

**Question for written answer P-4720/2010
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Sergio Berlato (PPE)

Subject: Illegal trade in stray dogs

On 9 June 2010 I filed a complaint with the Italian Public Prosecutor about the serious problem of stray dogs being traded, and sent to other European countries, by self-styled animal welfare associations and kennel-owners.

The documents I submitted in support of that complaint clearly show that, in Southern and Central Italy, the problem of stray dogs, far from being prevented and controlled, is being exploited. Strays are being caught for sale on the black market, with most of them ending up in Switzerland and Germany, where the fees people are charged to 'adopt' a dog enable those operating this illegal trade to make a profit.

It has emerged that some animals which were no longer in Italy still appeared on the register of Italian kennels and were even offered for long-distance adoption, thus deceiving unwitting members of the public who, on asking to see their adopted pets, were threatened or actually assaulted by kennel-owners who wanted to keep secret the fact that many of these dogs had left Italy or, in the worst case, had been sold to facilities carrying out vivisection or *in vivo* testing for industry.

In view of the foregoing,

1. Is the Commission aware of the situation outlined above?
2. What action does the Commission intend to take to prevent illegal trading in stray dogs in Europe?
3. Does the Commission agree that it should launch a public awareness campaign on the subject to enable our fellow-citizens to recognise kennels which do not fulfil their responsibilities correctly?