

Animal Welfare.
Worldwide.

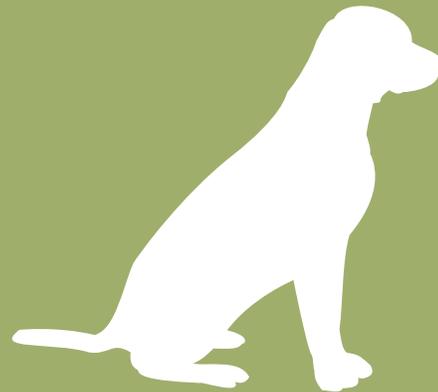


How can DSA help in targeting illegal animal trade?

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ONLINE PET TRADE HAS SEVERAL RISKS

1. The animals being advertised cannot be differentiated

- Healthy, well-cared for pets
- Illegally bred, imported and traded pets of poor health and welfare status

2. Anyone can advertise animals online

- Legally regulated (registered / approved) breeders, sellers / third parties
- Legally unregulated (small-scale / hobby) breeders
- Regulated rehoming shelters
- Unregulated back yard, illegal breeders
- Unregulated sellers / third parties

Advertised for sale online
on a given day in the EU¹

 438,004

 80,712

1. Based on the EUPAAG report 'Online pet advertising in the EU: the costs continue to rise' published by the EU Dog & Cat Alliance and Blue Cross on Dec 1 2020

ILLEGAL SELLERS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE

Online platforms are exploited by illegal sellers

- Lacking or poor seller verification secures anonymity
- Content moderation lets rogue ads go unnoticed
- Mandatory fields filled in with incorrect data
- Grant access to a pool of consumers
- Guarantee fast sales (e.g. impulse buying)



Implications

- Consumer deception
- Compromised public health
- Tax fraud
- Internal market distortion
- Animal suffering



TO PUT THIS TO THE TEST – A CHALLENGE



Chiuaua super mini Chocolate Tan. Apple head.
Amazing! Male

€ 690

 HIGHLIGHT  TO THE TOP

Particular

Age: 1-6 months

LOP:

Electronic identification number of the baby: 900182001692570

Electronic identification number of the breeding female: 900182001692580

Breeder's Registration Number:

Number of animals in the litter: 2

Description

Excellent chihuahua. Perfect! Mini Boy. Chocolate Tan. Apple head. Russian lineage. Parents with Lop. For customers who want the sweetest and sweetest baby. Calm.
Wonderful example. Wide head. Excellent size. Quality. . Apple head. Short muzzle. Mini. Vaccinated and dewormed. Declaration by the veterinarian to certify race and health. Very sweet. Feed you eat: Royal Canin. Accustomed to children. Shipping to Switzerland and Luxembourg

Misleading information:

- ❌ Mother's chip not registered
- ❌ Puppy's chip not registered

We have made search in all related databases- unfortunately we could not match your search criteria: 900182001692580.

- ❌ Breeder's number potentially misused

DOG ADS DROPPED WITH BORDER-CONTROLS INDICATING PRIOR NON-COMPLIANT ACTIVITY

During the first lock-down, **puppy advertisements fell by 67% even though demand increased** indicating previous non-compliant activity, e.g.; lack of TRACES registration, transport by unlicensed individuals,...

Number of puppy advertisements counted on 2 large German websites¹



1. <https://www.vier-pfoten.de/unseregeschichten/publikationen/vier-pfoten-corona-report>

MEASURES TAKEN BY PLATFORMS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

Measures taken by platforms today

- ✓ Email verification of the advertiser
- ✓ Mandatory fields to fill in (chip number, breeder number)
- ✓ Requirement to submit breeder certificates
- ✓ Introduction of a Paywall (payment with credit card / PayPal)
- ✓ Updating Terms of Use, raising awareness, report button
- ✓ Banning sales

(!) Problems that remain unaddressed

- ☐ Sellers use numerous accounts and profiles
- ☐ Information is rarely or ineffectively verified
- ☐ Sellers can pose as hobby/one-off breeders
- ☐ Hard to get information from the transaction code
- ☐ Complex for platforms and consumers to detect fraud
- ☐ Activity moves to closed groups



THE EU ACKNOWLEDGES THE PROBLEM

- **EU Coordination Control Plan on Online Sales of Dogs and Cats**
- **Recommendations on platforms and consumers by EU PAW**
- **Minimum requirements to sell online in some Member States**

HOW THE DSA COULD HELP

- The **DSA** provides a good framework to **improve security** in the online trade, but it does not go far enough
- It should be **more ambitious to effectively address seller anonymity and expand its scope**
- **DSA should be strengthened with:**
 - ✓ a mandatory requirement to **verify the identification information of the seller**
 - ✓ a requirement to **verify the identification information on the product** (labelling / registration)
- Sellers that are traceable and accountable for the offered product have less incentives to commit fraud
- Level-playing field in online classified advertising



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Thank you for your attention!

Contact:

office@vier-pfoten.org

#TracingTheTrade

www.four-paws.org/tracingthetrade

FOUR PAWS is the global animal welfare organisation for animals under direct human influence, which reveals suffering, rescues animals in need and protects them. Founded in 1988 in Vienna by Heli Dugler, the organisation advocates for a world where humans treat animals with respect, empathy and understanding. FOUR PAWS' sustainable campaigns and projects focus on companion animals including stray dogs and cats, farm animals and wild animals – such as bears, big cats, orangutans and elephants – kept in inappropriate conditions as well as in disaster and conflict zones. With offices in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Switzerland, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, Hungary, the UK, the USA and Vietnam as well as sanctuaries for rescued animals in twelve countries, FOUR PAWS provides rapid help and long-term solutions. www.four-paws.org