

**Question for written answer E-006489/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Marc Tarabella (S&D)

Subject: Dog trafficking and animal welfare

The market in imported animals is highly lucrative, so lucrative, indeed, that many people have seized on it as a way to make money at the expense of the animals themselves and their prospective owners. To give just one example, 'importers' bring dogs and cats over from eastern European countries and sell them to pet shops. The aim is simple, to make as much money as possible, and the method used is just as simple: pedigree dogs of all kinds can be bought extremely cheaply from breeders in central Europe. Puppies are separated from their mothers before they are even two months old, and the importers have forged paperwork and vaccination cards ready for when they arrive in the European Union. The animals are then transported to all parts of France with new documents which fraudulently claim that they were bred in France. At this point they are sold to pet shops or 'fake breeders' for considerable sums of money. The traffickers turn a profit at every stage.

Weaning puppies at such a young age, depriving them of contact with other dogs and transporting them thousands of miles without food or water is physically and psychologically scarring.

Far too often, owners are left with ill or traumatised animals. Many are faced with tough financial and ethical choices as a result.

1. Does the Commission plan to introduce psychological, legal or financial support for victims of this kind of fraud in Europe?
2. Does the Commission believe that the victims are adequately protected under EU law?