

**Question for written answer E-003087/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Sergio Berlato (PPE)

Subject: Impact of the movement of animals for adoption

The movement of animals for adoption is reaching alarming proportions in the European Union. Although, on the one hand, it is being portrayed as a healthy symptom of solidarity with many useful social benefits, on the other it entails obvious health, social and economic risks. The health risks are mainly linked to the lack of checks on these animals, which are often transported from one part of Europe to another without any health certificates (which are compulsory for legally traded animals). Transportation is almost always organised on the Internet, and animals are being moved when they might be suffering from viruses, bacterial infections or parasites, which could in many cases be passed on, including to humans. In some cases, for example, animals suffering from the Mediterranean disease leishmaniasis are actually being moved because they are sick, without any consideration for the obvious risk of spreading animal diseases among humans. The social implications are linked to the somewhat dubious proliferation of not-for-profit organisations in connection with these activities. These organisations are assumed to be conducting socially useful activities, which gives them access to funding from various sources, including European funds.

Another social problem is emerging as a result of the exponential increase in the number of pets that are not properly socialised – animals with a high risk of developing behavioural problems, which end up having a more or less direct impact on public authorities and society at large because they cause legal disputes, damage to property, personal injuries, the need for health care, etc. Also, people are adopting dogs from other Member States instead of from within their local area, which means that local organisations are being left to take care of dogs seeking adoption. Nor should the economic connotations be under-estimated. We are talking about practices that are supplanting normal trade in animals. This means that tax revenue is falling and the correct laws of the market are being distorted, with seriously damaging effects for the tax authorities, livestock farming and trade. Lastly, there are black-market implications (there are no checks on animals being moved in this way) in that the so-called 'donations' for adopted animals are often not subject to any fiscal control, and there is a financial pay-off in keeping dogs in sanctuaries run by local institutions and promoting adoptions of dogs from foreign countries instead (supported by vigorous media campaigns whose real economic value it would be interesting to assess), with the result that the animals for which donations are received remain in the sanctuaries.

1. Is the Commission aware of this issue?
2. What provisions is it planning to recommend in order to govern and control animal movements of this kind?