



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on the welfare of dogs and cats

3050th AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES Council meeting

Brussels, 29 November 2010

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"Considering that:

- Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, having general application, states that - since animals are sentient beings - the EU should pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals in formulating and implementing its relevant policies, while respecting the legislative or administrative provisions and customs of the Member States relating in particular to religious rites, cultural traditions and regional heritage;
- to respond to citizens' concerns it is necessary to plan appropriate actions at Member State and European level and ensure suitable welfare conditions for dogs and cats;
- this topic is also addressed in other international fora such as the OIE, the Council of Europe or in the framework of the discussions on the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW);
- the breeding of and EU trade in dogs and cats represent an economic activity within the European Union where business operators need to work within a level playing field;

Taking into account that:

- large differences seem to exist between the different national or regional rules on the welfare of dogs and cats within the European Union;
- those differences may lead to unequal breeding and marketing costs which could create animal welfare problems, zoonotic risks and deception of the citizen due to the purchase of animals carrying possible hidden diseases, including genetic defects and/or with irreversible behavioural problems;

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- those problems may have a negative impact on primary objectives of the European Union such as the functioning of the internal market, public health and consumer protection;

Bearing in mind:

- the need for the European Union and the Member States to limit the administrative burden;
- the relevant international obligations, in particular concerning the trade in dogs and cats;
- the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;

The Council of the European Union calls upon the Commission, in the framework of the second EU strategy for the protection and welfare of animals:

- 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 in order to ensure better guarantees to the citizen through more efficient traceability of those animals. The options may take into account the need for fast and precise investigation, particularly in the case of illegal trade and zoonosis;
 - 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 (not aimed at preventing reproduction) 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, as well as to support national information campaigns on the negative impact of non-curative surgical interventions on the welfare of dogs and cats."
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