

**Question for written answer E-002064/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Manuela Ripa (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Commission help to Member States for consumer awareness raising and the training of officials on the illegal pet trade

The development of e-commerce has led to a spectacular increase in the illegal pet trade. Online platforms and social media allowing unverified advertisements substantially contribute to the very lucrative smuggling of companion animals. Even when legal, online pet sales remain unregulated and pose serious risks to the welfare of animals, public health and consumers' rights, and affect the EU internal market through lost taxes and unfair competition.

The 'EU Coordinated Control Plan on online sales of dogs and cats' by the Commission revealed that many of the animals traded are too young, unhealthy or not vaccinated. Transported for long journeys, new-born puppies and kittens suffer from heat or cold, thirst and stress, and are at high risk of transmissible diseases. Those that survive often become poorly socialised and unmanageable, leading to abandonment. Technical difficulties to control the online market were also detected.

1. Is the Commission planning to help Member States to carry out information and awareness-raising campaigns advising citizens to only purchase animals traded in a responsible way with due concern for animal welfare?
2. Will the Commission commit to better law enforcement by providing training on control of online pet trafficking to national public services such as customs and veterinary offices?