



# **Study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices**

**Conference on  
"Welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial  
practices"  
Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg  
12 November 2015**

**Andrea Gavinelli  
Animal Welfare  
Directorate for Health and Food Safety**

# SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION:

- *Background*
- *Content of the Study*
  - **Dog and cat health and welfare**
  - **Potential effects on the EU internal market**
  - **Protection of EU consumers**
- *Main findings*
- *Possible opportunities to protect the welfare of dogs and cats*





European  
Commission

## BACKGROUND - 2006

**Community Action Plan** on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010 grouped the various aspects of EU policy on animal welfare governing the keeping of billions of animals for economic purposes in the EU.

- Upgrading existing minimum standards
- Promoting future research a high priority
- Introducing standardised animal welfare indicators
- Ensuring that animal keepers/ handlers as well as the general public are more involved and informed
- Continue to support and initiate further international initiatives



## BACKGROUND - 2010

Conclusion of the **Council of the European Union** on welfare of dogs and cats...

"large differences seem to exist between the different national or regional rules on AW of dogs and cats within the EU"

"those differences may lead to unequal breeding and marketing costs which could create **animal welfare problems, zoonotic risks** and **deception of the citizens** due to the purchase of animals carrying hidden diseases, including genetic defects and/or with irreversible behavioural problems".



COM has to study the situation and investigate policy options for improvement





European  
Commission

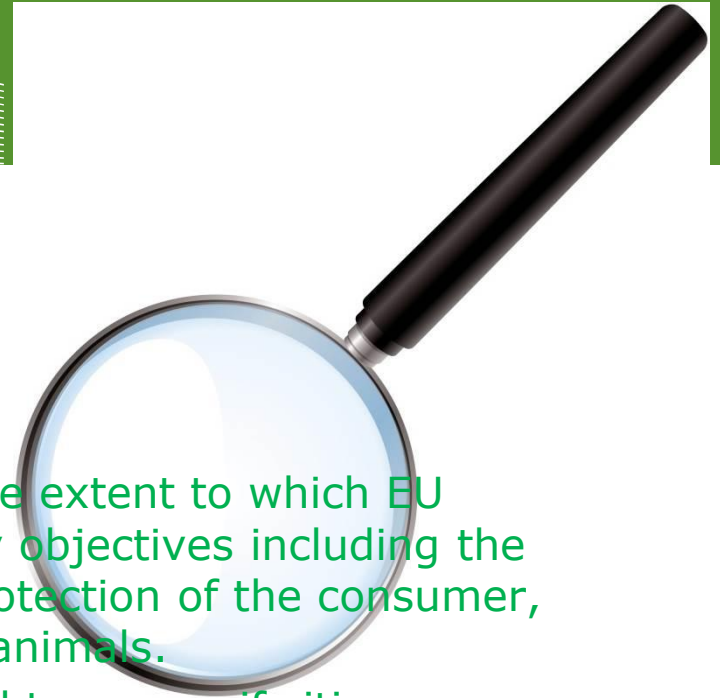
## BACKGROUND - 2012

European Parliament resolution called COM to put forward an EU legal framework for the protection of pets and stray animals, including rules for the identification and registration of animals, measures to promote responsible ownership, the prohibition of unlicensed kennels and shelters, and the prohibition of the killing of stray animals without medical indication\*.



The delivery of the study was included in the EU strategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015

*\*European Parliament resolution, 4th July 2012 on the European Union Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012-2015*



## WHY A STUDY?:

- **WHY A STUDY... ?** The study determines the extent to which EU initiatives would be necessary to achieve key objectives including the proper functioning of the internal market, protection of the consumer, public health, and the health and welfare of animals.
  - To identify possible **EU relevant issues** and to assess if citizens are appropriately informed about the **risks linked to dog and cat commercial practices**
  - To provide options on possible added value of EU actions
- **HOW WAS THE STUDY CONDUCTED?**
  - Socio-economic, technical and legal data were collected. They were gathered by analysing the available **literature**, disseminating **questionnaires** and conducting **interviews** with stakeholders.



European  
Commission

# SCOPE OF THE STUDY/SELECTED COUNTRIES

## The study collected data from 12 representative Member States:

- Countries were selected using population data, volumes of animals traded in the EU registered in TRACES and geographical and socio-economic data
- Selected case study countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.
- The Eurostat report (2012) indicates that **85% of the estimated total dog** and **87% of the total estimated cat population** in the EU are found in the selected MS.



# METHODOLOGY

- **Literature study**
  - internet sources such as Pubmed and Google;
  - database of the study organisations and the project team (extensive experience in pet welfare);
  - stakeholders selected for their expertise and experience in different relevant discipline;
  - questionnaires - respondents given the opportunity to upload relevant documents, which were added to the project database.
  
- **Tailored questionnaires** for target groups in the case study countries translated into official languages

Web-based questionnaires	Word questionnaires (disseminated by email)
<b>Breeder associations/organisations</b>	Dog and cat transporters
<b>Breeders</b>	Insurance companies
<b>Citizens</b>	Microchip producers
<b>Dog and cat dealers</b>	Pet food producers
<b>Dog and cat shelters</b>	Veterinary drug producers
<b>Dog trainers</b>	
<b>NGOs (animal welfare non-governmental organisations)</b>	
<b>Private veterinarians</b>	
<b>Research institutes</b>	
<b>Veterinary organisations</b>	
<b>Competent authorities</b>	



# SCOPE OF THE STUDY/RESPONDENTS

- **29,993 responses** to the questionnaires, of which **22,973 responses** received from 12 MS.
- **71%** of respondents were **dog owners**, compared to 13% of the EU population.
- **45%** of respondents were **cat owners**, compared to 15% of the EU population.
- **31%** of respondents **owned both species**.
- **Approx. 30%** of citizen respondents were **members of a welfare organisation**



European  
Commission

## Number of respondents to the questionnaires by case study country

	Case study countries												TOTAL**
	BE	FR	DE	HU	IT	NL	PL	RO	SK	ES	SE	UK	
Breeder organisations	9	15	5	0	5	1	3	3	0	10	6	5	62
Breeders	108	490	361	31	57	95	163	82	9	65	433	126	2,020
Citizens	1,897	493	3,934	300	2,446	947	2,493	528	374	2,653	896	617	17,578
Dog and cat dealers	182	58	165	6	19	37	36	12	0	80	29	10	634
Dog and cat shelters	30	9	111	4	7	36	5	26	5	69	20	40	362
Dog trainers	68	15	205	12	86	90	40	5	0	62	93	56	732
NGOs	25	13	67	2	9	38	33	31	5	97	6	39	367
Private veterinarians	33	20	197	8	72	96	164	213	4	94	146	24	1,071
Veterinary organisations	8	7	23	2	2	9	14	11	3	17	36	17	149
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>5,068</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>2,703</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>2,951</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>3,147</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>22,973</b>

**Total respondents for case study countries + those not indicating a country = 29,993**

# SCOPE OF THE STUDY/ DATA ANALYSIS

- Overview of the dog and cat sector in the EU
  - Population and stakeholder organizations
  - Economic development of the sector in the EU
  - Dog and cat breeding and distribution
- Dog and cat health and welfare
  - Transport
  - Breeding and keeping
  - Training activities for stakeholders
- Effects on the EU internal market
  - Dog and cat distribution
  - Identification and registration
- Consumer protection



European  
Commission

## Overview of the dog and cat sector in the EU

# DOG AND CAT POPULATION

- In the EU there are: 60.8 million dogs and 66.5 million cats
- Over 125 million animals, numbers increasing every year
- **Annual value of cat and dog sales** in the EU estimated at **1.3 billion euros**
- Pet sector generating the direct employment of **300,000 people**
- **22 billion euros spent on pet food and care**
- **2.1 billion euros** towards pet health products

★ FEDIAF Facts & Figures 2010.; Facts & Figures 2012

Health and  
Food Safety





European  
Commission

# Breeding and distribution of dogs



## Coming from:

Spain (36,4%)  
Hungary (21,5%)  
Slovakia (10,1%)  
Romania (9,7%)  
Italy (3,7%)

## Going to:

Germany (57,1%)  
United Kingdom ( 9%)  
France (5,1%)  
Italy (4,8%)  
Belgium (4,7%)





European  
Commission

# Non-EU Countries

## Top five case study Member States for import of dogs and cats from Non-EU countries

Dogs 2012			Dogs 2014		
Country	Number	% of EU total	Country	Number	% of EU total
UK	5143	43%	UK	1908	20%
DE	1265	11%	DE	1548	16%
FR	1236	10%	FR	1514	15%
NL	880	7%	NL	1737	18%
IT	508	4%	IT	654	7%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3889</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>5453</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>EU total</b>	<b>11896</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>EU total</b>	<b>9771</b>	<b>100%</b>

Cats 2012			Cats 2014		
Country	Number	% of EU total	Country	Number	% of EU total
UK	3168	65%	UK	432	21%
DE	468	10%	DE	513	25%
FR	308	6%	FR	161	8%
NL	181	4%	NL	194	9%
IT	119	2%	IT	133	6%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1076</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1001</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>EU total</b>	<b>4907</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>EU total</b>	<b>2060</b>	<b>100%</b>

- The total value for the EU associated with import of dogs is estimated at approximately 21 million euro (2014), and for cats 3 million euro (2014).

# Breeding and distribution

According to the questionnaire responses:

- **Breeding:**

- **87% were hobby breeders**
- 13% professional breeders
- 5% indicated that breeding was their main source of income
- more than 75% breed less than 10 animals per year and only 7% sell more than 20 animals per year.

- **Dealing**

- 43% annual turnover of less than 10,000 euro
- **16% turnover over 200,000 euro**
- 29% of dog dealers sell less than ten dogs per year
- 59% of cat dealers sell less than ten cats
- 10% of dog dealers and 5% of cat dealers sell more than 200 animals per year.

# Dog and cat health and welfare

- Transport
- Breeding and keeping
- Training activities for stakeholders





# Transport – Regulation (EU) 1/2005 and national legal framework

Case study Member States with a national legal framework providing specific requirements for the transport of dogs and cats

	Case study Member State												Total
	BE	DE	ES	FR	HU	IT	NL	PL	RO	SE	SK	UK	
Dogs		+	+	+						+			4
Cats		+	+	+		+				+			5

**8 MS: no legislation on commercial transport of dogs**  
**7 MS : no legislation on commercial transport of cats**

# Transport - questionnaire

- MS: "Non compliance of transport documents required by EU legislation is a major issue"
- 2,020 breeders: 77% did not consider regular transport of animals as part of their commercial and promotional activities
- Breeders, veterinarian organisations and NGOs: welfare impairment and stress to animals viewed as main risk



# Breeding and keeping

- 11 MS have national legal framework on Animal Welfare (except Romania)
- Breeder organisations: necessary to have guidelines on breeding standards and voluntary national standards issued by competent authorities for health and social behaviour of pedigree dogs
- The United Kingdom, Slovakia and Italy: technical standards for breeders in place
- 10 MS: Registration for professional dog breeders already in place
- 8 MS : Registration for professional cat breeders already in place
- Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Spain and Romania: no legal criteria to define professional breeders
- Registration of hobby breeders only exists in Belgium



European  
Commission

## Breeding and keeping – Welfare of dogs and cats

Table 1. Topics covered in the national legislation of individual Member States\*

Topics	Case study Member State												Total
	BE	DE	ES	FR	HU	IT	NL	PL	RO	SE	SK	UK	
Euthanasia	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	11
Abuse	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	11
Health care			+		+	+	+				+	+	6
Housing	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	11
Feeding/water supply	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	11
Protection from pain and disease	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	11
Right to perform appropriate behaviour	+	+		+	+			+		+	+	+	8
Abandonment	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	11
Neutering		+	+		+	+						+	5
Information and education						+		+				+	3
Others	+					+						+	3

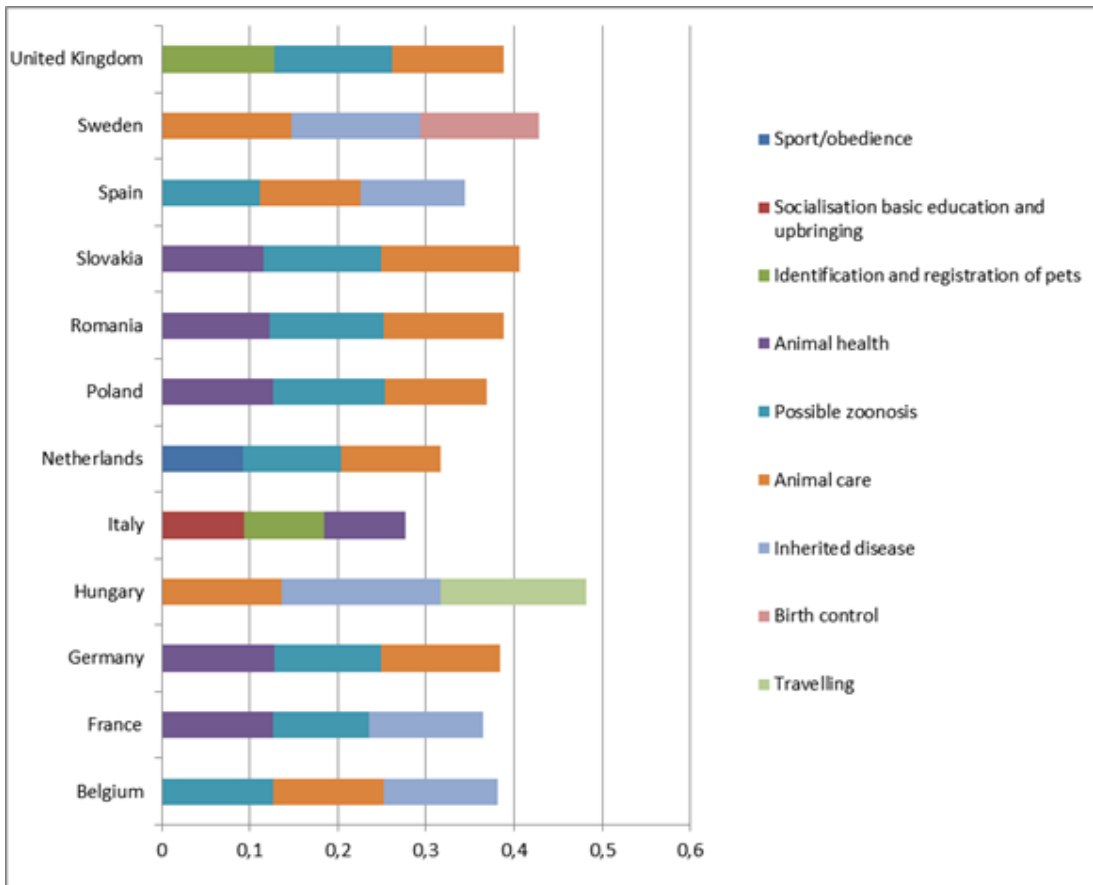
\* does not cover stray animals

Source: study data



European  
Commission

# Training activities – Information needs of pet owners



**Animal care = 10 MS**  
**Zoonosis = 9 MS**  
**Animal health = 6 MS**  
**Inherited diseases = 5 MS**

# Potential effects on the EU internal market

- Unequal conditions for competition on the dog and cat market
- Breeders and traders calling for better enforcement of legislation
- Identification and registration: improving traceability and transparency of internal market

**Table 1. Presence of a national legal framework for dog or cat I&R in case study Member States**

Case study Member States*													
	BE	DE	ES	FR	HU	IT	NL	PL	RO	SE	SK	UK	Total
<b>Dogs</b>	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	<b>8</b>
<b>Cats</b>	-	+	+*	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>

\* In some countries, I&R is only compulsory in some regions, for example cat identification in Spain



**"Illegal distribution"** defined in the study as "not compliant with applicable national or EU legislation"

- Not possible to determine effects of illegal distribution based on the outcomes of the study
- The study found considerable discrepancies between the number of traded dogs and cats registered through TRACES and the data provided by the literature

# Protection of the EU consumer

- Consumer Rights Directive concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices: cats and dogs viewed as "products" / "goods"
- 6 MS have a specific national legal framework on consumer protection when purchasing dogs or cats: Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK.

**8 of 11 MS report a low compliance:  
Consumer protection deserves more attention!**



## Consumer behaviour:

- When pets purchased present problems, most consumers go back to the breeder, rather than consumer organisations or starting legal procedures
- Consumers generally dissatisfied with the way complaint is handled

## Risks:

- "Product" non-conformity to be reported **within a few months** after purchase. Genetic disorders may not become apparent within this time: **six month period not adequate.**
- Often the law applies only when consumer has purchased an animal from a **registered** seller. Consumer protection needed when purchasing **from any seller!**
- Specific health guarantees not provided at purchase: **difficult for consumers to prove** that genetic diseases, behavioural disorders or infectious diseases **existed at the time of the purchase**




European  
Commission

# CONCLUSIONS

## FOUR MAIN AREAS IDENTIFIED:

1. Breeding
2. Transport
3. Lack of knowledge and information for the keeping of pets
4. Discrepancies in market data of pets



### Main findings from the study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices

Within the EU, national legislation on animal welfare for dogs and cats differs across Member States. Recognising this situation, in 2010 the Council of the European Union concluded that these differences may lead to unequal breeding and marketing costs which could create animal welfare problems, zoonotic risks and the deception of citizens due to the purchase of animals carrying hidden diseases, including genetic defects and/or with irreversible behavioural problems.

#### WHY THIS STUDY?

As a result of growing concerns, both the Council and the European Parliament urged the Commission to study the situation. The study examines the extent to which initiatives would be necessary to achieve key objectives including the proper functioning of the internal market, protection of the consumer, public health, and the health and welfare of animals.

#### ECONOMIC ASPECTS

The keeping, breeding and trade of dogs and cats have become significant economic activities within the EU. The sector employs around 300 000 people in sales alone and generates an estimated €1.3 billion in annual revenue. This has increased with the development of internet sales.

#### HOW WAS THE STUDY CONDUCTED?

The study was conducted in 12 representative countries — Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom — over the course of a year starting in February 2014. Socio-economic, technical and legal data were collected from almost 30 000 responses to questionnaires, interviews with stakeholders and analysis of available literature.

#### WHO WAS INVOLVED?

National competent authorities, breeders and dealers, owners, veterinarians, dog trainers, consumer organisations and NGOs.

Animal welfare

# 1. Breeding

- Among 12 Member States the system of registration and licensing of breeders and dealers is inconsistent.
- Breeder organisations consider this inconsistency as a source of health risk.
- Veterinary organisations concerned about health risks, particularly regarding inbreeding and infectious diseases.

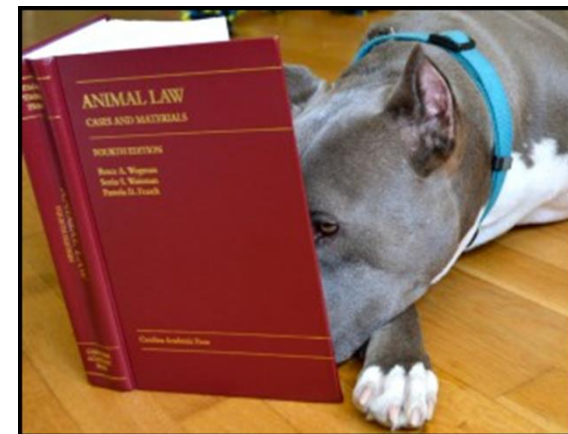


## 2. Transport

- ➔ Level of implementation in MS is variable
- ➔ 4 MS in the case of dogs, and 5 in the case of cats have implemented such rules.
- ➔ Most data available concerns transport of farm animals, but lacking where small animals are concerned

### 3. Lack of knowledge and information for the keeping of pets

- Lack of consumer knowledge about the level of responsibility they are about to undertake
- Unawareness of costs of keeping an animal
- Less than 20% of purchasers in 10 Member States reported being well informed about animal welfare and health at the moment of purchase.
- Member States should provide more knowledge and information to the general public on responsible ownership



## 4. Discrepancies in market data of pets

- Breeders and retailers: potential unfair competition in the EU caused by the lack of transparency of the pet market.
- Differences in market data:
  - Existing literature data estimates: **46,000 dogs traded every month** between all EU Member States, for a **total value of more than 5.5 million** euros per month.
  - In 2014 TRACES registered **20,779 dogs and 2,287 cats** involved in intra-EU trade and 9,771 dogs and 2,060 cats imported from Non-EU countries.
- Member States: discrepancies in data significant, increased health risks to both animals and humans.



European  
Commission

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CAT AND DOG WELFARE

1. **Commercial distribution:  
Improved data collection  
and traceability**
2. **General education and  
training**
3. **Improved enforcement of  
current legislation**



**Internal market**

# Commercial distribution: Improved data collection and traceability

- More systematic **identification, registration and movement control** of dogs and cats
- **Better collection of data** to ensure improved traceability and transparency of the market.





# General education and training

- **Awareness and knowledge** of consumers on potential dangers involved in cross-border purchasing and their **consumer rights**
- Development and distribution of **self-assessment tools** such as checklists, protocols and/or guidelines on purchasing to provide better animal care and responsible ownership.
- Establishment of **reference centres for animal welfare**



# Improved enforcement of current legislation

- The **exchange of knowledge, best practices** and **networking** among Member States can help to improve enforcement.
- These different tools, such as best practices, could include **science-based animal welfare indicators** to standardise welfare assessment across Member States.
- Additionally, **good practices** could be identified for all aspects of commercial breeding, keeping and distribution.





European  
Commission



**Thank you!**