



EU-Wide Traceability and Welfare Standards for Cats and Dogs

By: Ines Gulić, DVM & Sirada Oratanachai

Overview:

In June 2025, the European Parliament adopted the first-ever EU-wide standards for the welfare, identification, and traceability of cats and dogs. This landmark decision establishes a unified legal framework to combat illegal trade, strengthen animal protection, and ensure that every pet is identifiable throughout its life time. The next step involves negotiations with the European Council and Commission to finalize the legalisation

Microchipping and registration

Microchipping and registration in national databases are expected to become mandatory across the EU - including for kittens before they leave a breeder's home.

What is a microchip?

It is a tiny electronic device (about the size of a grain of rice) implanted just under the animal's skin, typically between the shoulder blades.



Each microchip contains a **unique 15-digit identification number** that can be read with a microchip scanner

The number is links to a secure database record that stores key information such as:

- Cat name, breed, DOB, color
- Owner and breeder contact details
- Veterinary information and health records
- Registration details with recognized cat federations

Microchipping must always be done by a licensed veterinarian using sterile, biocompatible materials approved for animal use. Microchip does not contain GPS or track location - it only provide identification when scanned.

Importance of microchipping:

1. **Permanent identification and traceability** which ensures that every cat can be traced back to its breeder and owner for life.
2. **Promote responsible ownership** by encouraging accountability and responsible rehoming practices
3. **Prevent illegal trade and pet theft** as it acts as a strong deterrent against unregistered or unethical breeding and trafficking
4. **Reduces shelter overcrowding** as lost cats can be quickly returned to their owners, reducing the number of unclaimed strays
5. **Supports feline health & welfare research** by enabling accurate data collection for genetic health studies and welfare programs

Safety and comfort:

Is microchipping painful? No, the procedure is quick and feels similar to a vaccine injection. Cats may experience minor discomfort for a moment, but it doesn't require anesthesia.

What are common side effects of microchipping?

Common side effects include temporary pain, swelling, and tenderness at the injection site, which usually resolve within 24-48 hours. Rare but possible complications include infection, microchip migration, or an inflammatory tissue reaction. Monitor the site for any signs of infection or other unusual symptoms. Contact your veterinarian if you observe any concerning signs, such as persistent swelling, redness, or discharge.

Recommendations:

BREEDERS

- **Microchip kittens before rehoming** - ideally between 10-12 weeks
- **Include the microchip number in the pedigree** to ensure authenticity and traceability of registered cats while also helps prevent falsified pedigrees and maintain registry integrity
- Ensure each microchip is **registered in a national or EU-connected database** for comprehensive traceability

WCF CLUBS

- **Share this update on microchipping** among members and breeders
- Offer **training or guidance** on proper microchipping and registration procedures
- **Coordinate** with local veterinary authorities to align databases
- Assist breeders in **updating pedigree** with verified microchip numbers.