

**Question for written answer E-006758/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Julie Girling (ECR)

Subject: Illegal trade in dogs and cats and the EU internal market

The illegal trade in companion animals in the EU is a highly lucrative practice which affects not only animal welfare, but also the EU internal market.

The Commission's recently published study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices¹ found that: 'Different standards and rules on the welfare of pets in Member States cause distortions of the internal market as the economic valuation of pets is carried out differently. High standards of pet welfare in some Member States increase prices and lead to a competitive advantage for those businesses operating in Member States with lower standards. This situation of unfair competition between stakeholders in different Member States may be considered as having an effect equivalent to restrictions on imports and exports between Member States.'

1. What concrete steps will the Commission take to address these risks to the EU internal market uncovered in the study?
2. Which DGs will be involved in addressing these risks?
3. Can the Commission outline the timeframe for these actions?

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/docs/aw_eu-strategy_study_dogs-cats-commercial-practices_en.pdf