

EN

E-001199/2026

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(27.5.2026)

The co-legislators reached the provisional final political agreement on the Commission proposal for a Regulation on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability¹ on 25 November 2025, hence negotiations are closed, and new elements are no longer under consideration.

The agreement² reached between co-legislators defines ‘euthanasia’³ based on the method used to end the life of a dog or cat and the outcome it brings on the animal. It requires that euthanasia is applied when the welfare of a dog or a cat is compromised and the animal experiences severe pain or suffering while its recovery is not achievable. The agreement does not limit the use of euthanasia exclusively to these specific circumstances.

Where these circumstances outlined in point 1 arise, the agreement requires that a veterinarian be consulted to decide whether the dog or cat is to be euthanised to end its suffering. No record or register keeping is foreseen by the veterinarian. Member States are required to lay down rules on penalties applicable to infringements of the upcoming Regulation. Other Union legislation⁴ requires Member States to conduct official controls for the verification of compliance with the new rules. Those obligations also concern the issue of euthanasia.

The Commission helps develop and adopt international animal health and welfare standards through the WOAH⁵. WOAH standards⁶ require dog population management programmes to be based on a national context and tailored to local circumstances. They further specify that euthanasia alone is ineffective for long-term population control and, if used, must comply with WOAH killing standards and be implemented in combination with other measures to achieve effective long-term population management.

¹ COM/2023/769 final.

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2024_2029/plmrep/COMMITTEES/AGRI/LA/2026/01-12/1334329EN.pdf.

³ Euthanasia means the act of inducing death using a method that causes a rapid and irreversible loss of consciousness with a minimum of pain and distress, ending the life of the dog or cat.

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products (Official Controls Regulation), OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, pp. 1. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/625/oj>.

⁵ World Organisation for Animal Health.

⁶ Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Section 7, Animal Welfare, Chapter 7.7., Dog population management, https://www.woah.org/en/what-we-do/standards/codes-and-manuals/#chapter/?rid=82&volume_no=1&ismanual=false&language=102&standard_type=5&animal_type=7.