing system for veterinary medicines in Europe may be rigorous, but it is also complex and a lack of alignment between Member States implementing the legislation can add bureaucracy and lead to inefficiencies.

The EU cannot currently be described as having a 'single market' for veterinary medicines. This is of concern because the availability of safe, efficacious veterinary medicines across all EU Member States is vital to protecting both animal health and public health.

We are calling for:

- The introduction of a true single market for veterinary medicines. A more efficient regulatory process will not only improve the availability of medicines to protect animal health but it will contribute to public health.

For further information on our positions, a full list of our member organisations and information on how to become a member, visit our website or contact us using the details below:



www.dogsandcatwelfare.eu



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[@EUdogsandcats](https://twitter.com/EUdogsandcats)



If you are an MEP and would like to meet with us in Brussels to discuss our aims, please contact us using the email address above.

