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FOUR PAWS questions to Ministries and pet registries and their answers

This is a supporting document of the Report “Billion Euro Industry: why the EU must strengthen regulations to end the illegal puppy trade now”, available at www.four-paws.org/billion-euro-puppy-trade.

In July 2024 FOUR PAWS contacted the relevant ministries of all EU Member States, asking for the following information, for at least 2023 or 2022, but ideally for 2021-'23:

1. Number of puppies bred by registered breeders
2. Number of registered breeders (please give for different types of breeders, e.g. registered “hobby breeders” or “commercial breeders”). Please indicate how many of these are also FCI breeders, or if this is unknown information.
3. Minimum amount of puppies bred, or litters produced, which requires a registration as a breeder (please give for each breeder type)
4. Numbers of dogs imported (ideally with a differentiation between puppies and dogs if possible)
5. Number of dogs exported (ideally with a differentiation between puppies and dogs if possible)
6. Number of privately bred puppies per year (persons without any registration)
7. New dog registrations per year in the pet registry (Identification and Registration database). Please use the table:

(To pet registries we have asked additionally: Please could you also let us know how many dogs (all), and puppies are currently registered as alive in your database?)

	Dogs (all)	Puppies (specified with max. 4,5 months/ 20 weeks) – please indicate if you use other age limit
2023		
2022		
2021		

8. Besides the data above, we would also like to know
 - a. if there is a central database for all registered breeders in your country? If not, where are the breeders registered, e.g. at municipal level?
 - b. figures or estimates about how many dogs are adopted per year?



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Answers by Ministries and Pet Registries

Participation:

Ministry replies received:

- Austria (including dog registration data)
- Brussels (Region in Belgium),
- Bulgaria
- Slovenia (including dog registration data)
- Finland (including dog registration data)
- Denmark (including dog registration data)
- Luxembourg
- Poland
- Sweden
- Czech Republic (including dog registration data)
- Several States from Germany replied, whereas not all of them were able to provide data (Baden Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Brandenburg, Hamburg, Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niedersachsen, Rheinland Pfalz, Saarland, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen)
- The Netherlands have sent figures at a late stage, which are included in the calculations, but not included in this overview.

Auto-replies received but no answer:

- Estonia
- Belgium (Flanders)
- Croatia
- Hungary
- Portugal

Pet Registry replies received:

Estonian LLR Registry, a note from the Danish Dog Registry, Berlin dog registry, Lithuanian registry

Ministries which did not reply:

- Wallonia
- Greece
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Malta
- Slovakia
- Spain
- Italy
- Romania



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Answers

Please note, below we refer to the responsible ministries who provided the answer, or indicate where a pet registry replied. When the answers stated that data is not available, then we have usually not included these in the answer below.

1. Number of puppies bred by registered breeders

- **Brussels** (Region in Belgium) provided this information: Number undetermined, as either no inspection has yet been carried out at the kennel since approval, or administrative documents are missing/incomplete. At least ten puppies born in 2021 and four puppies born in 2023. Number of puppies registered under an approval number on DogID (*the Belgian Dog registration database*) in 2021, 2022 and 2023: 149 puppies registered under an approval number in 2021, 142 puppies registered under an approval number in 2022 and 126 puppies registered under an approval number in 2023.
- **The Czech Republic** replied: there is currently no central register of dogs and their breeders in the Czech Republic. The national veterinary administration does not have the required data. No legal regulation in the Czech Republic imposes an obligation on the State Veterinary Administration to register dog breeders or their number.
- **Denmark, France, Czech Republic and Slovenia** referred to the FCI.
- **Austria** wrote: With the amendment to the Animal Welfare Act, associations (with a permit according to §31 (1) TschG) that place dogs from abroad in Austria must report the number of dogs they have placed (from abroad) on a quarterly basis to the relevant district administrative authority (see §31a (3) TschG) - starting 01/01/2025.
- **Ireland** notified us that the numbers of pups born in Dog Breeding Establishments was not collected on a national scale previously, however since the beginning of 2024 this data was requested and by early 2025 some indicators might be available. (*Note: In Ireland there is also a registration obligation for smaller scale breeders*)
- **Finland** replied: This kind of information cannot be obtained from the Finnish Food Authority Dog Registry. In our national legislation there is an obligation for breeders delivering puppies from three or more litters per year to register, but this register is another register (register for animal keepers and establishments) and it does not include information about actual numbers of puppies bred.
- **The Netherlands** was able to deliver numbers for puppies bred by private persons and by professional dealers, but did not state how many were bred in which year.

2. Number of registered breeders (please give for different types of breeders, e.g. registered “hobby breeders” or “commercial breeders”). Please indicate how many of these are also FCI breeders, or if this is unknown information.

Several countries provided figures and information about legal requirements was collected in the document “Breeder Registration Overview EU”, which is available at our website www.four-paws.org/billion-euro-puppy-trade.

- **Austria** send the information, that breeders currently do not receive a registration number, at least not from the federal government. (*Note: A list of registered breeders is available from a Parliamentary Request answer of 13.12.2022, thus FOUR PAWS did not request this data.*)
- In **Brussels**, five amateur dog breeders are approved as of 24/07/2024.



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- The **Czech Republic** provided the number of registered breeders, who need to notify the number of kept animals and the place of keeping to the authorities:
 - by the beginning of 2021, 3,260 notifications of breeders were registered
 - by the beginning of 2022, 3,751 notifications of breeders were registered
 - by the beginning of 2023, 3,976 notifications of breeders were registered
 - by the beginning of 2024, 4,200 breeder notifications were registeredThe notifications hold the data about the number of puppies, that holdings/breeders with three and more female dogs breed.
- **Luxembourg** has 87 breeders, and every breeder has to be authorized, so the information whether if they are FCI breeders or not is not retained.
- **France** mentioned, that since December 14, 2023, breeders have started to register in the National Operator Base but to date, the majority have not yet done so. They do not have the means to distinguish breeders meeting the FCI nomenclature.
- **Slovenia** referred to the national FCI, as the competent authority for FCI breeders, but provided no further information about breeders registered with the state. They plan to introduce the breeding license according to AHL in next national veterinary legislation amendments.
- **Poland:** Neither the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland nor the Chief Veterinary Inspectorate have information regarding the registers regarding dog breeders and the number of puppies they bred. Only cynological associations of particular dog breeds or the Polish Kennel Club may have data regarding breeders and number of puppies bred by them, who voluntarily register their kennels with these organizations.
- **Finland:** 519 operators have reported active dog breeding activities to the Eläintenpitäjä- ja pitopaikkarekisteri (*Register of animal keepers and establishments*). The notification on keeping animals does not specify whether the operator works as a breeder as a hobby or as professional.
- The **Danish** Veterinary and Food Administration issues permits for breeding establishments where dogs are bred commercially, but does not keep a database for registered breeders. The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration cannot extract data regarding the number of issued permits for registered establishments. The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration cannot extract data regarding the number of any breeders (or “smaller” establishments), that do not require a permit.
- **Sweden** does not have any information on breeders. They referred to the Swedish kennel club.
- The **German** Federal Statistical Office, after asking the specialist departments, informed us that they do not have the information we asked for. In general the answers says, that only numbers on the breeders with a permit are available, at various levels below state level.
 - **Saarland has 60 registered breeders.** The number of hobby breeders is unknown.
 - For **Berlin there were 188 permits issued for the breeding and keeping of vertebrates**, but the figures do not differentiate species or the activity. The Senatsverwaltung für Justiz und Verbraucherschutz (*Senate Department for Justice and Consumer Protection*) notified us, that it is assumed that there is a multitude of “private breeders” and of “accidental litters”, which are unknown to the authorities, but will be marketed in Berlin. It can be assumed furthermore, that any dog breeders with fraudulent intentions won’t register with authorities, and thus evade from administrative supervision.
 - For **Brandenburg** we were asked to turn to the single Veterinary and food inspection offices, but asking all of these was beyond FOUR PAWS’ capacities for this research.
 - In **Bavaria** we were also asked to turn to the vet authorities, but asking all of these were beyond FOUR PAWS’ capacities for this research.



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- for **Hamburg**, we were advised to ask the district authorities for the numbers of registered breeders, but asking all of these were beyond FOUR PAWS' capacities for this research.
- From **Hessen's** reply the situation appears to be similar to Hamburg, and asking all of these were beyond FOUR PAWS' capacities for this research.
- **Saxony-Anhalt**: In Saxony-Anhalt, the districts and independent cities ("Landkreise und kreisfreien Städte") are responsible for monitoring animal welfare and animal health regulations; asking all of these were beyond FOUR PAWS' capacities for this research..
- **Lower-Saxony**: The responsibility for permits for commercial breeders lies with the districts and independent cities in Lower Saxony. This permit requirement is not linked to official registration in a register, so that a query of breeders with a Section 11 permit to the responsible authorities would involve a disproportionate amount of effort and would be detrimental to the legally prescribed tasks of the responsible authorities. The result of such a query would only be able to cover a small part of the data FOUR PAWS have requested.
- **Mecklenburg-Vorpommern** mentioned, that from our request only the import and export data would be available.
- **Thüringen**: (on Q1 & 2) The data you requested is not available to the Ministry and is not recorded statistically here.
- Several German states mentioned, that a survey of the dog breeders that require a permit according to § 11 TierSchG is theoretically possible, at least with regard to the litter documentation by the local authorities, but it would involve a lot of personnel and time, which would make it difficult to carry out their other tasks properly, as they would be significantly affected, so that the effort must be assessed as disproportionate.
- It was notified by several states that they support the creation of a central research authority ("Recherchestelle") on the online trade with vertebrates.
- It was also mentioned by several states, that FOUR PAWS' work against illegal puppy trade or this research request is highly valued, thank you!
- FOUR PAWS was often advised to also ask the FCI, on information whether their breeders are also registered with the ministries.
- The FCI does not know which of their registered FCI breeders are additionally registered with the domestic authorities. Legislation differs from country to country regarding the obligation to be registered. The FCI knows that not all of their breeders are registered additionally with the domestic authorities, but the FCI is unable to give any numbers.

According to a recent FCI report, about 85% of the dogs across the EU are not covered by the FCI breeders." The distribution of FCI pedigree dogs across European countries presents a varied landscape. The EU average is 15.36%, with a standard deviation of 14.83%."¹

3. **Minimum number of puppies bred, or litters produced, which requires a registration as a breeder (please give for each breeder type)**

- **Poland**: There aren't any national regulations in place that set the minimal amount of puppies or litters which obliges to register as a breeder.
- **Other countries'** information is gathered in Supporting Document 6 *Breeder Registration Overview*.

¹ "Report on The Distribution of FCI Pedigree Dogs in the European Union in 2022", Attila Márton, FCI, 2024, <https://www.fci.be/en/Report-on-The-Distribution-of-FCI-Pedigree-Dogs-in-the-European-Union-in-2022-A-Marton-4817.html>



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4. Numbers of dogs imported and exported (ideally with a differentiation between puppies and dogs if possible)

- Many countries mentioned, that TRACES data does not differentiate puppies and dogs, as the age of the animals given at certification of consignments of live animals in the TRACES system is not mandatory information.
- A few countries provided an overview, most notable the Lithuanian pet registry, who also differentiated between puppies and older dogs.
- **Brussels** sent data:
 - Imports from non-EU countries to RBC (all years combined): no data
 - Imported from an EU country to RBC (2023): 129 dogs and 53 puppies
 - Imported from an EU country to RBC (2022): 114 dogs and 73 puppies
 - In 2021: 65 dogs exported according to DogID
 - In 2022: 98 dogs exported according to DogID
 - In 2023: 84 dogs exported according to DogID
- **Finland** does not have data regarding non-commercial movements of dogs from other EU countries into Finland, and no data on exports to third countries. There is quite a difference visible in the provided data between dogs coming to Finland through commercial imports and non-commercial movements from third countries:
 - Commercial imports to Finland from countries **outside EU** (According to TRACES-data. Age-related information is not available in TRACES):
2021: 1 611 dogs
2022: 922 dogs
2023: 7 18 dogs
 - Non-commercial movements from third countries:
2021: 6 081
2022: 11 796
2023: 15 837
 - Commercial imports to Finland **from EU-countries** (according to TRACES-data):
2021: 3 582 dogs
2022: 4 596 dogs
2023: 3 401 dogs
- **France** has sent data established for intra-EU imports or trade by ICAD for the week of identification, and mentioned, this information only concerns identified dogs because they do not have information on unidentified dogs. Exports: They do not have this data at their level.
- **The Czech Republic** delivered data, saying, it might include certain percentage of non-commercial movements of animals. At the same time TRACES does not include cases where a new owner buys a dog directly from the country of its birth from the original breeder, and he is already traveling to the Czech Republic with his new animal, or takes it from Czech Republic to another country, within the framework of non-commercial transfer.
- **Lithuania** provided import and export data taken from the pet registry.
- **Sweden** has no data about imported dogs, and for exported ones only when they are registered before they are exported. If the dog is exported before it is registered, they don't have any information (dogs must be registered before they are four months old). FOUR PAWS believes the export data is taken from the Swedish pet registry and includes non-commercial exports, as the available TRACES data for Swedish exports are lower.



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Number of exported (registered) dogs:

	Dogs (all)	Puppies (specified with max. 4,5 months/ 20 weeks) max 140 days	Unknown age
2023	416	21	13
2022	452	27	12
2021	386	29	18

- **Germany:**

- **Hamburg** (Behörde für Justiz und Verbraucherschutz) provided data about commercially incoming and privately arriving dogs via the Hamburg airport, and highlighted, that in general, private transfers are not subject to control or reporting obligations, and are thus not systematically recorded.
- **Hessen** also pointed to the entity who could provide import and export data of animals which are dealt with at the airport, by the Veterinary border control point (TGSH) at the airport Frankfurt a. M.
- **Saarland** and **Baden-Württemberg** have provided import and export numbers.
- **Thüringen** said data for imports (specifying import=import from a third country) are not available. A TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System) query filtered by country of destination on federal state level is not possible. For exports: Only exports from Germany to third countries with transit through other member states can be evaluated in TRACES. Exports from Germany directly to third countries (without transit through other member states, e.g. via airport/port) are not recorded in TRACES unless there are agreements with the relevant third countries. For dogs, this is only the case for Great Britain. Direct exports to other third countries are not recorded/cannot be evaluated. On this basis, it can be reported that six dogs were exported in 2023, and there are no reports for 2021 and 2022.
- **Lower Saxony** provided Traces Import data from third countries, but also below table covering "From a EU Member State with destination in Germany", which is most likely taken from the pet registry in Lower Saxony as it holds data about puppies.

Year	Number of Dogs	Number of puppies (younger than 0,375 years / 4,5 months / 18 weeks / 126 days)
2021	1401	257
2022	8069	1591
2023	7503	1319

5. Number of privately bred puppies per year (persons without any registration)

France: The French Ministry said they do not have this data. The French pet registry sent the below data, indicating how many dogs were kept at the time of identification by a private individual also called a "PARTICULIER" (someone who does not sell dogs or cats from a reproductive female they own), and which by registered breeders ("PRO"). In comparison to the data sent to the ministry, stating 718.613 dogs excl. import were newly registered in a year, also the dogs in below chart must refer to new registrations in the year. In France, one litter per tax household in a year does not require registration as a breeder, unless at least one puppy is sold.



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ANNEE	DETENTEUR AU MOMENT DE L'IDENTIFICATION	NOMBRE DE CHIOTS IDENTIFIES
2021	PRO	58191
2021	PARTICULIER	774591
2022	PRO	57052
2022	PARTICULIER	721172
2023	PRO	56903
2023	PARTICULIER	661337

6. New dog registrations per year in the pet registry (Identification and Registration database). Please use the table:

	Dogs (all)	Puppies (specified with max. 4,5 months/ 20 weeks) – please indicate if you use other age limit
2023		
2022		
2021		

FOUR PAWS published all provided figures in Supporting Document 3 document *Calculations to showcase puppies from unknown sources*, available at www.four-paws.org/billion-euro-puppy-trade.

- Denmark, Lithuania (dogs and puppies), Estonian Registry LLr (dogs and puppies), France (covering 2023, 2021), Slovenia (dogs and puppies), Austria, Brussels (dogs and puppies) Lower Saxony, Berlin, Sweden (dogs and puppies) provided data, as well as Finland (The Finnish Dog Registry is operating its first full year, so they have only partial information for 2023 because of the transition period).
- The Belgium pet registry wrote, due to GDPR law, they are not authorized to provide us with the requested information, and directed us to the relevant ministries responsible for Animal Welfare.
- Several non-state operated pet registries did not send data, claiming it would violate their policies as it reveals secretive company data to their competitors.
- Poland wrote, there is no single national pet registry (identification database and registration). There are several databases containing information about pets marked with implanted transponders.
- Luxembourg wrote their animals are registered in the database ID chips of Belgium.

7. Besides the data above, FOUR PAWS also asked:

- a) if there is a central database for all registered breeders in your country? If not, where are the breeders registered, e.g. at municipal level?**
- **Germany**
 - **Hessen**, answered that there is no central database for registered breeders in Hessen. Due to the law on the municipalization (“Kommunalisierung”) of the district administrator and the mayor as authorities of the state administration, the enforcement of animal protection regulations has been subject to the district administrators in the districts and the mayors in the independent cities since 2005. In this sense, the relevant granting of a permit in accordance with Section 11



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Paragraph 1 Sentence 1 No. 8a of the Animal Protection Act (TierSchG) for the commercial breeding of dogs is carried out by the Hessian veterinary authority responsible for the applicant's respective business premises, who handle applications on the basis of the provisions of Section 11 Animal Protection Act and the General Administrative Regulations for the Implementation of the Animal Protection Act within the framework of an administrative procedure under their responsibility.

- **Thüringen, Germany:** the responsibility for recording the activities requiring a permit pursuant to Section 11 Paragraph 1 Number 8 Letter a) of the Animal Welfare Act with the VLÜÄ of the respective districts and independent cities.
- As this situation with the responsibility at lower levels is the case in several further German states, we will not list all replies here.
- **Baden-Württemberg** replied, there is no public registry of breeders.
- **Luxembourg:** The database of the authorisations of the breeders is managed by ALVA (Luxembourg Veterinary and Food Administration)
- **Denmark:** The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration does not keep a database for registered breeders.
- **Sweden** does not have any information on breeders.
- **Slovenia:** Currently there is no breeder registry by the government, but Slovenia plans to introduce the breeding licence according to AHL (*Animal Health Law*) in next national veterinary legislation amendments.
- **Czech Republic:** There is currently no central register of dogs and their breeders in the Czech Republic. From 1 October 2022, the Act on Veterinary Care in § 5e introduced the obligation to create a central register of dogs information system, operated and managed by the Chamber of Veterinary Doctors of the Czech Republic, but this provision has not yet been fulfilled.
A certain type of registration of dogs and their breeders is the reporting obligation for dog fees. Every breeder who is registered or domiciled in the Czech Republic and also owns a dog older than three months, is obliged to report this fact and pay the set fee for the dogs locally the relevant municipality (the municipal office of the municipality is responsible).
- **Austria** wrote, breeders currently do not receive a registration number, at least not from the federal government. Furthermore, with the amendment to the Animal Welfare Act, it is now new that associations (with a permit according to §31 (1) TschG) that place dogs from abroad in Austria must report the number of dogs they have placed (from abroad) on a quarterly basis to the relevant district administrative authority (see §31a (3) TschG). Starting 01/01/2025.
- **France:** the pet registry replied: Yes, in accordance with the Animal Health Law, the national database of operators is currently being set up. We administer it, but the constraint lies with the Ministry.

b) Do you have figures or estimates about how many dogs are adopted per year?

- Most countries notified us they do not have the data, and referred to NGOs and associations running their own shelters, but outlining, that also their data might not cover the overall situation.
- **France:** the pet registry wrote: If by adoption, meaning having passed through an association/shelter, yes. The ministry wrote: the head network associations with which we work (the SPA, the CNDA, the Brigitte Bardot Foundation, the 30 million friends Foundation, and Solidarité People Animal) probably have this data for their own shelters and associations, but they do not cover all the shelters and associations in the territory.
- **Brussels** does not have this information.



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- **Ireland** referred to dog control statistics page on gov.ie, which includes information on shelters (www.gov.ie/en/collection/879d4c-dog-control-statistics/)
- **Slovenia** reported, that each year approximately 2000 dogs enter the shelters. Approximately 50% of them are reunited with their owners and the rest are adopted by new owners.
- **Sweden** doesn't have any information on adopted dogs.
- **Finland's** data revealed, that roughly half of the commercial imports both from third countries as well as from the EU do come from rescue organizations.
 - This information is not available from official sources.
 - Commercial imports from third countries by rescue organizations (analyzed from TRACES data):
2021: 775
2022: 421
2023: not yet available
 - Commercial imports from EU countries by rescue organizations (analyzed from TRACES data):
2021: 1 472
2022: 2 496
2023: not yet available
 - Please note that street dogs are often imported by private persons and do not show up in the figures above.
 - No data is available for adoptions within Finland.
- **Czech Republic** wrote: Adoption of dogs in the Czech Republic is mainly carried out by registered shelters that proceed according to Act No. 246/1992 Sb., on the protection of animals against cruelty. The operator of the shelter must keep information and documents about adoptions in accordance with § 25 paragraph 3 letter c) of this law. The list of registered shelters for animals is published on the State website veterinary administration - Registered shelters for animals - State veterinary administration (svscr.cz).
- **Denmark** advised to contact **Animal Protection Denmark/Dyrenes Beskyttelse**, who provided data:
 - About adoptions:
 - 2021
Our (Animal Protection Denmark) shelters 409 dogs
Other NGOs estimated 300 dogs
 - 2022
Our (Animal Protection Denmark) shelters 540 dogs
Other NGOs estimated 450 dogs
 - 2023
Our (Animal Protection Denmark) shelters 610 dogs
Other NGOs estimated 450 dogs

Animal Protection Denmark/Dyrenes Beskyttelse additionally provided a link to an article (<https://dvt.ddd.dk/bladarkiv/2019/nr-12/gadehunde-importeret-til-danmark/>) on imported stray dogs, which stated, that there are about 30 organisations in Denmark which import stray dogs, of which nine organisations reported figures which amount to 546 dogs annually. Overall, the information indicates that more than 5,000 street dogs have been imported to Denmark since 2001, and that there are many organizations that import former street dogs from a large number of southern and eastern European countries. Only a few of the organizations participated in the survey, but their information is supplemented by the answers from the practicing veterinarians, where approx. 170 stated to have



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handled >4,500 imported street dogs in the past year, there is reason to say that there are currently (2019) more than 5,000 imported former street dogs live in Denmark.

Please could you also let us know how many dogs (all), and puppies are currently registered as alive in your database? (This questions was asked to the registries only, and to a few ministries later on).

One database answered, that they would not be able to provide us with the data about registered alive dogs, as too many animals are potentially dead, but were never confirmed to have deceased to the database. Another database also answered, that their data might include many deceased animals. Note, the number is a snapshot for the time of the request (summer 2024):

- **Lithuania** has 289.093 registered alive dogs, including 13 367 puppies, 13 August 2024
- **Slovenia:** 251.702 dogs are registered in Central Pet Database, on 19 August 2024.
- **Austria:** 726.051, 26 July 2024
- **Brussels:** The total number of dogs registered in the Brussels-Capital Region on 30/06/2024 is 130,983. The number of puppies (<6 months) registered in the Brussels-Capital Region and born after 01/02/2024 is 723.
- **Berlin:** 61.050 dogs, 26 July 2024