

Press release – Stop illegal trade in cats and dogs, says Public Health Committee



On Tuesday, the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee adopted a resolution demanding action against the illegal trade in pets to protect animal welfare, consumers and public health.

The text calls for a series of measures to address illegal trafficking of companion animals, including:

- an EU Action Plan clearly setting out responsibilities to address the illegal trade in companion animals,
- a Commission proposal to set up a mandatory EU-wide system to identify and register cats and dogs,
- an EU definition of large-scale commercial breeding facilities known as puppy mills,
- improved law enforcement and tougher sanctions for those involved (veterinarians, national public services, economic operators),
- better cooperation, communication and training for customs and veterinary authorities,
- encouraging people to adopt, rather than purchase, companion animals.

Next steps

The resolution was adopted with 66 votes to 0 and 3 abstentions. It will now be put to a vote at the plenary in Strasbourg. It is tentatively scheduled for the February session.

Background

Each year, many companion animals are illegally traded in the EU by abusing the EU's pet movement legislation ([Regulation \(EU\) No 576/2013](#)), which is intended for non-commercial movement of pet animals.

Aside from the negative implications on public health, animal welfare and consumer protection, it has also become a source of income for organised international crime. It affects the smooth functioning of the EU internal market through lost taxes and by creating unfair competition, particularly with the increase in online sales.