

Relocating Your Pet to the European Union



A practical guide for moving dogs, cats and ferrets into the EU, including microchips, rabies vaccination, titre testing, health certificates, entry points and onward travel.

Personally managed by Julia | Fly Your Tail

One Union, several possible routes.

The core animal-health rules are harmonised across the EU, but national breed restrictions, airline policies, airport procedures and local entry arrangements can still differ. The first EU country of entry is especially important for pets arriving from outside the Union.

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The essentials before you begin

This guide focuses on non-commercial movements of dogs, cats and ferrets. The pet should not be travelling for sale or transfer of ownership, and the owner or an authorised person must normally travel with the pet or within 5 days of its movement.

Identification	An ISO-compatible microchip is normally required. A clearly readable tattoo applied before 3 July 2011 may still be accepted in limited cases.
Rabies vaccination	The pet must be vaccinated after identification and satisfy the applicable waiting period.
Travel document	Pets arriving from outside the EU generally need an EU animal health certificate; pets already established in the EU normally travel with an EU pet passport.
Maximum number	Non-commercial movement is generally limited to 5 dogs, cats or ferrets, subject to a narrow competition/show/sport exception.
Owner timing	If an authorised person accompanies the pet, the owner must normally make the corresponding journey within 5 days.
First EU entry	Pets arriving from outside the EU must enter through the appropriate travellers point of entry and present the pet and documents for checks.

EU rules do not replace national restrictions

- Individual Member States may restrict certain dog breeds or impose local ownership, muzzle, registration or insurance rules.
- Airlines decide whether a pet may travel in cabin, as accompanied baggage or as cargo.
- Some airports or border points may not handle pet checks at all hours or may require advance notice.
- Commercial movements, rescue transfers, sales and changes of ownership follow a different regulatory pathway.

Check the actual destination, not only “the EU”.

A pet that is compliant with EU animal-health rules may still face national breed restrictions, carrier conditions or local registration obligations after arrival.

Listed or unlisted origin: the key distinction

For pets entering from outside the EU, the rabies preparation depends heavily on whether the country or territory of origin appears on the EU list and whether a rabies antibody titration condition applies.

Origin status	Typical preparation	Main consequence
EU Member State	Microchip, valid rabies vaccination and EU pet passport.	Travel between Member States is usually the simplest pathway.
Listed non-EU country/territory	Microchip, rabies vaccination, waiting period and EU animal health certificate.	A rabies titre test is generally not required unless the official listing specifies otherwise.
Unlisted or titre-required origin	Microchip, rabies vaccination, accepted rabies antibody titration test and 3-month waiting period.	Preparation normally takes several months and must be sequenced correctly.
Commercial movement	Different certification, notification, establishment and border-control rules apply.	Do not use a non-commercial certificate for a sale, adoption or ownership transfer.

Typical unlisted-country timeline

Day 0	Read or implant the microchip, then administer a valid rabies vaccination.
At least 30 days later	Collect blood for the rabies antibody titration test.
Laboratory result	The result must be at least 0.5 IU/ml and issued by an accepted laboratory.
3-month waiting period	Wait 3 months from the blood-sampling date before EU entry, unless a specific legal exception applies.
Final 10 days	Obtain the EU animal health certificate from an official veterinarian and complete endorsement/supporting declarations.
Arrival	Present the pet, microchip and original documents at the first EU travellers point of entry.

Step-by-step relocation pathway

1**Confirm non-commercial eligibility**

Establish the owner, purpose of movement, number of pets and whether the owner will travel within the required time window.

2**Identify the first EU country of entry**

This is where border checks normally occur and where the correct certificate and travellers point of entry must be planned.

3**Verify the microchip**

The microchip must be readable and consistently recorded on vaccination, laboratory and travel documents.

4**Complete rabies preparation**

Vaccinate after identification and complete any required titre test and waiting period.

5**Obtain the EU animal health certificate**

For entry from outside the EU, the official certificate is normally issued within 10 days before arrival and accompanied by the required owner declaration and supporting records.

6**Select the airline and transport method**

Assess cabin, accompanied-baggage or cargo options, breed restrictions, aircraft type, temperature rules and kennel requirements.

7**Confirm the travellers point of entry**

Check that the first EU airport, port or land crossing is authorised to perform the required pet checks and whether advance notice is required.

8**Complete border checks**

Present the pet, microchip and original documents for verification at first entry.

9**Continue to the final Member State**

After lawful EU entry, continue under the applicable intra-EU rules and retain endorsed documents for the onward journey.

DOCUMENTATION

Core veterinary and travel requirements

Entering from outside the EU

- Readable microchip or qualifying pre-2011 tattoo
- Valid rabies vaccination administered after identification
- Rabies titre test and waiting period where required
- EU animal health certificate issued by an official veterinarian
- Owner/non-commercial movement declaration and vaccination/lab evidence
- Entry through the correct travellers point of entry

Travelling within the EU

- EU pet passport issued by an authorised veterinarian
- Continuous rabies vaccination validity
- Microchip or accepted qualifying tattoo
- Tapeworm treatment for dogs entering Finland, Ireland, Malta, Norway or Northern Ireland
- Compliance with national breed and carrier rules
- Additional evidence for movements of more than 5 pets under an event exception

Validity and onward use of the EU certificate

- The EU animal health certificate for non-commercial entry is generally issued within 10 days before arrival at the EU border.
- After documented entry, it can generally support onward non-commercial movement within the EU for up to 4 months from the date of issue, or until the rabies vaccination expires, whichever comes first.
- An EU pet passport is normally obtained after the pet is established in the EU and is not simply issued abroad by any veterinarian.
- Original documents and laboratory reports should travel with the pet.

The first border check matters.

A perfectly prepared certificate can still create problems if the pet arrives at an entry point that is not authorised or if the authorities were not notified as required.

SPECIAL SCENARIOS

Requirements that depend on the destination or movement

Tapeworm treatment for dogs

Dogs travelling to Finland, Ireland, Malta, Norway or Northern Ireland generally require treatment against *Echinococcus multilocularis* by a veterinarian. It must normally be administered 24 to 120 hours before arrival and recorded correctly in the passport or certificate.

Young puppies, kittens and ferrets

Member States may differ on whether they accept animals under 12 weeks that have not been vaccinated, or animals aged 12 to 16 weeks whose rabies vaccination is not yet fully valid. The destination country must be checked before booking; many do not permit this derogation.

More than five pets

Non-commercial travel is normally limited to five dogs, cats or ferrets. A limited exception may apply when animals over 6 months old are travelling to a competition, exhibition or sporting event with supporting registration evidence.

Owner not on the same flight

An authorised person may accompany the pet, but the owner must normally travel within five days and provide written authorisation. Longer separation may move the case into commercial rules.

Rescue, sale, adoption or transfer

When the movement is connected to sale, adoption, rehoming or change of ownership, non-commercial pet-travel rules may not apply. Commercial entry normally involves a Border Control Post, TRACES certification and other controls.

Other pet species

Birds, rabbits, rodents, reptiles and other companion animals follow different EU and national rules. Requirements must be assessed by species and Member State.

TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL

Airline, kennel and border planning

Transport method

- The EU does not require every pet to travel as manifested cargo. Cabin, accompanied baggage and cargo acceptance are determined by the airline, route, aircraft and animal.
- Large pets, unaccompanied pets, certain destinations or commercial movements may require cargo handling.
- The airline can refuse travel if the kennel, documentation, breed, temperature or animal condition does not meet its rules.

Travel kennel

- The kennel must be correctly sized and suitable for the airline and animal.
- Pets should be able to stand naturally, turn around and lie comfortably.
- Water containers, ventilation, fasteners, absorbent bedding and labels must meet carrier requirements.
- Sedation is generally discouraged for air transport and may result in refusal.

At the first EU border

- Authorities check the microchip against the original certificate or passport.
- Vaccination dates, titre results, declarations and document validity are verified.
- Non-compliant pets may be returned, isolated or placed in quarantine at the owner's cost.
- Retain the endorsed paperwork for onward travel and future registration with a local veterinarian.

After arrival

- Register with a local veterinarian and discuss obtaining an EU pet passport for future intra-EU travel.
- Check national pet-registration, dog-licensing, liability-insurance, breed and muzzle rules.
- Keep the rabies vaccination continuously valid to avoid restarting entry requirements for later travel.

RISK CONTROL

Common mistakes that delay EU entry

Vaccinating before microchipping: The rabies vaccination may not qualify if valid identification was not established first.

Assuming every non-EU origin is “listed”: Unlisted or titre-required origins need additional testing and a 3-month wait.

Using the wrong certificate: An export health certificate designed for another destination may not satisfy the EU model.

Arriving through the wrong border point: Not every airport or port is authorised to perform travellers pet checks.

Ignoring the first EU country: The first EU border, not only the final destination, controls entry clearance.

Treating a sale as non-commercial travel: Ownership-transfer movements may require commercial import procedures.

Exceeding the five-pet limit: Without a valid event exception, the movement may become commercial.

Missing tapeworm treatment: Dogs entering certain destinations can be refused when treatment is absent or incorrectly timed.

Relying only on airline approval: Airline acceptance does not prove compliance with EU border rules.

Overlooking national breed restrictions: Animal-health compliance does not override Member State breed legislation.

Before booking, confirm these 10 points

- The movement is genuinely non-commercial.
- The first EU entry country and travellers point of entry are identified.
- The pet number, owner travel dates and authorised-person arrangements comply.
- The microchip and rabies vaccination sequence is valid.
- Any rabies titre test and 3-month waiting period are complete.
- The correct EU animal health certificate or EU pet passport will be available.
- Destination-specific tapeworm, breed and young-animal rules are checked.
- The airline accepts the pet and the kennel has been reviewed.
- The border authority notification and check procedure are understood.
- Onward transport and local registration after entry are planned.

How we support a European Union relocation

Fly Your Tail can coordinate the complete move or selected stages of the process. Every case is personally managed by Julia, with one point of contact across regulatory preparation, transport and arrival.

- Origin-country classification and rabies-titre assessment
- First EU entry-point and final-destination planning
- Preparation timeline for microchip, vaccination and testing
- RNATT sample logistics to an accepted laboratory
- EU animal health certificate and document review
- Cabin, accompanied-baggage or cargo route assessment
- Travel-kennel sizing and airline compliance review
- Border-check and authorised-agent coordination
- Onward EU road or air transport planning
- Travel-day monitoring and destination support

Planning a move to the European Union?

Send Fly Your Tail your pet's species, breed, age, weight, measurements, current country, first EU arrival point, final destination, vaccination history and preferred travel date for an individual assessment.

Official references used for this guide

European Commission - Bringing a pet into the EU from a non-EU country

https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/live-animal-movements/dogs-cats-and-ferrets/bringing-pet-eu-non-eu-country_en

European Commission - Travelling with a pet within the EU

https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/live-animal-movements/dogs-cats-and-ferrets/travelling-pet-within-eu_en

Your Europe - EU rules on travelling with pets

https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/carry/pets-and-other-animals/index_en.htm

European Commission - Listed territories and non-EU countries

https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/live-animal-movements/dogs-cats-and-ferrets/listing-territories-and-non-eu-countries_en

European Commission - Designated rabies antibody laboratories

https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/live-animal-movements/dogs-cats-and-ferrets/designated-laboratories-performing-rabies-antibody-titration-tests_en

European Commission - EU countries specific information

https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/live-animal-movements/dogs-cats-and-ferrets/eu-countries-specific-information_en

Important disclaimer

This guide is general information prepared in August 2026. EU legislation, country listings, certificates, travellers points of entry, airline policies and Member State measures can change. The current European Commission rules, official certificate, destination-country instructions and border-authority decisions take precedence. Fly Your Tail verifies the applicable requirements for each individual case before travel.