

(English version)

Question for written answer E-005216/18
to the Commission
Miriam Dalli (S&D)
(12 October 2018)

Subject: Companion animals

The welfare of pets is currently not the subject of EU legislation.

The Commission argues that the EU's competence on animal welfare is limited by treaty and that it is not, as such, an EU objective and is only relevant if it affects EU policies such as the internal market, agriculture or public health.

The introduction of pet welfare under EU animal welfare law could provide a common understanding of animal welfare across Europe. It could propose a clear set of duty and care obligations for users and keepers of animals that would further have a positive impact on public health.

Moreover, a definition of companion animals is required if the EU is serious about fighting the extensive illegal trade in companion animals across Europe.

1. Is the Commission prepared to take the lead and promote specific EU legislation addressing the welfare of companion animals?
2. Does the Commission agree with connecting national and EU databases to track the breeding and trade of companion animals, as well as to allow identification traceability?
3. An EU-wide database could help with the issue of traceability. Does the Commission plan on pushing for such a database?

Answer given by Mr Andriukaitis on behalf of the European Commission
(7 December 2018)

1. The welfare of pets, referred to by the Honourable Member, is currently not subject of EU legislation. However, within the EU Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012-2015⁽¹⁾, a 'Study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices' was conducted. The Commission will further look into this area in the context of an evaluation recommended by the European Court of Auditors⁽²⁾.
2. With effect from 1 November 2018, the zootechnical and pedigree requirements for the marketing of pure-bred dogs and cats are no longer harmonised at the level of the European Union.
3. At present, trade in dogs, cats and ferrets is governed by the animal health conditions laid down in Council Directive 92/65/EEC⁽³⁾, which include requirements for registration of the establishment of origin, identification of the animals intended for movement to another Member State, official certification and traceability through the computerised system TRACES⁽⁴⁾. Transport of these animals is subject to the animal welfare conditions laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005⁽⁵⁾.

Regulation (EU) 2016/429⁽⁶⁾ of the European Parliament and of the Council ('Animal Health Law') empowers the Commission to adopt delegated acts concerning the recording in a database of information related to animal species other than bovine, ovine, caprine, porcine and equine species due to the specific and significant risks posed by those species in order to ensure efficient disease prevention and control measures and to facilitate traceability. However, the keeping of pet animals for non-commercial purposes is not affected by the registration obligation referred to above.

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/strategy_en

⁽²⁾ Special report No 31/2018: Animal welfare in the EU: closing the gap between ambitious goals and practical implementation.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A31992L0065>

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/traces_en

⁽⁵⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32005R0001>

⁽⁶⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2016.084.01.0001.01.ENG