

Interim procedure of the Chief Veterinary Officer on handling of animals accompanying refugees entering the EU from Ukraine via Polish external border during a military conflict.

1. Purpose of the guidelines:

- establishing a system to minimise the risk of importing animals posing a potential risk of transmission of infectious diseases, in particular rabies virus to humans and animals in the situation of an influx of persons leaving the territory of Ukraine due to military activities and having companion animals,
- minimising the stoppage at border crossing points and improving the movement of people across the EU external border.

Institutions responsible: Veterinary Inspection (VI), National Tax Administration (KAS).

2. Description of the situation.

In the situation of mass movements of people from Ukraine to the EU we can deal with **three groups of people travelling** with companion animals:

- EU citizens,
- Ukrainian citizens,
- nationals of other third countries.

2.1. Animals of the species dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*), cats (*Felis silvestris catus*), ferrets (*Mustela putorius furo*)

Animals of the above mentioned species moved into the EU Member States in accordance with the standard procedure may accompany travellers **when all EU requirements are met**, i.e.:

- the animal has been correctly microchipped,
- the animal has been vaccinated against rabies and the vaccination is still valid (<https://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/nadzor-weterynaryjny/szczepienie-na-wscieklizne>),
- the animal has a recent serological test for rabies antibodies (<https://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/nadzor-weterynaryjny/badanie-poziomu-przeciwcial>),
- the animal is accompanied by a valid passport issued in an EU Member State <https://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/nadzor-weterynaryjny/dokumenty-identyfikacyjne> or a health certificate in accordance with the model laid down in EU law (<https://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/nadzor-weterynaryjny/swiadectwo-zdrowia>).

In an emergency situation due to an armed conflict, animals of the above mentioned species accompanying their owners crossing Polish-Ukrainian border may be introduced into the territory of Poland **despite not meeting one or more of the above mentioned requirements**.

2.2. Derogations from the standard requirements for dogs, cats and ferrets due to the emergency situation on the territory of Ukraine and actions in case of failure to meet the requirements.

Animals moved during a military conflict need not be accompanied by the results of a serological test for the determination of the rabies antibody titre.

In order to determine the health status of an animal accompanying a refugee and place the animal under appropriate supervision, a person crossing the border with an animal **not meeting one or**

more of the import requirements is obliged to fill in an application, the template of which is enclosed as Annex No. 1 to this procedure. The DVO locally competent for the place of crossing the border issues a permit attached as Annex no. 2 to the procedure. The information about the microchipping the animal and the anti-rabies vaccination should be provided at the border crossing point, and the information about the microchip and vaccination should be included in the permit.

In the case of crossing the border without obtaining the above mentioned permit due to not vaccinating and not having the animal microchipped, it is necessary to report to the point indicated by the territorially competent District Veterinary Officer (an up-to-date, detailed list of places where animals accompanying refugees from Ukraine can be vaccinated and microchipped free of charge is available on the website of the General Veterinary Inspectorate under the link: <https://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/handel-eksport-import/informacje-dla-podroznych-z-ukrainy-nie-posiadajacych-kompletu-dokumentow-weterynaryjnych>). At the indicated location (link above), after completing the application (annex 1), the animal will be microchipped and vaccinated against rabies, and a permit (annex 2) will be issued by the District Veterinary Officer or a private veterinarian working within an Animal Treatment Facility. The permit will be issued in paper form or electronically (it is possible to send a scan of the permit to the applicant's e-mail address).

The costs related to the above-mentioned activities are covered by the State budget.

Bearing in mind that the procedures for microchipping the animal and vaccinating it against rabies are carried out in the territory of the Republic of Poland, the serological test for determining the level of antibodies against rabies is not performed. The State budget may not cover the costs of issuing passports. If the passport or the result of the titration test are necessary for further movement, they should be provided by the holder of the animal.

2.3. Handling of animals under 12 weeks of age

- up to 8 weeks of age, microchip and vaccination against animal rabies is not required. In this case, you only need to obtain permission to move the companion animal.

The microchipping and anti-rabies vaccination must be completed at a later stage after the animal is 8 weeks old;

- from 8 to 12 weeks of age as in points 2.2 and 2.3.

2.4. Handling of illegally introduced animals (in case of detection of illegal border crossing by the owner or holder of the animal)

The authority which discovered the illegal border crossing shall, in case the apprehended person is discovered in possession of an animal or animals, notify the locally competent District Veterinary Officer, who will decide on further handling of the animal (placement in an animal shelter or asylum / as a last resort euthanasia).

3. Other species of animals moved as companions (rodents, rabbits, amphibians, reptiles, ornamental aquatic animals, invertebrates)

Due to the absence of risk associated with the potential transmission of infectious diseases dangerous to humans or animals, including rabies virus, a temporary exemption from the requirement for a licence from the Chief Veterinary Officer for importation is introduced. If there are any species restricted due to the Washington Convention CITES without the required permits - the decision will be taken by the National Tax Administration.