

German TV:

Europamagazin

13th, November 2021

<https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/europa/polen-tierschutz-101.html>

Translation:

On the road with a hidden camera at one of the largest Polish markets, about 60 kilometres from the capital Warsaw. You can buy almost everything here. Even pets: big dogs, small dogs, mixed breeds and pedigree dogs. **Breeders normally charge between 500 and 2000 euros for pedigree animals - it's much cheaper here.** And dog sales are often car boot sales.

Poland as a European hub for illegally bred dogs

Olaf Bock, ARD Warsaw, Europe Magazine, 14.11.2021

A few weeks old puppies are for sale in a remote corner. The animals look frightened. There is no doubt about it: they should still be with their mother, the sale seems to be illegal. A few metres further on, mixed breeds are offered for sale: They are supposed to cost between 100 and 200 euros, but there are no papers that would inform them about their state of health, for example. The whole area is private, the sale of animals is basically permitted. **Mateusz Janda, head of the state animal protection police**, has been concerned about such markets for many years. They encourage illegal dog breeding - a big problem in Poland. The animals are often kept, reared and sold under torturous conditions. He has already dug up entire dog factories. He shows us disturbing pictures in his office: **"The animals are transported from there to all of Poland and Europe.** What a drama. These animals were housed in garages and tin houses and had no exercise, couldn't play and never got out of their cages."

A reform with consequences

It is estimated that there are now **several thousand breeding farms in Poland** - too many, says Janda. **This was made possible by a new animal protection law that was passed nine years ago.** It was actually intended to combat illegal dog breeding. However, **the law now also allows micro-dealers to sell pedigree animals** - and because of the high number, there are almost no controls. In practice, this means that many animals are not kept in a manner appropriate to their species. The documents are also easy to forge.

A hub for the whole of Europe

The fact that **Poland, of all places, is such a hotspot for the puppy trade** also has to do with its geographical proximity to Western Europe. And there are no controls to fear at the EU's internal borders. **"Some traders organize themselves into groups, buy puppies for 200, 250 euros, which are then brought to Germany, the Netherlands, France and Norway.** The Corona pandemic has increased the demand for dogs, Janda reports. As a remedy against loneliness - besides, even during curfews, one was often allowed outside with a dog. Janda fears that the situation will change little

for the time being. On the contrary: **"As long as our Polish parliament and the legislators do not include restrictive provisions in the animal protection law that prohibit the breeding of this type of dog, this problem will continue to increase.**