



**EU DOG & CAT
ALLIANCE®**

Briefing on the review of pet movement legislation under the “Animal Health Law”

October 2016

1. About the EU Dog & Cat Alliance

The EU Dog & Cat Alliance represents over 60 organisations from over 20 countries of the European Union. This includes veterinary organisations, organisations which are involved in the rescue/rehoming of dogs and cats and organisations which are working to protect dog and/or cat welfare. The Alliance’s main focus is on improving EU legislation in relation to dogs and cats.

This briefing represents the view of all EU Dog & Cat Alliance members with the exception of the British Veterinary Association (BVA).

2. Background

Regulation (EU) 2016/429 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (“Animal Health Law”) was finally adopted in March 2016, streamlining almost 40 legal acts related to animal health into a single law. It will come into force in April 2021, although for some provisions, such as the non-commercial movements of pet animals, the Regulation envisages a ten-year transitional period.

It presents a critical opportunity to address concerns and shortcomings in the existing EU legislation related to pet movement, namely:

- Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 on the non-commercial movement of pet animals and repealing Regulation (EC) No 998/2003, as well as the implementing and delegated regulations under this Regulation
- Directive 92/65/EEC (Balai Directive) laying down animal health requirements governing trade in and imports into the Community of animals, semen, ova and embryos not subject to animal health requirements laid down in specific Community rules referred to in Annex A (I) to Directive 90/425/EEC.

3. The Problem

- Regulation 576/2013 (the non-commercial Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)) is being used as a cover for commercial dealers from certain Member States on a regular basis to illegally



import puppies into other Member States¹. A notable example of this is the UK, where, in 2015, 2,271 dogs entered the country via PETS from Lithuania, in comparison to only 2 dogs that entered under the Balai Directive. Additionally, 2,694 dogs came from Romania and 3,435 dogs came from Hungary under PETS.²

- Unscrupulous vets are falsifying data on pet passports for PETS, and breeders are supplying young puppies below the age they can legally be imported under PETS.³
- Controls at border inspection posts for compliance with Directive 92/65/EEC and Regulation 576/2013 are few and ineffective, and little to no sharing of information between agencies (including veterinary regulatory authorities), carriers, customs officials and veterinarians nor intelligence-led checks exist, allowing this illegal, commercial trade of puppies to continue.
- This produces a public health risk, as diseases such as rabies, leishmaniosis, ehrlichiosis and babesiosis can spread to other countries and be introduced into non-endemic Member States.

4. What should stay the same in the current rules?

- The requirement for dogs, cats and ferrets to have received an anti-rabies vaccination before being moved between Member States, and for the pet animal to be at least 12 weeks old at the date on which the vaccine was administered.
- The requirement for dogs, cats and ferrets entering a Member State from a Third Country to have undergone a rabies antibody titration test not less than three months before the movement.
- The requirement for dogs being moved into the UK, Ireland, Finland and Malta to be treated against mature and immature intestinal forms of the *Echinococcus multilocularis* (tapeworm) parasite, although the Alliance would prefer the treatment window to be shortened to reduce the risk of reinfection prior to travel.⁴

¹ Dogs Trust (2014). The Puppy Smuggling Scandal.

http://www.dogandcatwelfare.eu/media/filer_public/dd/ad/ddad851f-ac2c-480c-864d-e65de3208fbd/dt_puppy_smuggling_report_v12_web.pdf. p. 4.

² UK Parliament: Response to Written Question 22443.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-01-13/22443>

³ Dogs Trust (2015). Puppy Smuggling: The Scandal Continues.

http://www.dogandcatwelfare.eu/media/filer_public/5c/fe/5cfedc4b-31c8-406e-a765-179b73b06cae/puppy_smuggling_continues_final_report.pdf. p. 8.

⁴ European Food Safety Authority (2015). *Echinococcus multilocularis* infection in animals. Panel on Animal Health and Welfare. In: EFSA Journal, Volume 13, Issue 12, December 2015, pp. 38-41.



- The requirement for dogs, cats and ferrets being moved between Member States or into a Member State from a Third Country to be marked by the implantation of a transponder.

5. What changes should be implemented?

- One of the key problems with the identification requirement for dogs which are moved in the EU, either commercially or non-commercially, is that microchips are not required to be registered at all, let alone on a centrally accessible database, which is linked to a European database. Regulation (EU) 2016/429 creates a legal framework for the introduction of compulsory identification and registration systems of dogs and cats across Member States, and the European Commission has committed to starting preparatory work on a delegated act which could introduce this. The Alliance strongly supports the introduction of a delegated act on the identification and registration of dogs and cats. This would also ensure traceability of companion animals in the EU and, in the event of a disease outbreak, would enable control measures to be most effective.
- Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 requires that there is a 21-day wait after dogs, cats and ferrets have received an anti-rabies vaccination before they may be moved into another Member State. In naturally occurring rabies, the average incubation period in dogs is 3-8 weeks (Greene, 2012). The Alliance strongly believes that the post-vaccination wait period for dogs should be extended to at least 8 weeks (ideally 3 months), in line with the incubation period of rabies. This would mean that dogs could not be moved between Member States before at least 5 months of age. This would also help to address one of the problems with the enforcement of the Pet Travel Scheme – enforcers at ports, airports and border crossings currently find it difficult to age animals. By 5 months of age most dogs will have a significant number of permanent adult teeth,⁵ and so this would help with the ageing of animals.
 - Directive 2013/31/EU amends Directive 92/65/EEC to bring it in line with the requirements for dogs, cats and ferrets under Regulation No 576/2013 for commercial movements. Notably, according to Article 7 and Article 8 of Regulation No 576/2013, Member States can apply for derogation from requirements on intra-EU movement of young pet animals, including with regards to the proposed raised age of 5 months. This takes into consideration the possible concerns of legal breeders in certain EU countries which heavily depend on being able to sell young animals in other countries. The EU Dog & Cat Alliance believes that this derogation

⁵ Dyce, K.M, Sack, W. O and Wensing, K.M. (1987). The head and ventral neck of the carnivores. In: Textbook of Veterinary Anatomy. W. B. Saunders Company, pp. 377.



should only be used in certain circumstances and would not encourage it to be used widely.

- In the list of diseases in Annex II of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 the Alliance would like babesiosis and ehrlichiosis to be added. Furthermore, where diseases such as babesiosis and ehrlichiosis are not present in a Member State, we would like to see a requirement reintroduced for dogs to be treated against ticks before entering the relevant countries. For example, although found in mainland Europe, *Babesia canis* is rare in Ireland, especially in dogs that have not travelled to/from other EU countries or come into contact with those that have. It is crucial to take measures now to prevent introduction of the disease into non-endemic Member States.
- Leishmaniosis, which has zoonotic potential, is also of serious concern. The Alliance would also like this to be added to the diseases listed in Regulation (EU) 2016/429.

6. References

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http://www.dogandcatwelfare.eu/media/filer_public/dd/ad/ddad851f-ac2c-480c-864d-e65de3208fbe/dt_puppy_smuggling_report_v12_web.pdf

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