



Department  
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*Per George*

Thank you for your email of 23 July on behalf of a number of your constituents about puppy imports.

We are determined to crack down on animal traffickers and put a stop to the abhorrent illegal trade of puppies or abuses of the EU Pet Travel Scheme.

Responsibility for stopping the illegal movement of puppies begins in the country where they are born. The UK Chief Veterinary Officer has written to the authorities in Lithuania and Poland to remind them of their duty to ensure passports are correct and the welfare of pets intended for sale is safeguarded.

The UK has one of the toughest pet border checking regimes. Every pet travelling with its owner on an approved route has its microchip and passport checked and we carry out additional random checks which help to ensure puppies are properly vaccinated and are old enough to travel. The UK Border Force also carries out a wide range of checks on vehicles arriving in the UK. Stringent penalties are already in place for those who breach the law by smuggling animals, use false documentation or disguise the movement of pets intended for sale as non-commercial movements. Changes to the pet passport scheme introduced in December 2015 further strengthen the system by increasing traceability and making the pet passport harder to forge or tamper with.

I should also point out that the trade in illegally imported pets is driven by consumer demand. Pet owners in the UK can help end this trade by only buying a pet from a reputable source and, in the case of very young animals, by seeing it interact with its mother in the breeding environment.

Finally, leaving the European Union gives us an opportunity to look at how we can further strengthen our controls.

Thank you again for your letter.

With every good wish,

*Yours,  
Michael*

Michael Gove

