

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0968/00

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to the Commission

Subject: Dog fights

The illegal practice of holding dog fights for the purposes of betting is now widespread in many European countries. In Italy alone, the courts have estimated that more than 500 million euro is spent each year on betting and, according to the Anti-Vivisection League, more than 5 000 dogs die each year as a result of this practice.

In 1991 the United Kingdom adopted the Dangerous Dogs Act, which inspired similar legislation in France last year, seeking to eliminate dogs of the pit-bull breed in order to deter the holding of further dog fights.

However, the Anti-Vivisection League, which is committed to preventing and exposing this practice, has listed a further 40 different breeds of dog used in fights, including German Alsatians, Doberman, bulldogs and other popular breeds.

In fact, the United Kingdom law has not succeeded in eliminating the criminal organisations which organise the fights and other ways of dealing with this problem are clearly needed.

Nothing is being done at present to draw up European provisions to tackle the issue and put an end to this practice, although the section on health in the Commission's work programme for 2000 provides for a European Parliament and Council regulation to be submitted during the year to lay down health policy standards for the movement of pet animals, which could serve as an instrument for action in this sector.

Does the Commission intend to intervene in this area, taking due account of the need to condemn the practice of organising, betting on and watching fights between dogs or other animals, while seeking to avoid penalising specific breeds such as pit-bulls, since animals are the main victims of this criminal activity as they are encouraged by the use of violence to develop excessive and unnatural aggressive tendencies?