

John Dalli
Member of the European Commission

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Dear Ms Liotard,

Thank you for your letter of 1 December on stray dogs in Romania which you co-signed together, with other Members of the European Parliament.

I am very sensitive to the welfare of stray animals and their treatment in some parts of the EU.

There is no EU rule governing the welfare of dogs except on transport. This issue therefore remains a primary competence of the Member States.

Nevertheless, the welfare of dogs will be considered in the context of preparing the new EU strategy for the protection and welfare of animals to be adopted early in 2012. The Commission will investigate thoroughly to which extent the problems raised can be dealt with at EU level.

The Commission can only act within the framework of its legal competencies. Animal welfare as such is not an objective of the EU treaties and is only relevant for the Union in so far no action at EU level affects negatively one of the objectives of the treaties. This is the case for the welfare of animals kept for farming purposes (common agriculture policy) or the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes (internal market).

As regards the welfare of dogs, several dimensions have to be envisaged. Some of them may be of relevance for the Union because they could interfere with the functioning of the internal market or with public health. However, concerning the treatment of stray dogs, there is no *prima facie* evidence that the issue may affect one of the objectives of the Union.

I am looking forward to further discuss this important issue with you and your colleagues.

Yours sincerely,



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