

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002928/24
to the Commission
Maria Ohisalo (Verts/ALE)
(13 December 2024)**

Subject: Protection of hunting dogs in Spain

Roughly speaking, between 50 000 and 100 000 hunting dogs, glagos and podencos, are killed in Spain every year when the hunting season ends. ⁽¹⁾

This is based on an old belief that the more a dog suffers when dying, the more it will bring the hunter good luck the following hunting season. The dogs are killed in the most horrendous ways: they are hanged, beaten, burned, pelted with stones, poisoned, dragged behind a vehicle or thrown into a ravine. Dogs are also abandoned after the hunting season, which is another major problem.

It has been challenging to do anything about this, because rules on animal welfare have largely been left to the individual countries to decide on, which means that Spain cannot be obliged directly to improve the situation for hunting dogs through any EU legislative procedure. ⁽²⁾

The European Commission updated its animal welfare strategy in 2020 ⁽³⁾, since when steps have been taken to safeguard animal welfare, including rules at EU level. In December 2023, the Commission published a proposal for a regulation on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability ⁽⁴⁾.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of how the forthcoming Regulation will also improve the situation for Spanish hunting dogs?

2. Does the Commission intend to propose legislation that would provide for minimum standards at EU level to protect all animals?

Submitted: 13.12.2024

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(4 March 2025)**

The Commission condemns any form of cruelty to animals. In 2023, the Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability ⁽¹⁾ that aims to raise the level of protection for the welfare of dogs and cats.

The proposal requires animal welfare conditions for all premises or structures, including households, where dogs are bred with a view to placing the offspring on the market ⁽²⁾.

If hunters are breeding dogs at a frequency above the thresholds foreseen by the Commission proposal, these breeding and keeping activities would have to comply with the requirements specified by the EU legal act.

In addition, the proposal foresees that dogs kept in establishments for supply ⁽³⁾ in the Union, including dogs supplied by natural persons, be identified and registered in a national database.

Therefore, if any supply would take place in the context of hunting activities, the dog should be identified and registered. Such a requirement should discourage the abandonment of dogs, as traceability would make it possible to locate the person abandoning the dog. The examination of the Commission's proposal by the European Parliament and by the Council is ongoing.

Different regulations concern different animal species. As foreseen in the Mission Letter for the Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare ⁽⁴⁾, the Commission intends to modernise the existing EU animal welfare legislation on the basis of new scientific, social and economic elements during its current mandate.

¹ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/spanish-galgo-hunting-dog-killing-welfare>

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-000675-ASW_EN.html

³ https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/evaluations-and-impact-assessment/revision-animal-welfare-legislation_en

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023PC0769>.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2023:769:FIN>

⁽²⁾ Article 3 point 5 of the proposal defines 'placing on the market' as the keeping of dogs and cats for the purpose of sale, offering for sale, distribution or any other form of transfer of ownership or responsibility for the animal, that is against consideration or at least reimbursement of the costs incurred, including the advertising of animals for the above purposes.

⁽³⁾ Article 3 point 6 of the proposal defines 'supplying' as the transferring of ownership or responsibility for dogs or cats through any means or form, whether for a consideration or not, excluding occasional supplies by natural persons of dogs or cats by other means than via the intermediation of an online platform.

⁽⁴⁾ Page 6 of the Mission Letter: https://commission.europa.eu/document/b1817a1b-e62e-4949-bbb8-ebf29b54c8bd_en