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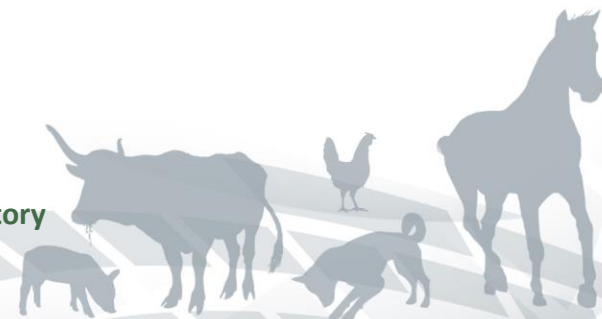
Collaborating Centre
for Veterinary Training, Epidemiology,
Food Safety and Animal Welfare

Experience from the first EU study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices

Pan Commonwealth Veterinary Conference
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The Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale Abruzzo e Molise is a technical-scientific body of the Ministry of Health and Regions, founded in 1941.



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Today, more than hundred million dogs and cats live in the EU

- In 2012 it was estimated the presence of **48.7 million dogs** and **66.5 million cats** in the European Union.
- Currently, almost **25% of European households own a dog** and **24% own a cat**.
- These percentages range from **11% for Switzerland to 44% in Hungary for pet dogs** and from **9% in Slovakia to 42% in Latvia and Romania for pet cats**.





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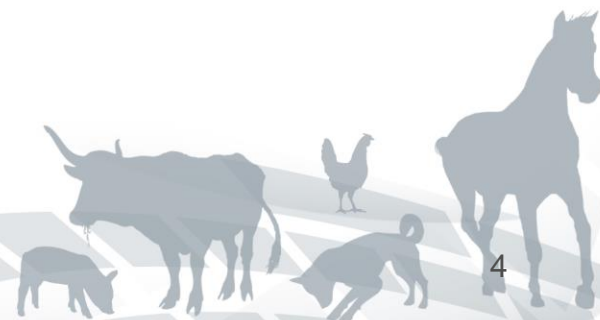


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The companion animal sector is becoming **increasingly economically important** within the EU.

- In 2006, the **total turnover** generated by the sector in **France** (care, food and equipment) amounted to **around 4 billion euros**.





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In 2011, companion animals (mainly dogs & cats) made up **40% of the EU veterinary medicine market**, for a total value of **1.6 billion euros**.

- Throughout Europe, an estimated **550.000 direct and indirect jobs** were generated in 2010 by pet ownership, such as **veterinarians or breeders or connected supply industries**.





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The international adoptions of stray dogs

International adoptions (2013-2014)



Since 2005:
4754 dogs rehomed
internationally



Companion Animal welfare in the EU



However, there is **currently no EU legislation on the welfare of dogs and cats**, with the exception of limited specific requirements on the protection of animals during transport, this matter remains under the sole responsibility of the Member State concerned.

Over the last forty years, the European Commission has adopted legislation to protect **animals kept in farms, during transport** and at **slaughterhouses**, as well as on the use of animals for **experimental purposes** or kept in **zoos**.





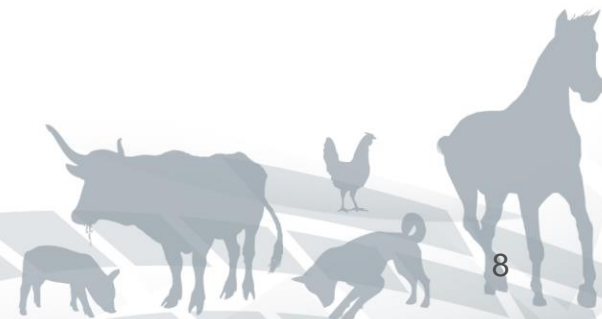
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The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

In fact, Article 13 of the Treaty on European Union does not give a legal base nor requires addressing all animal welfare issues.

"in **formulating and implementing** the Union's agriculture, fisheries, transport, **internal market**, research and technological development and space **policies**, the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals....."





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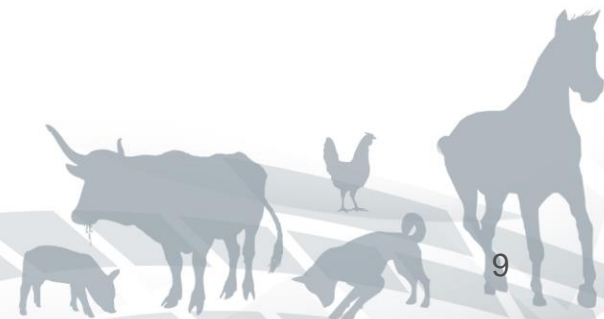
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In 2009, the European Commission mandated an external consultant to evaluate EU policy on Animal Welfare

The study concluded that the **animals outside the scope of current EU legislation**, such as pets, **would benefit from harmonised EU legislation** to achieve higher standards of welfare.

<http://www.eupaw.eu/docs/Final%20Report%20-%20EUPAW%20Evaluation.pdf>





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The Council of the EU adopted conclusions on the welfare of dogs and cats - 2010

It called on the Commission:

- to study the differences between the measures taken by the Member States regarding **the breeding of and EU trade in dogs and cats** and, if appropriate, to prepare policy options for the harmonisation of the internal market;
- to study and propose if justified, options for facilitating **compatible systems of identification and registration** of dogs and cats;
- to study and present, if justified, a specific proposal to restrict, in the European Union, the **exhibition at public events** of dogs and cats having undergone a **non-curative surgical intervention and the trade** in these animals;
- to develop, if necessary and in coordination with the Member States, appropriate actions to **promote and support education** concerning **responsible dog and cat ownership**.

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



The European Parliament resolution on the Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012–2015

Called for:

- The EU and MS to implement the provisions of the **European Convention for the Protection Pet Animals**;
- An evaluation of a system for the registration and the **electronic identification of pets**;
- MS to adopt **comprehensive dog population management** strategies

and urged:

- To **recommend concrete solutions** to prevent **dogs and cats from being bred and traded** in a way which is likely to cause welfare problems





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As a consequence, in the framework of the **EU strategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015**, the Commission has committed itself to perform a **study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices**





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

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Messori S., Sikkema R., D'Albenzio S., Barnard R.,
Bergevoet R., Dewar D., De Massis F., Schrijver R.



Kick – off February 2014



To be completed



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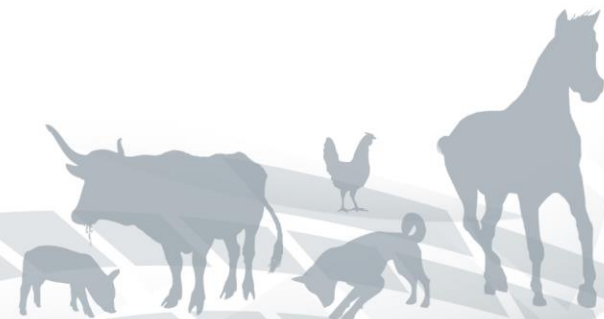
Overall objective



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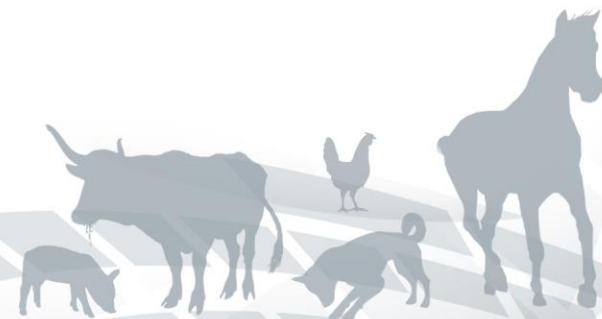


- To determine the **extent to which the EU should take specific measures** on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices aiming to **achieve a level playing field in the internal market**, better **protection of the consumer**, improved **public health**, animal health and **welfare**.
- To **make recommendations for possible future actions**.



Specific objectives

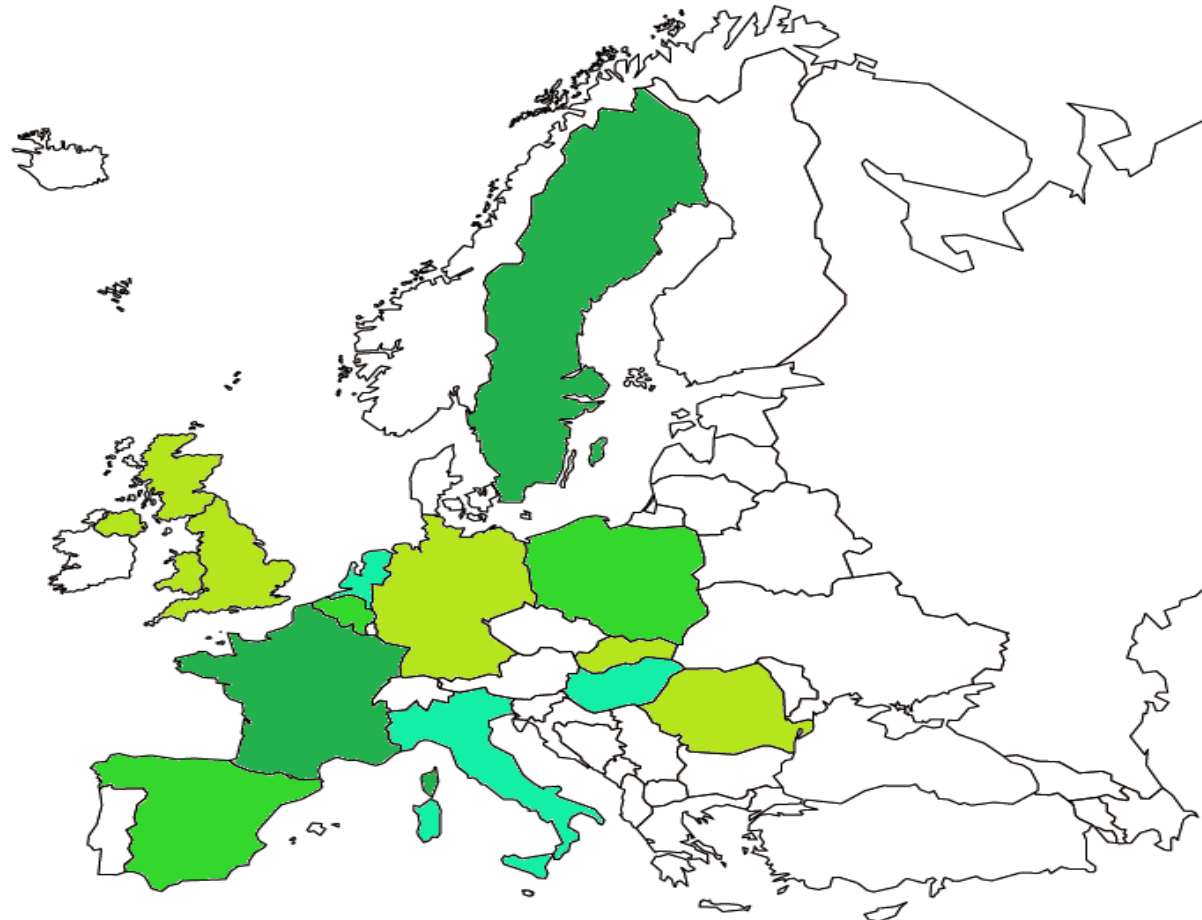
- 
1. To collect socio-economic, technical and legal data and experts' opinions on the breeding, keeping and trade of dogs and cats in the EU;
 2. To identify possible EU relevant issues and to assess if citizens are appropriately informed about the risks linked to dog and cat commercial practices;
 3. To provide options on the possible added value of EU actions in this area.



Project geographical scope

Target:

12 EU Member
States



Case-study country selection

Country selection
geographically balanced

Dog population			Cat population		
Member State	Dogs	% of total	Member State	Cats	% of total
UK	8 500 000	14.0%	FR	11 412 000	17.2%
PO	7 430 000	12.2%	UK	8 500 000	12.8%
FR	7 421 000	12.2%	DE	8 200 000	12.3%
IT	6 947 000	11.4%	IT	7 482 000	11.3%
ES	5 400 000	8.9%	PO	5 740 000	8.6%
DE	5 300 000	8.7%	RO	4 090 000	6.2%
RO	4 130 000	6.8%	ES	3 800 000	5.7%
CZ	2 200 000	3.6%	NL	2 682 000	4.0%
HU	2 100 000	3.5%	HU	2 245 000	3.4%
Sub-total	49 428 000	81.2%	Sub-total	54 151 000	81.4%
Total EU	60 847 000	100.0%	Total EU	66 492 000	100.0%

12 MS, covering over 80% of
the dog and cat populations
and over 80% of intra-EU trade.

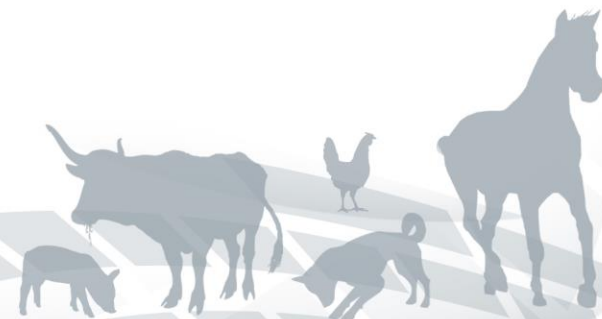
Dog exports and imports, 2012					
Exported dogs			Imported dogs		
Country	Dog exports	% of EU total	Country	Dog imports	% of EU total
SK	46 696	40.7%	ES	26 495	21.5%
HU	32 900	28.7%	IT	23 364	19.0%
ES	9 343	8.1%	BE	22 940	19.0%
CZ	7 481	6.5%	DE	17 729	14.4%
BE	4 126	3.6%	FR	10 237	8.3%
Sub-total	100 546	87.7%	Sub-total	100 765	82.0%

Source: TRACES, 2012

Data collection: methodology

Collection of information and stakeholder opinions from all relevant actors in the sector, as well as from citizens.

1. Implementation ad-hoc **on-line questionnaires** for the different target groups.
2. Development of **traditional questionnaires** for targeted interviewing.
3. Direct and indirect **sensitisation activities** to ensure appropriate response rate.
4. Desk study: **bibliographic research**.



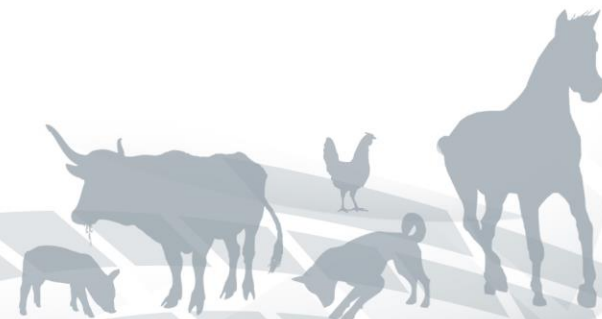
Target groups

Online Questionnaires

- Competent Authorities
- Breeder associations/organisations
- Breeders
- Citizens
- Dog and cat dealers
- Dog and cat shelters
- Dog trainers
- NGOs (animal welfare non-governmental organisations)
- **Private veterinarians**
- Research institutes
- **Veterinary organisations**

Traditional questionnaires

- Dog and cat transporters
- Insurance companies
- Microchip producers
- Pet food producers
- Veterinary drug producers



Questionnaire dissemination



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Newspapers

Specialist
Journals



Linked in

CAROcat
responsible ownership



EUROGROUP
FOR ANIMALS



FVE




veteffect
veterinary and public health

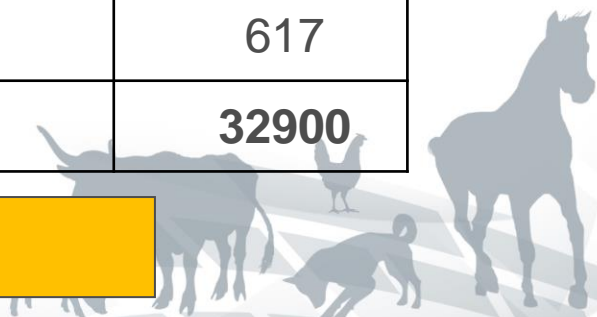


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On-line questionnaires respondents



Breeder organisations	254
Breeders	3008
Citizens	18891
Dog and cat dealers	2879
Dog and cat shelters	1109
Dog trainers	940
NGOs	577
Private veterinarians	1761
Research institutes	2864
Veterinary organisations	617
Overall	32900



On-going analysis

Preliminary results: desk study

- The study of available scientific bibliography allowed the **identification of main hazards** to the welfare of dogs and cats consequent to breeding, keeping, transporting and straying.
- The **analysis of trade flows and reports** concerning dog and cat movements across countries allowed to gain insight of the **main transport dog/cat routes**



Top five Case Study Member States trading DOGS (Intra-EU trade)

Countries of origin - DOGS 2012			Countries of origin - DOGS 2014		
Country	Num. dogs	% of EU total	Country	Num. dogs	% of EU total
SK	46 696	40.7%	ES	7 561	36.4%
HU	32 900	28.7%	HU	4 474	21.5%
ES	9 343	8.1%	SK	2 106	10.1%
BE	4 126	3.6%	RO	2 026	9.7%
NL	3 139	2.74%	IT	760	3.7%
Sub-total	96 204	83.9%	Sub-total	16 927	81.5%
Countries of destination - DOGS 2012			Countries of destination - DOGS 2014		
Country	Num. dogs	% of EU total	Country	Num. dogs	% of EU total
ES	26 495	21.5%	DE	11 862	57.1%
IT	23 364	19.0%	GB	1 878	9.0%
BE	22 940	19.0%	FR	1 061	5.1%
DE	17 729	14.4%	IT	994	4.8%
FR	10 237	8.3%	BE	985	4.7%
Sub-total	100 765	82.0%	Sub-total	16 780	80.7%

Source: TRACES, 2012, 2014


Top five Case Study Member States trading CATS (Intra-EU trade)

Countries of origin - CATS 2012			Countries of origin - CATS 2014		
Country	Num. cats	% of EU total	Country	Num. cats	% of EU total
SK	6 568	33.0%	ES	1 260	55.1%
HU	6 175	31.0%	DE	200	8.7%
ES	2 499	12.6%	BE	105	4.6%
BE	907	4.6%	IT	128	5.6%
PL	237	1.2%	FR	155	7.3%
Sub-total	19 023	89.3%	Sub-total	1 843	80.6%

Comparing TRACES data on dogs and cats intra-EU trade, a **substantial reduction in the overall amount of animals moved between EU Member States** can be appreciated for all categories presented.

Such a great discrepancy seems **unrealistic**, suggesting that data from TRACES 2014 might be partial.

Preliminary results: regulatory frameworks




National dog and cat welfare legislation exists in **most Member States**, although there is considerable variation in the level of detail. Different level of implementation.

- **Dog and cat transport carried out for commercial purposes** within the EU must comply with Regulation (EC) 1/2005. **Lack of specific standards.**
- **Most of the surveyed MS**, has **national framework on dog I&R** while fewer has it for cats. Different bodies are responsible.
- **Almost all the surveyed Member States**, have a **national framework on stray animals**, that usually covers both dogs and cats.
- **6 out of 12 EU MS** indicated they have **additional legislation on consumer protection**; however, interpretation and content differ greatly



Preliminary results: breeding/keeping



Selection pressure towards **phenotypic exaggeration** driven by breed standards has increased the potential for **conformation-associated disease in both dogs** (O'Neil et al 2014) and **cats** (Sonntag et al 2014).

- Selection pressures to refine the breeds by **inbreeding** contribute to a **loss of genetic diversity**, increasing the likelihood of **recessive disorders** (Bellumori et al 2013).
- **Dog and cat health and welfare** related issues arise from the **housing conditions** where the animals are kept (Hubrecht 2002; Rochilitz, 2002), both in rearing and sale sites.
- Inappropriate housing and **management** have a clear cut influence on the incidence of both **health and behavioural problems** (Uzunova et al 2008; McMillan et al 2013).
- In particular, **pet shops** are deemed to present a **risk to both animal health** (Halsby et al 2014) **and welfare** (McMillan et al 2013), and may lead to **behavioural problems** (McMillan et al 2013).



Preliminary results: transport

- **Animal movements** are a major risk factors for the **spread of animal disease** (Englung & Pringel 2003). This risk increases exponentially when factors out of control, such as **illegal pet trade**, are involved.
- **Pet animal movements** can also affect the well-being of the animals involved (Wohr & Erhard 2004).
- As a **result of transport** stress, dogs might show the **reactivation of latent infections** (Englung & Pringel 2003).
- **Transport** can also have a negative effect on **dogs' behaviour** – insistent barking, over-excitement, phobia (Frank et al 2006; Benchaoui et al 2007; Cannas et al 2010).



Preliminary results: stray animals



The **overbreeding of dogs and cats** contributes to the increase of stray dog/cat population.

- The **exhibition of behaviour that is considered problematical** is also one of the primary reasons that large numbers of **dogs end up in shelters** and pounds (King et al 2012), and helps increase the **abandonment rate**.
- Stray dogs are **an issue for humans** (Matter et al 2000; Dalla Villa et al 2010) and their **welfare is at risk** (Vučinić et al 2011; Molento et al 2014).
- 60% of the Balkan countries have experienced **increasing trends in stray dog populations** (1st OIE regional workshop on stray dog population management for Balkan countries, 2014).
- **Poor management and poor housing conditions in dog shelters** may lead to **health and behavioural disorders**, increasing the risk of spreading infectious disease and decreasing the likelihood of successful adoption.



Preliminary results: knowledge and public awareness

- **Animal health and welfare, I&R, animal behavior** are the most common areas on which information and training initiatives are provided to **all categories of stakeholders** - including owners and **prospective owners**.
- The situation is different for information and training activities related to **consumer protection at the moment of acquisition, stray animals** and **human health**.
- Considering the **volume** of dog and cat traded in Europe and the consequences to the community from a **scarce knowledge** of such topics, **more efforts are needed in this area**.
- National Competent Authorities, **veterinarians** and NGOs play a key-role in disseminating knowledge.



Conclusions



This study is a milestone - the first EU financed project on the welfare of dogs and cats;

- The **existing legislation** on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices across EU countries **lacks of harmonisation**;
- **There are risks** connected to commercial practices and they have **to be addressed with a concerted approach**;
- The results of the study will provide a **guidance to possible further actions at EU level**.





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Thank you for your attention



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