

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001711/25
to the Commission
Kosma Złotowski (ECR)
(29 April 2025)**

Subject: Pet breeding mills in the EU

In recent years, the EU has seen a rise in pet breeding mills, which operate illegally or on the fringes of the law. These types of mills not only negatively impact animal welfare, as the animals are often kept in appalling conditions, but also pose a serious risk to public health and the safety of people purchasing these animals. Pet breeding mills circumvent regulations on animal welfare and transport, fail to keep adequate records, do not carry out veterinary examinations and are solely profit-driven, often showing complete disregard for ethical issues. The scale of the phenomenon, the lack of effective legal and institutional mechanisms, and the cross-border nature of the issue mean that action must be taken not only at national level, but also at EU level.

1. What specific steps will the Commission take to draft and implement effective mechanisms for identifying, monitoring and shutting down pet breeding mills operating illegally, and is the Commission considering creating an EU database of breeders alongside a system to assess and verify them?
2. Are there any plans to amend existing EU regulations laying down standards for the breeding of cats and dogs, with a view to making registration requirements stricter, increasing penalties for operating illegal breeding mills and providing more effective monitoring tools?
3. Does the Commission intend to take action in the form of information and educational campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of buying animals from illegal sources, including pet breeding mills, and to support the responsible adoption and purchase of animals only from legally operating breeders?

Submitted: 29.4.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(20 June 2025)**

In 2021 an obligation for all establishments keeping animals, including dogs, to be registered was introduced in the Animal Health Law ⁽¹⁾.

Operators of these establishments must keep and maintain records on the health status of these animals. Furthermore, for disease prevention, such establishments must receive regular animal health visits from a veterinarian.

This legislation also strengthened traceability rules for dogs by making the individual identification of these animals mandatory in the case of cross-border movements.

Official controls in these establishments are the responsibility of Member States' competent authorities, which must also ensure its effectiveness.

The Commission proposed in 2023 the first EU Regulation on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability ⁽²⁾. The proposal requires that breeding establishments producing above a threshold notify their activity to Member States' competent authorities and that these establishments are approved before starting their activities.

The approval must be granted with a certificate, following an on-site inspection by the competent authority that confirms that the establishment meets the animal welfare requirements of the regulation.

This proposal requires that the competent authorities maintain a list of breeding establishments of dogs and cats, made publicly available. Penalties to operators breaching the proposed Regulation are set by Member States.

The Commission proposal sets requirements that aim to prevent illegal breeders from reaching the EU market, thus promoting responsible adoption from legitimate breeders. For reasons of subsidiarity, awareness campaigns for the public are to be launched by Member States and are commonplace.

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/429/oj>.

⁽²⁾ Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability, COM/2023/769 final.