

DAS NETWORK I&R

Factsheet

Identification and Registration (I&R) is more than a technical construct

Identification and Registration (hereafter referred to as I&R) is an essential feature of companion animal responsible ownership, in addition to creating a file that holds all comprehensive information of the owner, the animal, the veterinary records, the welfare, care and upbringing, it's also important that a dog or a cat can be traced back to its owner, making him/her accountable for the animal that's in their care:

- The owner can be held responsible and accountable when an animal is maltreated or neglected as defined by national or local animal welfare regulations
- The owner can be held responsible should the animal pose a threat to public safety or public order
- The owner is obliged to ensure that the animal never has to experience stress or suffering due to a lack of I&R

Companion Animal Responsible Ownership is one of the most important principles of animal welfare standards in Europe, and around the world. Responsible ownership and I&R are synonymous, and so are the terms 'Identification' and 'Registration'. It wouldn't make sense to do one and not the other. This is why I&R is called for as a harmonized construct for over 15 years, for dogs as well as cats, including a resolution and a call for action from the European Parliament, European veterinarian professionals, and animal welfare organisations, in addition to a number of German animal welfare organizations at national level.

Good reasons for Identification and Registration

Identification and Registration is beneficial in many different areas: animal health, animal welfare, legal safety, consumer protection, public health, and economic efficiency.

→ www.heimtierversorgung.net/kennzeichnung-und-registrierung/situation-in-deutschland

The legal situation in Germany

Germany, together with only a few other countries, is lagging behind in the EU when it comes to mandatory I&R. Despite the fact that I&R is a legal requirement in most of the Member States, there is still no nationwide legal obligation in Germany. However, there is at federal level: § 2a Animal Protection law contains a legal basis for such a regulation, in particular for dogs and cats. Unfortunately, the legislator only mentions the Identification of Animals and not

the Registration of animals, which is indispensable in order to prove the indisputable purpose of the provision.

A nationwide animal welfare regulation for dogs (TierSchHunde VO from 2. May 2001) details the minimum legal requirements for keeping dogs, protecting their safety, as well as their well-being (requirements to meet their basic needs such as movement and community) but not I&R.

Further legislation for keeping dogs and cats is assigned to federal states, leading to 16 different regulations for dog owners. For an overview I&R is a legal requirement for dogs in 4 federal states (Hamburg, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia with some restrictions, and Saxony-Anhalt), where there are for Hamburg, Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia state-owned registers. Berlin is preparing for this. In the remaining 11 states it's only required to Identify your dog if the dog is from a particular breed that is on the so-called dangerous breeds list.

Despite the voluntary nature, the majority of dogs is identified and registered, but the situation is unsatisfactory and confusing due to the different regulations. The situation also provides a loophole for illegal breeders who want to import or export illegal puppies from abroad. Germany is not only a destination for these animals, it's also a transit country.

The situation is even more confusing when it comes to cats. Because the topic of Identification and Registration is linked - due to the problem with stray cats - in some municipalities only partially as an additional duty to the neutering obligation for domestic cats. Currently 04.12.2018) have nine Federal Provinces made use of the authorization based on § 13a TierSchG. In this case, at least 58 ordinances were created which, in addition to the castration obligation, also provide for identification and registration requirement.

On the other hand, out of 185 ordinances evaluated on an administrative basis, 7% contained exclusively the castration obligation, 59% additionally a mandatory identification and 34% additional a Identification and Registration obligation. In relation to the 335 municipalities in which these regulations apply, 4% contain only a pure castration obligation, 74% an additional identification obligation and 22% additional Identification and Registration.

The situation of the registries in Germany

There are currently two practice-oriented private animal registries paving the way. The largest is TASSO e.V., followed by Findefix, the registry owned by the German Animal Protection Federation e.V. (Deutscher Tierschutzbund). Neither ask for a fee. IFTA, a smaller registry that's managed privately charges a fee.

The primary objective of these private registers is to reunite owners with their animals who escaped or were lost, meaning their objective is to protect animals. The objective of a state-owned, public registry differs, it aims to protect and maintain public safety by recording and

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identifying owners with so called dangerous dogs. This allows the state to keep owners accountable when a dog attacks someone and it makes it easier to verify, or obtain, any outstanding dog taxes. Logically the legal basis differs from the private registers.

The emergence (importance) of the I&R Network: from the first seminar in 2015 on the topic to the newest conference on 6 November 2019

Due to the unsatisfactory and legally ambiguous situation, the State Commissioner for Animal Welfare of Saarland, Dr med. Hans-Friedrich Willimzik, organised an event in Saarbrücken in 2015 to discuss the mandatory Identification and Registration of cats. In September 2016 he organized an experts seminar on the topic of Identification and Registration of dogs and cats at the federal representation of the state at the Government in Berlin, together with TASSO managing director Philip McCreight.

→ www.heimtierverantwortung.net/netzwerk-k-r/aktivitäten

Result of the first Experts Seminar, taking place in September 2016 | Berlin: a high-level interdisciplinary Network of experts was set up in February 2017 with the aim to call for a nationwide mandatory I&R and to provide the federal government with a solution for a nationwide I&R regulation for dogs and cats. A rough concept was developed and presented in a brochure with additional information about the claim and solutions.

→ www.heimtierverantwortung.net/kennzeichnung-und-registrierung/brosch%C3%BCre-k-r

In January 2018, the I&R Network presented this brochure in Berlin, accompanied by an appeal to the Bundestag at a parliamentary evening.

→ www.heimtierverantwortung.net/netzwerk-k-r/aktivitäten

As Result of several experts group, the solution is now developed with all technical detail and will be presented to the public on November 6th 2019 within the Experts Conference “Time to Act”... Pilot projects will follow and all stakeholders can use the proved system as a cost efficient solution argument solving on the long run many problems.

The position of the Federal Government

The Federal Government already rejected the idea of a nationwide legal obligation for I&R, arguing that the bureaucratic efforts were too big and too costly during the previous legislative period, in other answers there were each time diverse arguments.

Eventually the Federal Government’s vision entails a new database that needs to be created, which does not correspond to the solution approach of the Network. At the same time the former Agriculture Minister of the German Government joined a working group of the Council of

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the European Union led by the Netherlands for harmonization throughout Europe, for which in turn a nationwide I&R anyway would be necessary. The consent is granted only if it is the border crossing of private animal owners with up to five animals, but not for a comprehensive EU I&R.

The approach of the Network I&R: A Registry Network

The concept developed by the Network I&R nullifies the Government's argument that it's too costly and labor intensive to set up a new Network, by digitally connecting the existing registers, making a new database superfluous.

The solution approach of the so-called registry association is currently will be presented in the frame of the Conference on 6 November 2019 in Berlin. The next step is to prove the procedure by pilot projects to convince the Federal Government of the meaningfulness, necessity and practicability of such a system. The start of these pilot projects is planned for the year 2020.

The I&R Network

The I&R Network represents all interested groups and stakeholders that are involved in the field of I&R in Germany. In addition to the active members, there are also partner organizations that address the issue support the Network I&R. The members of the Network are:

Dr Julia Stubenbord, Animal Welfare Officer, Baden-Württemberg

TÄ Diana Plange, Animal Welfare Officer, Berlin

Dr Stefan Heidrich, Animal Welfare Officer, Brandenburg

Dr Madeleine Martin, Animal Welfare Officer, Hessen

TÄ Michaela Dämmrich, Animal Welfare Officer, Niedersachsen

Dr Hans-Friedrich Willimzik, Animal Welfare Officer, Saarland (Leiter des Netzwerk K&R)

Dr Marco König, Animal Welfare Officer, Sachsen-Anhalt

Katharina Erdmann, Animal Welfare Officer, Schleswig-Holstein

Torsten Schmidt, Association against misuse of Animals (bmt)

Dr Petra Sindern, Vice President of the federal association of practitioners (bpt)

Dr Jörg Styrie, Managing Director Federal association for Animal Protection (BV TS)

Eva Biré, acting Managing Director, Erna-Graff-Stiftung

Michel Schoffeniels, president Europetnet, Brüssel

Philip McCreight, Managing Director TASSO e.V.

Dr Marlene Wartenberg, coordinator of the Network I&R, TASSO e.V.

Jörg Bartscherer, Managing Director and Judicial at the German dog association (VDH)

Daniela Schneider, VIER PFOTEN – Stiftung für Tierschutz (FOUR PAWS)

Dr Sven Hüther, Expert International Animal Identification and ISO-Expert

Andrea Weber, Fondazione Capellini/AlmoNature (Partner organization)