

I&R in Europe and recommendations for setup of an companion animal database

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Present Situation in the EU concerning I&R

Legal situation within the EU

- Concerning I&R in companion animals, there are very few mandatory legal obligations
- One of the most well know legal acts in the EU concerning I&R is regulation for the EU-Pet-Passport addressing the cross border travel within the EU with companion animals, requiring a mandatory transponder for cats, dogs and ferrets.
- TRACES also provides us with a tool for the tracking of movement also of companion animals in Europe
- All these measure, only tackle a small part or a special problem concerning companion animals within the EU, leaving most of the regulation work to the member state itself
- The result of this is a mostly unharmonized and heterogeneous landscape of I&R for companion animals across Europe, leaving the member states, the pet-owners and authorities with a number of problems concerning I&R
- To put it straight: I&R in Europe is due to the lack of concrete regulations and it's history of over 30 years a conglomeration of various mostly incompatible systems



EU Databases

Types of databases

- Usually we differentiate between mandatory databases and non-mandatory database
- In this context there are databases run by NGO's, companies, by state institutions or state institutions delegating the database to companies.
- The biggest European databases are TASSO with app. 7.1 million registered companion animals, followed by Great Britain and Spain, which unites the autonomous mandatory databases of their regions.
- Attempts have been made to provide users with cross border search-plattforms to identify also animals from other than their home-countries.
- At the moment there are two centralized systems
- The first one is a free of charge company run solution www.petmaxx.com (Provider datamars) which functions a a meta-search-engine and also searches a few non-European databases
- The second is an European NGO, run by its member-database-providers and uniting almost every European database. www.europetnet.org



EU Databases

Examples of databases within the member states

- Mandatory database example: France runs a mandatory database for cats and dogs. France provides us with an exemplary model for I&R since it also regulates the coding of transponder-numbers
- Non-Mandatory database example: Germany has non-mandatory I&R, and even though TASSO runs Europe's largest database, only 60 % of all companion animals are registered
- Austria shows us a solution for integrating already existing private run databases into a new established mandatory I&R system. Private organizations have to be approved by the government and be in compliance with the governmental regulations. Then they can continue registering animals and already registered animals don't have to be re-registered.
- Belgium runs a mandatory database with a special feature: The EU-Passport-number has to be registered in combination with the transponder of the animal. This prevents fraud with EU-Passports and is a help against the illegal puppy trade.
- Switzerland even though not an EU-memberstate obliges veterinarians and responsible governmental institutions to also register the parents of the registered dogs giving authorities in case of dog attacks the possibility to cross-check if certain breedlines are potential dangerous



EU Databases

The situation in Germany

- There are two major private NGO's registering animals in Germany. TASSO with 7.1 Million registered companion animals and "Deutsches Haustierregister" with app. 700.000 registered pet. Both organization register animals free of charge.
- Accompanied are these two databases by a commercial databases IFTA, which does not lay open their numbers of registration. Estimations talk about 50.000 registered animals
- Some of the 16 states ("Bundesländer") within Germany implemented mandatory registration of dogs for hazard prevention. Unfortunately the governmental institutions so far haven't adopted the previous mentioned "Austrian model") and therefor are re-registering hundredthousands of animals again at high cost.
- The most recent case is the state of Lower Saxony re-registering over 400.000 dogs, that are already registered with TASSO at a cost of app. 20 EUR per dog. This situation considerably reduces the acceptance of the new law in Lower Saxony and is leading to protest of citizens against the new dog-law.
- Other examples of mandatory databases are Hamburg, Berlin, Hessen and Thüringen.
- All number of different databases is a very unsatisfying situation in Germany and in this constellation a waste of governmental resources.



ISO-Standard for transponders

Problems of an unregulated market

- A not commonly know fact is, that the market for the transponder-numbers in Europe is mostly unregulated leading to a freely interpretation of the ISO-Standard for the number of transponders
- As the use of the country code for transponders is recommend, its use is according to the ISO-Standard only allowed, if a “competent authority” is in charge of providing producers of transponders with number-blocks they can use with their transponders
- As an workaround producers use the country-code followed by their manufacturer-number and a serial-number, trying to provide uniqueness of the number, which is one demand of the ISO-Standard
- The disadvantage of this system is, that the member state governments do not see a need for regulation of the market, since they assume the market regulates itself.
- TASSO has experienced in hundreds of cases, that this system doesn’t work correctly, since there is a tendency to produce an import transponders from far east
- This in the worst case leads to double transponder numbers, numbers with country-codes from e.g. China and to sometime completly non-ISO-compliant numbers.
- The solution: National regulation of the market and establishing an competent authority controlling the market



Best practice

A few suggestions for a functional I&R-System

- Mandatory I&R
- One database and in case of existing databases a cooperation (“Austrian model”)
- Traceability
- Competent Authority controlling the use of country-code
- Registration of EU-Pet-Passport-Numbers (Belgium example)

Thank you for your attention!

Questions are appreciated

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