

**Question for written answer E-000996/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Henna Virkkunen (PPE)

Subject: Closing down illegal puppy farms

Over half a million dogs change hands in the EU in the course of any given year, and the pet trade has a turnover of more than one billion euros per annum. There are considerable differences in national legislation on the pet trade in the various Member States. This has facilitated a great deal of illegal cross-border trade in pets and the operation of many puppy farms.

The illegal activities often involved are failure to comply with tax obligations, counterfeiting of documents, ill-treatment of animals and outright animal welfare offences. Unethical and irresponsible puppy farms supplying the dog trade also pose public health risks, as animal health and vaccination requirements are neglected and documents are falsified.

Illegal trade in animals is already the EU's third largest field of organised crime after drugs and arms trafficking. It needs to be tackled in a much more efficient way.

What measures does the Commission intend to take to tackle the illegal trade in animals and illegal puppy farms?

Is the Commission preparing more stringent legislation to improve the common animal identification system?