



14th March 2022

Guidelines on Temporary procedure for dealing with animals accompanying travellers entering Malta from Ukraine during the military conflict.

Objective of the guidelines:

- to establish a system to minimise the risk of importing animals presenting a potential risk of transmission of infectious diseases, in particular rabies virus to humans and animals in the event of a mass influx of people leaving the area of military operations and with accompanying animals
- to minimise delays at border crossing points and improve the movement of people across the external EU border.
- To maintain and safeguard Malta's rabies-free status. Malta has been free from Rabies since last century, thanks in part to the fact that Malta is an Island, and to comprehensive entry health requirements for animals.

Requirements for animals of the species dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*), cats (*Felis silvestris catus*), ferrets (*Mustela putorius furo*):

Animals moved in conditions of extreme emergency may accompany travellers when

(A) all EU requirements are met, i.e.

- the animal has been properly identified with a microchip;
- the animal has been vaccinated against rabies and vaccination is still valid;
- the animal has a current serological test to determine the titre of anti-rabies antibodies;
- the animal has a valid passport issued in one of the EU Member States certificate that conforms to the model set out in EU law;

Or

(B) in a situation where one or more of the above requirements are not met.

Derogations from the standard requirements for dogs, cats and ferrets due to an emergency situation:

Animals moved during a military conflict do not need to be serologically tested for anti-rabies antibody titers.

Animals moved during a military conflict may enter without prior individual application for a permit.

Transportation companies (by air or ferry) and Customs officers shall inform the Veterinary Regulation Directorate (VRD) on the arrival and number of pets originating from Ukraine.

Procedure in the event of failure to meet the requirements mentioned above:-

The VRD will ensure that these animals are quarantined for the necessary period, and will carry out the procedures outlined below:

1. identify the pet (if the microchip is missing or illegible);
2. vaccinate the pet against rabies (if vaccination cannot be documented or is invalid);
3. quarantine the pet in accordance with Regulation 576/2013 on the non-commercial movement of pet animals.
4. collect blood for serological testing after 30 days from the administration of the vaccine,
5. arrange for the serological test for the determination of the level of anti-rabies antibodies to be performed by an EU-approved laboratory.

The first four procedures will be offered free of charge by the VRD for pets affected by Ukrainian crisis until further notice.

Recently-vaccinated pets with a satisfactory level of antibodies (as determined by the titre test carried out 30 days after the rabies vaccine), will be quarantined for three months (reflecting the incubation period of the Rabies Virus) at the expense of the Government of Malta.

The derogation mentioned in this document applies only to pet animals. It does not apply to Commercial imports of Dogs and Cats, or to Stray animals and animals from Shelters.

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