

To: **Ms Stella Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety,  
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**Ms Ylva Johansson**, Commissioner for Home Affairs  
[cab-johansson-contact@ec.europa.eu](mailto:cab-johansson-contact@ec.europa.eu)  
**Mr Janez Lenarčič**, Commissioner for Crisis Management,  
[cab-lenarcic-contact@ec.europa.eu](mailto:cab-lenarcic-contact@ec.europa.eu)

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Petras Auštrevičius MEP

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Manuela Ripa MEP

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Cc: **Mr Michael Shotter**, Director - DG HOME, Migration & Asylum  
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Tiziana Beghin MEP

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### Call for urgent EU guidance and support to address the situation of refugees and animals in and from Ukraine

Brussels, 31 March 2022

### Permanent Observers

Four Paws:

Georgia Diamantopoulou

Dog & Cat Alliance:

Runa Hanaghan

Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,  
Dear Commissioner Johansson,  
Dear Commissioner Lenarčič,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament's Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation and Animals, Companion Animals Working Group, share a common concern regarding the situation of companion and shelter animals in Ukraine, the evacuation of animal shelters to the EU and the settlement of refugees with their animals in the EU as a result of Russia's war and aggression against Ukraine.

For a month now, Ukrainians have lived in fear or fled to escape the war. In addition to this horrific human crisis requiring urgent humanitarian action, we note that this situation also affects 10 million cats and dogs and countless other companion animals including horses.

We welcome the European Commission operational guidelines acknowledging this situation and recommending all EU Member States to adapt entry requirements to facilitate the non-commercial movement of pets travelling with refugees into the EU territory, authorising their entry without a prior individual application for a permit as laid down in Regulation (EU) 576/2013. However, a few serious issues remain that have a potential of quickly evolving into a fully-fledged crisis with a potential zoonotic reservoir should an illegal movement of animals emerge.

### Secretariat:

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- 1) Specific rules with regards to quarantine requirements or vaccination are still unclear and differ across Member States, complicating the process of movement of animals for non-commercial purposes and leading to abandonment of animals at the borders.
- 2) The guidance issued only addresses non-commercial movement, limited to a maximum of 5 animals. This framework makes it impossible for animal shelters across Ukraine to evacuate their animals. These shelters are under a huge pressure because of an increased number of roaming animals left behind by refugees who could not transport them, and a lack of food and veterinary supplies.

- 3) Those refugees who managed to flee with their animals and seek shelter in the EU are often faced with lack of appropriate infrastructure and with refugee camps that do not allow for keeping animals. We would like to highlight that these animals are companions who bring crucial emotional support to people in distress.

Acknowledging this difficult situation, we kindly suggest the European Commission to issue additional guidelines recommending Member States to adopt the following measures.

1. temporarily relax the entry requirements provisions for the movement of more than 5 animals to allow the evacuation of shelters on an ad hoc basis and under the condition that suitable accommodation has been secured for these animals;
2. specify and relax entry requirements for other species than cats, dogs and ferrets, in particular equines;
3. provide vaccination and microchipping, preferably in the destination country when it is known, at no cost for refugees;
4. respect specific quarantine requirements with regards to length and supervision that would be detailed by the European Commission, preferably in the destination country when it is known, to harmonise the framework across the EU;
5. provide adequate quarantine facilities as well as logistic centres in the bordering countries to ensure the flow of supplies to those remaining in Ukraine;
6. remove all other administrative and financial constraints to the entry of companion animals into the EU, as appropriate;
7. guarantee suitable accommodation for refugees under the temporary protection mechanism as provided in Directive 2001/55/EC, including when these refugees must be accommodated with their animals.
8. secure pet medicine & food that Ukraine included in its list of humanitarian aid needs and to which the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and initiative Stand Up For Ukraine could contribute.
9. blocking of Russian companion animals' licenses in Europe and suspension of animal imports from Russia

We hope the Commission will take the lead and remain at your disposal should you wish to discuss this topic in more detail.

Your sincerely,

**Petras Auštrevičius MEP**

Chairperson of the Companion Animals Working Group

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