



**EU DOG & CAT  
ALLIANCE®**

## **EU Dog & Cat Alliance Position on International Rehoming of Dogs and Cats**

### **Position**

The EU Dog & Cat Alliance is working towards the day when moving dogs and cats across borders for rehoming is not necessary anymore.

International rehoming for dogs and cats is a practice which is not sustainable in the long term, as it only provides interim measures rather than addressing the root causes of companion animals living in shelters or being homeless in the country of origin.

It also presents the risk of spreading diseases across borders and introducing new diseases into different countries. The main diseases under consideration are rabies, *Echinococcus multilocularis*, leishmaniosis, babesiosis, dirofilaria and ehrlichiosis and, in the case of cats, retroviruses.

Regarding cats, international rehoming presents an additional layer of problems. Being much more territorial than dogs, cats inevitably suffer a huge amount of stress during transport. Cats take a long time to acclimatise to a new environment and some may never recover from the stress of being moved internationally.

### **Agreement**

Bearing these considerations in mind, members of the EU Dog & Cat Alliance agree to the following:

- To work towards not carrying out international rehoming of dogs and cats as a standard practice. If already undertaking international rehoming, members agree to minimise this practice as much as possible, carry it out legally



following EU Directive 92/65/EEC<sup>1</sup> and complying with Regulation (EC) 1/2005<sup>2</sup>, duly perform relevant disease testing and health checks and work towards the day when international rehoming is not needed anymore

- To ensure that diseases such as leishmaniosis, babesiosis and ehrlichiosis are not transferred to non-endemic countries via infected dogs
- To work preventatively in the country of origin to minimise the need for rehoming animals abroad, for example, through neutering and educational campaigns
- To ensure full traceability of any companion animals rehomed internationally, including carrying out due diligence on and working with trusted local partners
- To ascertain as far as possible that any dog rehomed internationally was not a free-roaming dog born on the street, as such dogs are much more likely to experience problems when contained in a home environment than dogs which have been relinquished
- To carry out international rehoming solely for the best interests of the animal, and not for monetary gain for the organisation as a primary goal
- To share best practices with other members on successful methods of promoting responsible rehoming in their own countries.

### **Considerations if rehoming internationally**

The EU Dog & Cat Alliance does not support the international rehoming of dogs and cats as a standard practice but recognises such activity as an interim measure in some cases. Should a situation arise when it is in the animal's best interest to be rehomed in another country

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 92/65/EEC of 13 July 1992 laying down animal health requirements governing trade in and imports into the Community of animals, semen, ova and embryos not subject to animal health requirements laid down in specific Community rules referred to in Annex A (I) to Directive 90/425/EEC.

<sup>2</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97.



and, after all other domestic options have been exhausted, the following conditions must be met:

- International rehoming should be done legally:
  - The movement of animals for rehoming is classed as a commercial movement. Therefore compliance with Regulation 576/2013<sup>3</sup> is not sufficient, even if the organisations responsible for the movement are animal welfare organisations or charities. International rehoming must be carried out following the Balai Directive (Directive 92/65/EEC)
  - It should be done in a way which ensures that diseases are not transferred between countries. Members agree to follow the procedure for disease testing in Annex I.

### **Conclusions**

As a matter of principle, members of the EU Dog & Cat Alliance undertake to not engage, as standardised practice, in international rehoming as a primary means of population management.

Members who currently carry out international rehoming agree to a) concentrate their resources on domestic campaigns aimed at spaying/neutering companion animals and education of the local population regarding rehoming domestically, b) work towards the day when moving dogs and cats across borders for rehoming is not necessary anymore.

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<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 on the non-commercial movement of pet animals and repealing Regulation (EC) No 998/2003.



## **ANNEX I**

### **PROCEDURE FOR THE PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF DISEASES WHEN MOVING DOGS ACROSS BORDERS**

1. The present owner/organisation will be asked to cover the costs of rehoming a dog internationally. It is important that any such dog is assessed for rehomeability before undertaking any tests.
2. Find out country of origin and which countries the dog has visited; find out when the dog last visited those countries.
3. Has any parasite control been used on the dog? If so, what and how often?
4. With veterinary liaison, ascertain which tests are appropriate, including bearing in mind the disease profile of the destination country. This can be done by visiting [www.cvbd.org](http://www.cvbd.org) and clicking on the world occurrence map.

The diseases we are most concerned about are:

- Babesiosis
- Ehrlichiosis
- Leishmaniasis
- Dirofilaria

Highlight the country in question. This will tell you if there is a risk of that disease in the country visited.

NB: For France, find out where in the country the dog has visited and seek veterinary advice for clarification of testing. The reason for this is that some diseases are only found in the South, but the limitations of the website mean that the whole country is coded 'red' for the disease.



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NB: For dogs that have travelled outside of Europe, please seek veterinary advice.

If you are unsure about using the website, please seek veterinary advice.

5. Arrange for blood to be taken for the appropriate diseases. We recommend that samples are sent to the Acarus laboratory or any EU Approved Laboratories.
6. Dogs which test positive for any of the diseases mentioned above must not be transported to a country which does not have this disease in order to prevent disease spread across borders.