

# FVE/FECAVA view on consequences of online trade

The online market place; an argument for self regulation

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## FVE's mission

The European veterinary profession, embodied by FVE, strives to **enhance animal health, animal welfare, public health and protect the environment** by promoting the veterinary profession.

**FVE's Strategy**  
2015-2020

**Veterinarians: caring for animals *and* people**

**FVE** | Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

48 national associations  
39 European countries

# Most vets work with dogs and cats



[www.fve.org](http://www.fve.org)

FVE is the umbrella organisation for all veterinarians, irrespectively in which areas they work

>50% vets work in area of companion animals

For all companion animal issues, FVE works in close collaboration with FECAVA, the umbrella organisation of all companion animal veterinarians.



# Illegal online trade:



[www.fve.org](http://www.fve.org)

- Most owners only come to vet after having bought a new companion animal
- Origin of animal is not always known by veterinarian
- In many countries, online trade plays an increasing role in obtaining puppies due to the decline in local breeders
- Online trade enhances 'impulse' buying!
- Illegal online trade is difficult to control -) poses challenge to official veterinarians
- Often pups are younger than officially declared







[www.fve.org](http://www.fve.org)

# Potential consequences online trade:

- **Animal Health** problems

e.g. Too young vaccinated, Parvo, Leptospirosis, respiratory infections,...

- **Behavioural** problems

e.g. too early separation with mother and not socialised

- **Animal Welfare** problems

e.g. mortality due to transport, overcrowding, etc

- **Public health** problems

e.g. zoonotic diseases, international disease transfer (32 zoonoses from a dog)





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# Internet trade of shelter dog:

- More and more seen in some countries
- ‘Want to save a dog’ reflex
- Often import via non-commercial transport (legally incorrect)
- Owners select a dog without proper background knowledge
- Possibility to introduce infectious diseases
- Some countries (thinking to) prohibit





CALLISTO

# CALLISTO

healthy and safe human-animal relationships in Europe

# Callisto outcomes:



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- Companion animals greatly contribute to the wellbeing of human society.
- But can also pass zoonotic diseases, such as:

## VIRAL PATHOGENS

- Rabies virus
- Crimean-Congo fever virus
- West-Nile virus
- Foot-and-mouth disease virus (non-zoonotic)
- Bluetongue virus (non-zoonotic)

## PARASITIC PATHOGENS

- Echinococcus
- Leishmania infantum
- Toxoplasma gondii
- Giardia species
- Toxocara canis/cati

## BACTERIAL PATHOGENS

- Campylobacter jejuni
- Leptospira
- Salmonella enterica
- Bartonella henselae
- Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase
- **BITE WOUND INFECTIONS**





# Rabies



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- Deadly disease!
- Long incubation time
- EU has successfully eradicated rabies from most of its territory, but still endemic just outside EU borders
- Main risk factors:
  - dogs and cats illegally imported from countries which still have rabies
  - citizens travelling and having had contact with infected animal



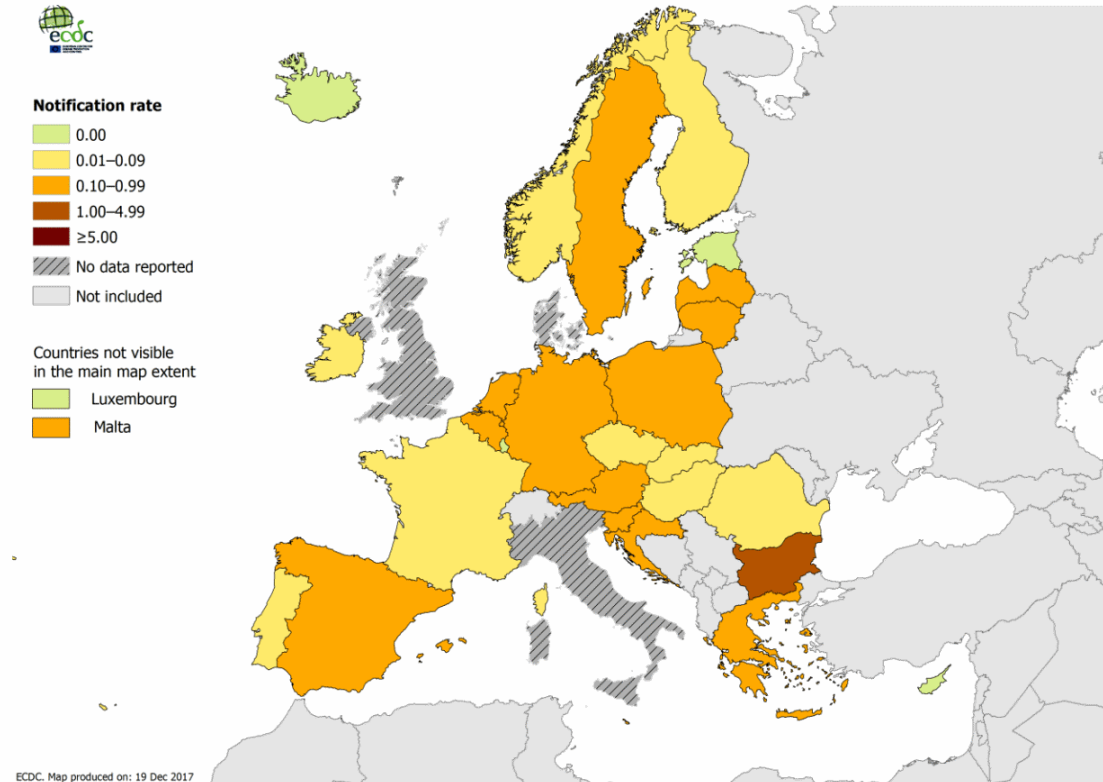
# Echinococcus



[www.fve.org](http://www.fve.org)

- Tapeworm
- In 2016, 775 confirmed echinococcosis cases were reported in the EU/EEA.

**Figure 1.** Distribution of confirmed echinococcosis cases per 100 000 population by country, EU/EEA, 2016





# Working together to make online trade of companion animals safer

- ✓ FVE, FECAVA together with other organisations wrote letters to policy makers and online platforms
- ✓ FVE, FECAVA is part of the voluntary initiative subgroup on companion animal (dog) trade
- ✓ FVE, FECAVA Works on promoting owner awareness





# BREEDING FOR EXTREME CONFORMATIONS

What is the problem?

**Extreme breeding**

**EXAMPLE OF BREED SPECIFICATIONS\***  
Instructions for breeders

**Blue coat, dark blue ears**

\*Although this example is fictitious, it is inspired by real breed standards. Breed specifications (or their interpretation) can be quite extreme.

➔ **Extreme conformation** of pets by selecting for a particular 'look' (e.g. flat nose, sloping back, bulging or droopy eyes, skin folds, round skull) to the point of causing animal suffering.



## Causes

- **Increased demand** (fashion) of certain breeds, boosted by advertising, movies, social media and celebrities
- **Lack of owner awareness** about the health and welfare impact of extreme breeding (e.g. thinking that snoring is normal)
- **Lack of regulations** (e.g. extreme breeding, breeding conditions)

## Consequences for animals

- Extreme looks (conformation) can lead to poor animal health and welfare to the point of **animal suffering** (struggling to breathe, overheating, joint pain, sore skin, eye ulcers...)
- They may **need invasive surgery** in order to breathe or walk normally, and often need a caesarean section when giving birth
- Intensive interbreeding can pass on genetic disorders, causing **suffering and early death**



## Consequences for owners

- **High unexpected medical and surgical bills**
- **Heartache** due to poor health and welfare or early death of their pet
- **Complicated care** of unhealthy dogs (avoid warm weather, excitement, activities)
- **Unmet expectations of pet ownership**
- **Emotional and legal hurdles** for dealing with unhealthy animals



## Consequences for society

- More and more **unscrupulous breeders and puppy farms** to satisfy demand
- **Behavioural problems** if dogs are from an uncertain source (due to early weaning, poor socialisation)
- Higher risk of **introducing disease** with dogs that come from abroad (e.g. rabies, resistant bacteria, disease-carrying ticks and fleas)
- Increased numbers of **unwanted puppies and dogs**



Although pugs dominate on this page, many other breeds and animals are also affected by extreme breeding.

Very successful!!

FVE Facebook alone:

> 67 000

People Reached

< 1700

Reactions, Comments & Shares



Infographic - European Parliament 26 June

# Potential Solutions:



- Obligatory identification and registration of all dogs
- Promoting consumer awareness and empowerment
- Stricter movement and animal welfare laws
- More resources and guidance for effective enforcement
- Clearer and better enforced vending legislation particularly on electronic purchases
- The use of other legislation (for example, fraud) to challenge offenders with high penalties
- Cooperation between authorities
- Training of the officials



# Warning signs

- Puppies are not with their mother
- You cannot see their breeding environment
- Breeder reluctant to show you around
- Breeder wants to ship the animal to you or to get payed in advance









[www.fve.org](http://www.fve.org)

