



30.5.2016

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition 1071/2014 by Linda Mäki-Sulkava (Finnish) on breeding of unhealthy traits in animals (dogs)

1. Summary of petition

The petition draws attention to the fact that while there are laws on animal welfare and diseases, these laws relate to production animals, not pets. The petitioner states that unhealthy traits are generally accepted in cats and dogs, when the same traits are considered a developmental handicap in production animals. The petition cites dog breeding which has given rise to short noses, excessive hanging skin, and distortion of structural proportions, such as over-heavy bones. She lists many dog breeds which have precisely these unhealthy afflictions. The petition proposes that the laws on animal welfare be revised.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 27 March 2015. Information requested from Commission under Rule 216(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 27 January 2016

To date, the welfare of dogs in the context of breeding activities is not governed by EU rules and remains under the sole responsibility of the Member State concerned.

With reference to the breeding of dogs in the EU, in November 2010 the Council adopted Conclusions on the welfare of dogs and cats¹ where it calls on the Commission to study the differences between the measures taken by the Member States regarding the keeping and breeding of and EU trade in dogs and cats and, if appropriate, to prepare policy options for the harmonisation of the internal market. In addition, the European Parliament urged the

¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/agricult/118076.pdf

Commission to recommend concrete solutions to prevent dogs and cats from being bred and traded in a way which is likely to cause welfare problems¹.

Within this context, and in the framework of the EU strategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015², the Commission decided to perform a study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices, aiming at evaluating if these concerns reflect a general situation in the EU. The study will be published in December 2015.

In light of the outcome of this study, the Commission will consider if further action is necessary.

Conclusion

The welfare of dogs in the context of breeding activities is solely under the competence of the Member States. In the light of the outcome of a study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices, to be published in December, the Commission will consider if further action is necessary with due regard to the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality.

4. Commission reply (REV), received on 30 May 2016

As mentioned in the previous communication, a study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices, aiming at evaluating if these concerns reflect a general situation in the EU was being carried out.

This study, which was published in March 2016, provided a useful analysis of possible animal health and welfare risks for dogs and cats moving between and within Member States.

The Commission would like to reiterate, however, that the welfare of dogs in the context of breeding activities is solely under the competence of the Member States. In the light of the outcome of the above-mentioned study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices the Commission will not consider further action with due regard to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0290+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

² http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/actionplan/actionplan_en.htm