

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1145/03

by Charles Tannock (PPE-DE), Generoso Andria (PPE-DE), John Bowis (PPE-DE), Chris Davies (ELDR), Jean Lambert (Verts/ALE) and Lennart Sacrédeus (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: The trade in cat and dog fur

The Commission has been made aware that animal welfare organisations have provided evidence of extraordinary cruelty in certain Asian countries regarding the killing of cats and dogs for their fur, which is then exported to other countries including the European Union. This involves on occasion the hanging and skinning alive of these animals and other appalling acts of cruelty. The fur is often substituted illicitly for other types of fur or even sold as artificial fur.

Fur produced from any animal within the European Union must be obtained in a manner which is consistent with the requirements of Council Directives 93/119/EEC<sup>1</sup> and 98/58/EC<sup>2</sup>. These Directives insist on a respect for the welfare of animals which is clearly absent from the treatment of cats and dogs in countries such as China.

In response to Written Question E-1203/02<sup>3</sup> by Mr. Whitehead, Commissioner Byrne states that:

'Since a complete ban on the production, use, trade and import of those furs - as imposed by certain Member States - would apply regardless of the conditions under which the animals are kept and killed, it is evident that such measures are not motivated by solely animal welfare concerns. The motivation is primarily an ethical question, whether to use products derived from animals which are mainly regarded as companion animals'.

The Commission has already explained in its answer to Written Question E-3981/00<sup>4</sup> that a ban on importation of cat and dog fur that was not accompanied by a ban on internal EU trade in such items would probably fall foul of W.T.O. rules. Therefore, to be W.T.O. compliant, any ban on importation of these products would have to be accompanied by a total trade ban within the EU itself. Given that a complete ban of this kind is the only way to prevent such appalling cruelty, on what basis does the Commission say it is evident that a desire for such a ban is not motivated by solely animal welfare concerns? Moreover, does the Commission not accept that a desire to prevent cruelty to animals, quite separate from any desire not to use products derived from companion animals, can be seen as an attempt to prevent a 'breach of public morality' which could justify a restriction of trade in the form of a Commission Directive?

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 340, 31.12.1993, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 301 E, 5.12.2002, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 163 E, 6.6.20012, p. 232.