Basic information

2023/0447(COD) COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Regulation	Procedure completed
Welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability **Subject** 3.10.04.02 Animal protection	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	VRECIONOVÁ Veronika (ECR)	24/07/2024
	Shadow rapporteur DE MEO Salvatore (EPP) NARDELLA Dario (S&D) KRIŠTOPANS Vilis (PfE) WIEZIK Michal (Renew) METZ Tilly (Greens/EFA) HAZEKAMP Anja (The Left)	

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	VRECIONOVÁ Veronika (ECR)	25/01/2024

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Climate and Food Safety	RIPA Manuela (EPP)	05/12/2024

Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Climate and Food Safety		

Council of the European

Union	
European Commission	**Commission DG** / **Commissioner** Health and Food Safety / KYRIAKIDES Stella
European Economic and Social Committee	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
07/12/2023	Legislative proposal published	COM(2023)0769	Summary
25/01/2024	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
13/11/2024	Resumption of business from the previous parliamentary term		
03/06/2025	Vote in committee, 1st reading		
10/06/2025	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A10-0104/2025	
19/06/2025	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T10-0135/2025	Summary
19/06/2025	Results of vote in Parliament		
19/06/2025	Matter referred back to the committee responsible for interinstitutional negotiations		
12/01/2026	Approval in committee of the text agreed at 1st reading interinstitutional negotiations	GEDA/A/(2025)005958	
28/04/2026	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T10-0115/2026	Summary
28/04/2026	Results of vote in Parliament		
22/05/2026	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		
17/06/2026	Final act signed		
10/08/2026	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2023/0447(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 043-p2 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 114
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Mandatory consultation of other institutions	European Economic and Social Committee
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AGRI/10/00301

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE766.982	10/01/2025	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE768.231	10/02/2025	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE768.250	10/02/2025	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE766.664	08/04/2025	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A10-0104/2025	10/06/2025	
Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading /single reading		T10-0135/2025	19/06/2025	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T10-0115/2026	28/04/2026	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Coreper letter confirming interinstitutional agreement	GEDA/A/(2025)005958	10/12/2025	
Draft final act	00002/2026/LEX	09/06/2026	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(2023)0769	07/12/2023	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2026)06-15	15/06/2026	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	ES_PARLIAMENT	COM(2023)0769	18/03/2024	
Contribution	IT_CHAMBER	COM(2023)0769	25/03/2024	
Contribution	IT_SENATE	COM(2023)0769	15/04/2024	
Reasoned opinion	IT_SENATE	PE761.175	03/06/2024	
Reasoned opinion	CZ_CHAMBER	PE760.855	10/07/2024	
Reasoned opinion	IT_SENATE	PE761.176	10/07/2024	
Reasoned opinion	IT_CHAMBER	PE761.177	10/07/2024	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0532/2024	20/03/2024	

Additional information		
Source	**Document**	**Date**
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency

Name	Role	Committee	Date	Interest representatives
HAZEKAMP Anja	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	28/01/2026	Eurogroup for Animals VIER PFOTEN International
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	08/12/2025	Eurogroup for Animals
WIEZIK Michal	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	26/11/2025	Eurogroup for Animals
WIEZIK Michal	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	23/09/2025	Eurogroup for Animals
METZ Tilly	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	17/09/2025	Eurogroup for Animals
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	18/07/2025	Euractiv
WIEZIK Michal	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	10/06/2025	Eurogroup for Animals FOUR PAWS International
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	24/04/2025	Deutscher Tierschutzbund - German Animal Welfare Federation
WIEZIK Michal	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	04/04/2025	EuroPetNet
HAZEKAMP Anja	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	27/03/2025	Eurogroup for Animals VIER PFOTEN International
METZ Tilly	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	19/03/2025	CAS International
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	12/03/2025	MSD Pharma
VRECIONOVÁ Veronika	Rapporteur	AGRI	17/02/2025	Aurelia Netherlands TargetCo B.V. OLX Global BV
VRECIONOVÁ Veronika	Rapporteur	AGRI	12/02/2025	AnimalhealthEurope Eurogroup for Animals Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
NARDELLA Dario	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	03/02/2025	Eurogroup for Animals
ANDRIUKAITIS Vytenis Povilas	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	30/01/2025	European Pet Organization
NARDELLA Dario	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	29/01/2025	Fondazione Capellino

NARDELLA Dario	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	27/01/2025	Four Paws
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	22/01/2025	Aurelia Netherlands TargetCo B.V.
DE MEO Salvatore	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	16/01/2025	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
ANDRIUKAITIS Vytenis Povilas	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	15/01/2025	Eurogroup for Animals
METZ Tilly	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	14/01/2025	Aurelia Netherlands TargetCo B.V.
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	13/01/2025	European Pet Organization
WIEZIK Michal	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	13/01/2025	Four Paws International
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	06/01/2025	Erna-Graff-Stiftung
METZ Tilly	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	12/12/2024	Eurogroup for Animals
METZ Tilly	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	11/12/2024	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
WIEZIK Michal	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	11/12/2024	Eurogroup for Animals
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	10/12/2024	Eurogroup for Animals
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	05/12/2024	Eurogroup for Animals
DE MEO Salvatore	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	05/12/2024	Eurogroup for Animals
WIEZIK Michal	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	03/12/2024	European Pet Organization
DE MEO Salvatore	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	02/12/2024	Four Paws International
WIEZIK Michal	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	18/11/2024	Classifieds Marketplaces Europe
VRECIONOVÁ Veronika	Rapporteur	AGRI	13/11/2024	VIRBAC
VRECIONOVÁ Veronika	Rapporteur	AGRI	06/11/2024	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
VRECIONOVÁ Veronika	Rapporteur	AGRI	23/10/2024	Merck Sharp & Dohme Europe Belgium SRL
WIEZIK Michal	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	23/10/2024	Four Paws International
RIPA Manuela	Rapporteur for opinion	ENVI	26/09/2024	Deutscher Tierschutzbund - German Animal Welfare Federation
MORTLER Marlene	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	10/04/2024	Virbac
MORTLER Marlene	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	10/04/2024	FVE FECAVA
MORTLER Marlene	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	03/04/2024	Europetnet
MORTLER Marlene	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	05/03/2024	FACE - European Federation for Hunting and Conservation
MORTLER Marlene	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	05/03/2024	MSD Animal Health
MORTLER Marlene	Shadow rapporteur	AGRI	29/02/2024	Eurogroup for Animals
VRECIONOVÁ Veronika	Rapporteur	AGRI	27/02/2024	FOUR PAWS

Other Members

Transparency		
Name	**Date**	**Interest representatives**
NOICHL Maria	15/07/2025	AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection
HAYER Valérie	18/06/2025	Eurogroup for Animals
LUENA César	15/05/2025	Policías por los animales
NOICHL Maria	23/04/2025	Eurogroup for Animals
CÂRCIU Gheorghe	24/01/2025	European Pet Organization
ROTH NEVEĎALOVÁ Katarína	14/01/2025	European Pet Organization
FRIGOUT Anne-Sophie	18/12/2024	Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis
PENNELLE Gilles	15/10/2024	fédération des associations de chasse et conservation de de la faune sauvage de l'UE
HAYER Valérie	05/09/2024	World Dog Alliance

Final act	
Regulation 2026/1818 OJ OJ L 10.08.2026	Summary

Welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability

2023/0447(COD) - 19/06/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 457 votes to 17, with 86 abstentions, **amendments** to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability.

The matter was referred back to the relevant committee for interinstitutional negotiations.

Purpose and scope of application

The regulation will apply to the breeding, keeping, placing on the market and entry into the Union of dogs and cats. It will not apply to natural persons who keep dogs or cats for personal or family pet purposes and who allow these animals to reproduce, up to a maximum of one litter per species and per household, per period of eighteen months, without placing them on the market.

In order to exclude from the scope of the regulation **occasional and irregular donations** of small numbers of dogs and cats by natural persons, Members clarified the definition of ‘placing on the market’, which only operators responsible for a breeding establishment, selling establishment or a shelter will be able to carry out.

Regarding exemptions from the obligations, Members proposed distinguishing between establishments based on their size. A breeding establishment in which a **maximum of two litters per calendar year** are produced for marketing would only be subject to certain obligations.

Obligations of establishment operators

Animal operators and carers would be **responsible for the welfare of dogs or cats** kept in their establishments and under their control and for minimising risks to their welfare. In the case of **foster homes**, the responsibility would lie with the operator on whose behalf the dogs or cats are kept. Operators must not commit any acts of cruelty, abuse, or mistreatment of dogs or cats and must not abandon dogs or cats.

Obligations regarding breeding strategies

Members insisted on **banning crossbreeding** between cats or dogs from the same family, to avoid inbreeding. They also call for a ban on breeding dogs or cats with **excessive conformational traits** that could have a negative impact on their welfare. Members specified that such practices could be allowed in exceptional and duly justified cases to preserve local breeds with limited genetic heritage. The Commission will be empowered to adopt delegated acts regarding extreme conformations by 2030.

It would also be prohibited to use animals with extreme conformational traits - as well as mutilated animals - in **shows**, **exhibitions and competitions**.

Approval of breeding establishments

Operators of breeding establishments should place dogs or cats on the market only after obtaining approval for their establishment from the competent authority. The competent authorities will carry out **on-site inspections** to verify that the establishment meets the requirements of the regulation.

Obligation to provide information on responsible possession

Operators should provide the purchaser of a dog or cat with information on responsible ownership and the specific needs of the dog or cat in terms of diet, care, health, housing conditions and behavioural needs, as well as information on its health, including its vaccination status. Where the relinquishment of dogs and cats is advertised online, **the warning** should specify that caring for an animal requires financial resources and that abandoning the animal once it is in the care of the owner is forbidden.

Accommodation, health, painful practices

Operators and keepers should ensure that **feeding and drinking facilities** are clean and constructed and installed to ensure equal access for all dogs and cats. It is specified that the keeping or sale of dogs or cats in **pet stores** will be prohibited. Euthanasia of a dog or cat in animal shelters as a population control measure would also be prohibited.

Mutilation practices, such as ear cropping, tail docking, claw removal, or any other partial or total amputation of digits, would be prohibited unless medically indicated. **Sterilisation** should only be performed under anesthesia and prolonged analgesia by a veterinarian. The veterinarian may consider non-surgical sterilisation instead of castration.

Also prohibited would be the prolonged use of muzzles, except if necessary for health reasons, the use of **prong collars** and the use of **choke collars** without a safety top.

To prevent pregnancy-related complications and avoid compromising their welfare, Members proposed allowing up to **three litters within a two-year period**, followed by an adequate recovery period, which should not be less than one year for bitches and queens that have had three litters. Dogs and cats should be **exposed to light** for at least 7 hours a day and dogs should be walked daily for at least one hour a day in total.

Identification and registration of dogs and cats

Members called for all dogs and cats kept in the European Union to be identified by means of a **subcutaneous transponder containing a microchip**, implanted under the supervision of a veterinarian. Operators of establishments should ensure that dogs and cats born in their establishments are individually identified within **three months** of their birth and, in any case, before the date of their placing on the market.

Members also called for microchipped dogs and cats to be registered in **interoperable national databases**. The microchip identification number and information relating to the relevant national database should be centralised in an index database managed by the Commission.

Imports from third countries

The amended text distinguishes between the importation of dogs and cats for the purpose of placing them on the Union market and non-commercial movements, with a view to preventing fraud and improving the traceability of dogs and cats.

Dogs and cats entering the Union for the purpose of being **placed on the Union market** must be identified, prior to entry, by a veterinarian and registered in a national database within two working days of their entry into the Union. The entry of dogs and cats into the Union in the form of a **non-commercial movement** must be notified in advance by their owners in an online Union database of moving pet animals at least five working days before their arrival in the Union.

Data protection

Members have introduced data protection provisions to ensure the protection of personal data contained, for example, in dog and cat databases or in information transmitted by establishments.

Welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability

2023/0447(COD) - 07/12/2023 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: establish minimum harmonised rules that ensure the proper functioning of the internal market while ensuring a high level of welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: around 44% of households in the EU have a pet animal. Trade in dogs and cats has grown considerably in recent years, with an annual value of EUR 1.3 billion. However, animal welfare standards for professional breeding, keeping and selling dogs and cats very much diverge between Member States. There is also extensive evidence of sub-standard practices and abuse.

In addition, the illegal trade in dogs and cats has soared, accelerated by a growing online market which now accounts for 60% of all dog and cat sales in the EU.

Currently, there is no EU legislation on the welfare of dogs and cats while the situation within Member States is extremely variable and uneven, both in terms of welfare standards or traceability. In absence of common framework, individual action of Member States has limited effect and cannot address key issues while dogs and cats are traded freely in the EU. In addition, in absence of common rules on traceability, illegal trade from third countries is facilitated.

CONTENT: the objective of this proposal is to **regulate the trade in dogs and cats in the internal market**, including imports from third countries, to ensure the rational development of the sector and avoid barriers to trade and **combat illegal trade** in cats and dogs while ensuring a high level of protection of animal welfare. It lays down minimum animal welfare requirements for the breeding, keeping and placing on the Union market of dogs and cats.

More specifically, the proposal:

- covers the breeding and keeping of dogs and cats in establishments (including pet shops and animal shelters) and their placing on the market or their offer for adoption at no cost. It does not apply to small establishments;

- covers the **traceability** of dogs and cats placed on the market or supplied in the Union. It excludes dogs and cats kept for scientific purposes;

- introduces the principles of animal welfare based on the concept of the “five domains”, i.e. the needs of animals in terms of nutrition, environment, health, behaviour and mental state;

- establishes an obligation for operators to **notify their activities** to the competent authorities as well as to inform customers on responsible ownership.

- sets out requirements for the competence of animal caretakers and requires establishments to have veterinary visits;

- defines technical requirements on feeding and watering, housing, health, behavioural needs and painful practices, for breeding establishments, pet shops and shelters (however a number of provisions are not required for shelters). In addition, it requires breeding establishments to be approved by the competent authorities. Provisions on housing, health and the approval of breeding establishment have a deferred application of 5 years;

- obliges establishments keeping dogs and cats and suppliers of dogs and cats in the Union to identify the concerned animals by **microchip** and to register them in a database;

- requires suppliers of dogs or cats to provide **evidence of identification and registration**. In addition, **online platforms** where dogs or cats are offered for supply are required to enable suppliers to provide **proof of the identification and the registration** of dogs or cats offered on those platforms. It requires the Commission to ensure the development of a system publicly available free of charge verifying the authenticity of the identification and registration of a dog or cat;

- requires competent authorities to offer **training** for animal caretakers on animal welfare and to approve training programmes on animal welfare;

- requires Member States to establish a **database** for dogs and cats identified by microchip;

- contains rules on **stricter national measures**. Member States are allowed to maintain such rules that apply when the Regulation enters into force. Furthermore, Member States are allowed to adopt new legislation which establishes stricter national provisions as regards housing conditions, enrichment, mutilations and breeding strategies, provided that they are consistent with the Union’s respective rules and that they do not restrict the free movement and placing on the market of products not complying with the stricter national requirements;

- requires the Commission to publish a monitoring report every 5 years on the welfare of dogs and cats placed on the market. Member States may put in place effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties, and to notify these to the Commission.

Budgetary implications

The proposal will require additional human resources for managing the implementation of the legislation and the development of interoperable databases for the identification and registration of dogs and cats.

In parallel, an operational budget of EUR 1.5 million is estimated to be needed for the development and initial operation of the system of verification of the authenticity of this identification and registration for offerings via online Platforms and ensuring the interoperability of national databases and then, EUR 300 000 per year for its maintenance and operation.

Welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability

2023/0447(COD) - 28/04/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 558 votes to 35, with 52 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability.

The European Parliament adopted its position at first reading by amending the Commission's proposal as follows:

Material scope

This regulation applies to the breeding, keeping, tracing, placing on the market and entry into the Union of dogs and cats. It does not apply to the breeding, keeping, placing on the market or entry into the Union of dogs or cats intended or used for scientific purposes or for clinical trials required for the marketing authorisation of veterinary medicinal products.

General welfare principles

Among these principles, it is specified that dogs and cats must be kept in an environment that is appropriate and regularly cleaned, that is secure and comfortable, particularly with regard to **space, air quality, temperature, light**, as well as protection against adverse climatic conditions, and that is large enough to prevent overcrowding and facilitate their movement.

Operators will be **responsible for the welfare** of dogs and cats kept in establishments under their responsibility and control. In the case of foster homes, the responsibility should lie with the operator on whose behalf dogs or cats are kept. Such operators should not place more than a combined total of five dogs or cats, or one litter with or without a mother, in a foster home at any given time, should provide the foster family with adequate information on the animal welfare obligations as well as the individual needs of the dogs or cats.

Operators must not commit **any acts of cruelty, abuse, or mistreatment** towards dogs or cats and must not **abandon** the dogs or cats they breed or keep. Before ceasing operations at an establishment, operators should ensure that any dogs or cats kept there are placed either by becoming the owners of the cat or dog themselves or by transferring responsibility or ownership of the dogs and cats to other operators or purchasers.

Operators of breeding establishments that either produce or intend to produce more than five litters per calendar year or that keep more than a combined total of five bitches or queens at any given time should place dogs or cats on the market only after their breeding establishment has been **approved** by the competent authority.

Ban on commercial practices leading to abuses and health risks

Breeding between parents and their offspring, between grandparents and grandchildren, as well as between siblings and half-siblings, will be prohibited.

The inbreeding of dogs and cats between parents and offspring, between siblings, between half-siblings or between grandparents and grandchildren should be prohibited. Breeding dogs or cats to produce exaggerated or excessive characteristics that pose significant health risks will also be prohibited.

Dogs and cats exhibiting **excessive conformational traits** or having undergone **mutilations** that have altered their physical characteristics must be excluded from shows, exhibitions, and beauty contests.

It should also be prohibited to: (i) tying up body parts (tethering), unless required for medical reasons and limited to the minimum period necessary; (ii) using **muzzles**, unless required for medical reasons or animal or human safety reasons, limited to the minimum period necessary and during which the dog or cat is supervised; (iii) using **prong collars or choke collars** without a safety stop.

Identification and registration of dogs and cats

The regulation stipulates that all dogs and cats kept in establishments, placed on the market or owned by pet owners or by any other natural or legal persons shall be individually identified by means of a si**ngle injectable transponder containing a readable microchip**. This identification must be carried out within **three months** of their birth and, in any case, before the date they are placed on the market, and must be performed by a veterinarian or an authorised qualified person.

Operators of selling establishments and shelters, and operators who place and are responsible for dogs and cats in foster homes, should ensure that dogs and cats that enter their establishments or come under their responsibility are individually identified within **30 days** of arrival and in any event before the date of their placing on the market.

Within **two working days** after their identification, the dogs and cats should be registered by a veterinarian in an **interoperable national database**. Member States may grant exemptions for dogs intended for use in military, police and customs services.

The regulation also provides for: (i) the registration in the databases of changes of ownership within 2 weeks, as well as the death of the animal; (ii) the replacement of the transponder if it becomes unreadable, with updating of the data.

Sellers, breeders, and shelters have **four years** from the legislation's entry into force to prepare. For pet owners who do not sell animals, this obligation will apply after 10 years for dogs and after 15 years for cats.

Entry of dogs and cats into the Union

Dogs and cats may be brought into the Union for the purpose of being placed on the Union market only if they have been bred and kept in compliance with any of the requirements mentioned in the regulation, the requirements recognised by the Union as being equivalent or requirements contained in a specific agreement between the Union and the exporting country.

The operator responsible for the import of the dogs or cats into the Union should ensure that they are registered in a national database, by a veterinarian, **within five working days** after they were brought into the Union. The non-commercial movement of a dog or cat from a third country or territory to the Union should be pre-notified by its owner to the Union pet traveller database at least five working days before the dog or cat crosses the Union border, except in exceptional circumstances.

Where the dog or cat stays more than six months in the Union, the owner should ensure that it is registered in the database of the Member State of residence, by a veterinarian, within five working days after the expiry of the sixth month since it entered the Union.

Welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability

2023/0447(COD) - 10/08/2026 - Final act

Regulation (EU) 2026/1818 establishes minimum Union requirements for the welfare of dogs and cats bred or kept in establishments or placed on the Union market, and for their traceability. It applies to breeding, keeping, identification, marketing and entry into the Union of dogs and cats, with exclusions for animals used for scientific purposes or veterinary clinical trials and certain farm stray cats used for pest control.

Welfare requirements for establishments

Operators of breeding establishments, selling establishments, shelters and foster homes must ensure appropriate nutrition, housing, health care, behavioural conditions and positive human-animal interactions. They must prevent cruelty, abandonment, unnecessary suffering and harmful handling practices, and must rehome animals before ceasing activity.

Dogs and cats must receive adequate feed and continuous access to clean water. Puppies and kittens must receive colostrum during their first two days and be weaned gradually, no earlier than six weeks. Establishments must provide safe, clean and suitable accommodation, resting areas, adequate light and temperature conditions, and sufficient space. Keeping dogs and cats in containers is prohibited except in limited situations, including transport, short-term isolation and certain care needs.

Dogs older than eight weeks must have daily outdoor access or be walked for a combined minimum of one hour, unless a veterinarian advises otherwise. Animals must be socialised from three weeks of age and provided with enrichment. Puppies may not be permanently separated from their mothers before eight weeks; kittens may not be separated before eight weeks in shelters and foster homes, or before 12 weeks in breeding establishments, except for medical reasons.

Operators must inspect animals daily, provide preventive health measures and obtain veterinary advice where welfare is compromised. Euthanasia must normally be performed by a veterinarian using anaesthesia and analgesia. Mutilations, including ear cropping, tail docking, claw removal and vocal-cord resection, are prohibited unless medically justified and performed by a veterinarian under anaesthesia and prolonged analgesia. Tethering for more than one hour is prohibited, subject to limited exceptions.

Breeding strategies must minimise harmful genetic effects. Breeding animals with excessive conformational traits that pose a high welfare risk is prohibited. Close inbreeding is prohibited, except where authorised to preserve local breeds with a limited genetic pool, and breeding to produce hybrids with wild species is prohibited. Female cats may be bred from 10 months and female dogs from their second oestrus; no more than three litters may be produced in two years, followed by at least one year of recovery after three litters. Animals that have undergone two caesarean sections may no longer be used for breeding.

Operator obligations and controls

Operators must notify their activities and establishments to competent authorities. Breeding establishments producing more than five litters annually or keeping more than five breeding females must obtain prior approval. Competent authorities must inspect such establishments and maintain a public list of approved breeders.

Animal carers must have documented education, training or professional experience. At least one carer in each establishment must complete approved training and share knowledge with other carers. Operators must arrange veterinary advisory welfare visits by 31 August 2029, or within one year of notifying a new establishment, and retain records for at least four years.

Operators placing animals on the market must provide acquirers with written information on responsible ownership, the animal’s needs, vaccination status and known health conditions. Online advertisements must include a prominent responsible-ownership warning.

Identification, registration and online advertising

All dogs and cats covered by the Regulation must be individually identified by an injectable, readable microchip meeting specified International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards and registered in national databases. Identification is generally required by three months of age and before marketing; registration must occur within two working days. Changes of ownership, deaths and replacement microchips must be recorded.

Member States must establish interoperable national databases, while the Commission must maintain an index database. For online advertisements, advertisers must obtain and display a unique verification token, enabling prospective acquirers to verify the animal’s identification, registration and ownership through a free public system. Online platforms must facilitate these requirements but are not subject to a general monitoring obligation.

Identification and registration apply from 31 August 2030 to operators and persons placing animals on the market, from 31 August 2036 to non-commercial dog owners, and from 31 August 2041 to non-commercial cat owners.

Imports, enforcement and review

Dogs and cats imported for placement on the Union market must originate from listed third countries and establishments and comply with equivalent welfare and traceability requirements. They must be microchipped before entry and registered within five working days. Non-commercial movements from third countries must generally be pre-notified at least five working days before entry from 31 August 2036.

Member States must establish effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties. They may retain or adopt stricter national rules, provided these are compatible with the Regulation and do not hinder the internal market. The Commission will publish its first monitoring report by 31 August 2033 and evaluate the Regulation by 31 August 2040.

The Regulation was adopted following the European Parliament’s position of 28 April 2026 and the Council’s decision of 22 May 2026. It was published on 10 August 2026, entered into force on 30 August 2026 and applies from 31 August 2028, with phased application dates for specific provisions.

"This summary was AI-generated and human-reviewed."