



**EU DOG & CAT  
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# **Call for an Action Plan to tackle the illegal trade in dogs and cats in the EU**





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**The EU Dog & Cat Alliance calls for action based on the findings of the recently published *Study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices*.**

**The study, commissioned by the European Commission, provides much-needed evidence as to why EU legislation on the breeding and trade of dogs and cats is paramount to not only improving companion animal welfare in Europe, but to also safeguarding public health, consumer protection and the EU internal market. The EU Dog & Cat Alliance and its members have carried out complementary research which confirms these findings.**

## **The Problem:**



- PETS travel scheme abused: puppies and kittens for commercial sale imported under the non-commercial Regulation (EU) 576/2013
- EU-wide problem, exploiting discrepancies in pet legislation, welfare standards and prices among Member States
- Unscrupulous vets falsifying data on pet passports
- Breeders and dealers supplying young puppies under the legal age of 15 weeks
- Puppies kept and transported in poor conditions, severely impacting their health
- Ineffective border controls, few visual checks at ports, airports and controlled border crossings
- Negligible sharing of intelligence amongst key agencies
- Lack of sufficient penalties to deter the illegal trade

This illegal trade can only be addressed through a comprehensive approach, involving the European Commission, European Parliament and Member States, including agencies and border and veterinary authorities.

**The EU Dog & Cat Alliance calls on the European Commission to draw up an Action Plan to tackle the illegal trade in dogs and cats in the EU.**



## The Action Plan should cover the following:

- **Animal health and welfare:** Stopping the illegal trade in hundreds of thousands of young dogs and cats every year and the horrendous breeding and transport conditions which can result in life-long health problems or behavioural issues.
- **Public health:** Concrete steps to ensure that commercial practices involving dogs and cats do not result in zoonoses being spread in the EU, including not only rabies and *Echinococcus multilocularis*, but also ones that are not covered by EU legislation, such as leishmaniosis.
- **Consumer protection:** Addressing the serious consumer protection issues arising from illegal trade in companion animals through: public education campaigns on buying pet animals, improving EU consumer protection legislation for the trade of pets and ensuring its better enforcement across all Member States.
- **Internal market:** Compulsory licensing and harmonised EU standards for breeders, covering the conditions in which companion animals are kept. Appropriate controls on the internet trade of dogs and cats.
- **Trafficking:** Intelligence to be shared between agencies (including veterinary regulatory authorities), carriers, customs officials and veterinarians and acted upon where necessary as part of nationwide/EU-wide multi-agency strategy to tackle the problem. Treating this issue as a serious trafficking offence, comparable to the trafficking of drugs, firearms or wildlife.





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The Alliance would also like to see the European Commission progress with a **delegated act** under the Animal Health Law on **compulsory permanent identification and registration of dogs and cats on an appropriate national or regional database, which would be linked to an EU database.**

**For more information please see:**

**[www.dogandcatwelfare.eu/publications](http://www.dogandcatwelfare.eu/publications)**

Dogs Trust (2014). The Puppy Smuggling Scandal.

Dogs Trust (2015). Puppy Smuggling: The Scandal Continues.

EU Dog & Cat Alliance (2015). The welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices: a review of the legislation across EU countries.  
and

European Commission Specific Contract SANCO 2013/12364 (2015). Study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices: Final report.

