

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004677/16
to the Commission
Daniel Caspary (PPE)
(7 June 2016)

Subject: EU subsidies to the Irish Ministry of Agriculture resulting in support for the dubious sale of greyhounds to China

The Irish Ministry of Agriculture receives financial aid under the common agricultural policy. I have the following questions relating to the use of these funds:

1. Is the Commissioner aware that the bodies benefiting from these EU subsidies include the Irish Greyhound Board, which sells greyhounds to China, and thus supports dog races in which few if any of the animal welfare standards in force in Europe are complied with?
2. Does the Commission regard this as a problem?
3. What measures is the Commission considering in order to halt financial support for sales of greyhounds to China which are questionable in terms of animal welfare?

Answer given by Mr Hogan on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2016)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that no mention of support for greyhound breeding is made in the Irish Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020, including the associated local development strategies under Leader ⁽¹⁾.

As regards direct payments, most of them are decoupled from production, meaning that they do not target any particular sector and leave the decision of what and how to produce to EU farmers. Beneficiaries of direct support are, nonetheless, subject to cross-compliance and could get a penalty on their amount of support in case they do not respect certain EU basic rules linked, *inter alia*, to environment, animal health and animal welfare. However, dogs do not belong to the group of animals under cross-compliance being limited to calves, pigs and other animals kept for farming purposes. Concerning exports of live animals to third countries, there are no EU export refunds. Hence, the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) funds do not foster breeding activities of greyhounds in Ireland or the sales of these animals to third countries.

⁽¹⁾ Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale.