

European Parliament Bans Dog Fur Trade

The EU-wide ban on the trade of dog fur begins in 2009.

Posetd: June 20, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

The European Parliament on Tuesday June 19, 2007, adopted a report of a proposed EU-wide ban on trading in cat and dog fur, which the legislative body says the Council of the European Union, Europe's other legislative body, has agreed to adopt without changes.

Although individual European countries had previously enacted bans, this marks the first EU-wide ban on the trade. The ban was prompted by public outcry that dog and cat fur products were still entering the EU despite a voluntary code of conduct adopted by European fur traders three years ago.

"The placing on the market and the import to and export from the Community of fur of cats and dogs and products containing such fur shall be prohibited," the regulation states. Provided the Council backs the regulation as expected, it will become effective Dec. 31, 2008.

The approved regulation also scrapped an exemption that would have allowed the trade of fur from cats and dogs that had not been bred or killed for fur production, as legislators expressed concerns that such an exemption would provide a large loophole for traders.

The European Commission, however, may adopt provisions to allow cat and dog fur on the European market "for educational or taxidermy purposes."

An estimated 2 million dogs and cats die each year to supply the European market, the European Parliament reported, citing Humane Society International figures.

"There is plenty of evidence of the inhuman treatment of cats and dogs bred for fur," said Arlene McCarthy, chair of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection. "But this law is also about protecting consumers who have unwittingly been deceived into buying clothes, toys and household products made from cat and dog fur."

Cat and dog fur has been used as collars and trim for various apparel items, including parka hoods, ski boot linings, as well as in toys, including plush stuffed dogs and cats.

The United States had previously banned such trade, which resulted in more cat and dog fur being shipped to Europe.