

***Identification, Vaccination and
movement of dogs and cats in Europe
-The Pet Passport and TRACES systems-***

A REPORT FROM VIER PFOTEN

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WHY A REPORT ?

Starting point: we noticed that more and more, unscrupulous dog traders are using the EU pet passport and TRACES systems to bring legal appearance to illegal activities.

- Clarify actual EU rules on identification, commercial and non-commercial movement (transport), vaccination etc.
 - Identify legal loopholes
 - Identify issues met in practice by the competent authorities, official veterinarians, animal operators and NGOs
- ⇒ The goal is **not to « destroy »** the Pet Passport and TRACES system but to **offer tailor-made solutions** to improve the efficiency of these tools
- ⇒ The solutions offered are often costless and easy to implement
- ⇒ All the points of the report are documented with elements of proof

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METHODOLOGY

A **one year legal research** in International (ISO), EU and national rules was lead by the European policy office of VIER PFOTEN, together with the **help of experts**.

In parallel, FOUR PAWS companion animal campaign and research teams in Germany, UK, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Romania and Austria made **field investigation** together with the competent authorities, police services and private investigators.

A call for testimonies of victims of illegal traders was also launched on the Internet.

The results of the field research was confronted to the legal research to identify the legal loopholes and weaknesses. Up from there, the report was drafted.

Each section of the final draft report (especially the TRACES points) has been **reviewed by experts and competent authorities from different countries**.

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STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT (I)

INTRODUCTION on animal traceability in Europe with particular focus on dogs and cats

PART 1 on Identification of dogs and cats, including existing rules (ISO norms), missing rules and problem met in practice (generation of codes, country codes, manufacturers code etc.). Analysis of the role of competent authorities, veterinarians and transponders' manufacturers

PART 2 on the Pet Passport, including the generation of its number, its role and reason to be, the vaccination proofs and its limits, concrete cases of fraud etc.

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STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT (II)

PART 3 on the inclusion of dogs and cats within the TRACES system, including an analysis of the operation of the TRACES certificates and their limits and the enforcement of **Regulation 1/2005 on animal transport**.

PART 4 on the study of two cases investigated by VIER PFOTEN related to the misuse of the TRACES system by illegal dog traders.

In both cases, there were legal and validated TRACES documents (including pet passports) despite obvious fraud in the identification of the animals or in the vaccination protocols. Both cases are documented.

> First case: commercial movement of a dog travelling from Hungary to Switzerland, passing through Germany and Austria

> Second case: commercial movement of 113 puppies from Czech Republic to Belgium and the Netherlands passing through Germany

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STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT (II)

PART 5 gathering all practical recommendations (35) resulting from the weaknesses and loopholes identified regarding identification, vaccination, movement, transport, the Pet Passport and TRACES.

Most of these recommendations are easy and costless to adopt, and could improve significantly the current system.



CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT

PART 1: Identification

- The EU System is based on ISO norms 11784 and 11785
- But to be operational these norms require an effective control system, which is not in place today (ISO norm 24631-1)
- The EU has given all responsibility for unicity of the codes to Member States, the latter having themselves handed over responsibility to manufacturers and/or to those who implant transponders
- There is today no EU provision to ensure traceability of transponders' manufacturer. This leads to many problem when facing a wrong device
- The Pet Passport Regulation was updated in 2013, but did not consider new technologies in transponders..

=> This results in lots of wrong/ duplicate codes in transponders on the EU market

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CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT

PART 2: Pet Passport

- The Pet Passport was a great step forward, enabling the opening of European borders to pets and to the owners wishing to travel with them
- However, this system has failed to fulfil its potential because it is limited purely to health considerations
- The refusal to transform the Pet Passport into a true identity document for each animal has resulted in the failure of all attempts to establish pet traceability in Europe.

=> The weak rules on the commercial movement of pet animals, together with the possibility of easily circumventing the rules on the non-commercial movement of pet animals, have exposed Europe to significant health risks.

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CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT

PART 3: Dogs and Cats and the TRACES system

- The inclusion of pets in the TRACES system, created at the basis for the movement of animals intended for food consumption was made clumsily and remains unfinished today
- The current system of Pet Passports combined with the TRACES system is so easy to circumvent that animal smugglers have more incentive to exploit the system as it stands than to try to avoid it.
- Although many frauds are detected after they occurred, when a purchased animal becomes sick or dies, neither the TRACES system nor the (insufficient) control by competent authorities stops the fraudulent movement of animals.

=> Yet the Pet Passport and the TRACES system have the potential to effectively make the movement of pets in Europe secure if certain changes are introduced, and if greater financial and human resources are allocated to their application

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The Conference on the report

When: 21st and 22nd of June

Where: the Representation of the State of Hessen to the EU in Brussel

Partner: the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe



CONFERENCE

Identification, vaccination and movement of dogs and cats in the EU:
How to improve the Pet Passport and TRACES systems?

Registration:
event@vier-pfoten.eu

Brussels, 21 and 22 June 2016
Representation of the State of Hessen to the EU



The conference will enable an open discussion between veterinarians, lawyers, politicians and NGOs of several member States on the problem met in practice with the current EU system of Identification, vaccination and movement of dogs and cats

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An example of failure met in practice

March 2012, Truck accident in Germany

- FOUR PAWS was informed about a truck accident with 113 puppies on board on the motorway in Germany
- Two puppies died instantly, many were injured
- In the following weeks, 22 of the puppies died from diseases and infections against which they were vaccinated according to their papers
- The puppies had come from Czech Republic and were going to Belgium and the Netherlands to be sold in pet shops
- The movement was recorded in the TRACES system and had been validated by the Czech veterinary authorities
- At departure, the truck was checked by the Czech authorities



An example of failure met in practice

March 2012, Truck accident in Germany

After the accident, a deep veterinary check was done by the German authorities who noticed lots of irregularities:

- **An automatically calculated transport time provided by the TRACES system that was unworkable;**
- **The reuse of the same sticker (photocopies) certifying vaccination against rabies.** Based on the lot, the vaccine had expired in 2009 (3 years before the vaccination);
- **Vaccination dates were prior to the date of issue of the passport**
- **The ages of puppies as declared in their passports did not correspond at all to reality** (11-week old according to the papers, not more than 4-week old according to the expert vet)



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An example or failure met in practice

March 2012, Truck accident in Germany

- Rabies vaccinations were not valid at all (even if the age of the puppies declared in the passport was real!)
 - The cages used for the transport were inappropriate and not fixed properly
 - Puppies did not have enough food and water
 - Data on the carrier approval number did not match those entered in the TRACES system.
 - The licence of the carrier had expired 2 years ago
- ⇒ **By several aspects, the movement was infringing EU legislation on commercial movement of companion animals + the Transport Regulation**
- ⇒ **But despite all these infringements, real TRACES documents were issued and validated by competent authorities**

The TRACES system failed by:

- Not enabling to notice the inconsistency between passport issuance date, rabies vaccination date and birthdate as declared in the passport
- Not checking drivers licence validity

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

QUESTIONS ARE WELCOME



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