

6.1.1. Proposed amendment: the introduction of mandatory chipping and registration requirements for dogs, cats and ferrets for the keeper of animals and the imposition of a state fee for entry in the register (Draft § 1, points 3, 13-16, 22, 28 and 42 and § 4).

1) Social impacts

The microchipping of dogs, cats and ferrets and the subsequent registration of the animal and its owner in the animal register has an impact on human rights, as it involves the processing of personal data and therefore affects the protection of personal data. The data required about a natural person (e.g. contact details, personal identification code/date of birth) can generally be obtained from the population register (except for persons who are not entered in the population register), which does not require separate data collection and means that individuals do not have to submit their data to the state multiple times. From the point of view of **the protection of personal data**, when using the common database, the data required for all keepers of animals, including undertakings, are primarily those that are necessary for contacting the keeper of the animal (telephone number, address, e-mail address) and identifying the keeper (name, personal identification code/registry code). The address of the keeper of animals is necessary for local governments to know how many keepers of animals there are and what services to offer and in which area of the local government. Supervisory authorities may, where necessary (e.g. in the case of routine checks or tip-offs), verify the link between the animal and its keeper, including when the animal is being transported for commercial or non-commercial purposes. Most of the data processed in the database are pet data. However, it must be ensured that persons with access to the data set can only access the intended amount of data necessary for their activities. Considering the scope, context and purposes of the processing of personal data (personal data is necessary, in particular, to establish a link between the keeper and his pet animal in order to return the animal to the keeper in the event of loss, in special cases to the supervisory authorities to verify the legality of border crossings and compliance with the requirements for keeping animals), there is no high risk to the rights and freedoms of natural persons. No personal data are transferred to other countries (Europetnet is a pan-European search engine linking pet registers; it returns the details of the register in which the pet is recorded, but not data about the animal's keeper), nor are special categories of personal data processed. A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been prepared separately and submitted for approval to both the State Information System Authority and the Data Protection Inspectorate.

The amendment will affect the social welfare of livestock farmers experiencing financial difficulties and equal opportunities for people living in rural areas in terms of access to veterinary services. It is estimated that in Estonia one or more pet animals are owned by half the families. According to data from Statistics Estonia, approximately 20.2% ¹of the population lived in relative poverty in 2023, but this does not mean that these families do not have pets. Making the microchipping of pet animals mandatory will certainly affect this part of the population to a greater extent. Microchipping a pet (approx. 20 EUR per pet) may be more costly for those with more than one pet and for those living in a rural area where the cost of a veterinary visit is supplemented by possible travel expenses for carrying out a home visit when the veterinary surgeon is called to the home instead of going to the veterinary surgeon themselves with the pet. However, chipping reduces possible costs in the event of the animal's disappearance (the costs of keeping a found pet in a shelter are covered by the keeper of the animal), as the animal that has

¹The website of Statistics Estonia Relative poverty, 18 December 2024.

<https://www.stat.ee/et/avasta-statistikat/valdkonnad/heaolu/sotsiaalne-torjutus-ja-vaesus/suhteline-vaesus>

strayed may not reach the shelter, but the keeper will be found using the register data and the animal will be returned home immediately if found. In order to minimise undesirable effects on the target group, there are plans to develop campaigns in cooperation with veterinarians to enable the microchipping and registration of pets on more favourable terms. Several veterinarians, including those in cities, offer the option of paying for veterinary services in instalments. Proper care, upkeep and treatment of an animal is costly, but essential for the animal's health and well-being, and this must be taken into account before acquiring a pet.

In settlements with fewer inhabitants, or in cities and rural areas, there may be problems finding a veterinarian. Keeping accurate records of pets provides local governments with data that indicates the need for veterinary services in the area. In addition to microchipping and registration, pets require comprehensive care (such as vaccinations) and health care that only a veterinarian can provide. Therefore, the implementation of the proposed amendments will provide additional opportunities to open a veterinary clinic in an area where, at present, veterinarians may not find it profitable to start a business. This, in turn, would have a positive impact on employment in these regions. The availability of veterinary care also plays an important role in improving Estonia's animal keeping culture, as veterinarians can educate animal owners on the application and adoption of appropriate animal keeping conditions. The improvement of pets' health in turn reduces the occurrence of risk factors for human illness or health impairment in the area (the incidence of zoonotic diseases dangerous to humans decreases, and disease prevention activities become more active).

Under current law, microchipping of pets has been mandatory nationwide only for those wishing to travel outside Estonia with their dog, cat or ferret. Regionally, 67 of Estonia's 79 local governments have made the microchipping of pets mandatory within their territory. This means that in these local governments, the management of social change related to the behaviour of animal keepers has already become part of their operational practice, and making microchipping mandatory at the legislative level would have no significant additional impact on the target groups. The extension of the microchipping requirement across Estonia affects all individuals who keep dogs, cats and/or ferrets as pets, or who plan to do so in the future. The obligation applies to all residents of Estonia, including foreign nationals and EU citizens who have taken up residence in the country. The deadline for registering dogs, cats and ferrets marked with a microchip is one month if the animal keeper is a foreign national within the meaning of the Aliens Act, and three months if the keeper is an EU citizen within the meaning of the EU Citizens Act. These time limits are in accordance with both the Aliens Act (§ 121) and the European Union Citizens Act (§ 7), under which the deadlines are linked to a person's taking up residence in Estonia and registering their place of residence in the Population Register. Foreign nationals who take up residence in Estonia will be informed of the requirement to microchip and register their dogs, cats or ferrets in the same way as current Estonian residents – information activities on the need to comply with this requirement will be carried out in cooperation with the Agricultural and Food Board (PTA), the Agricultural Registers and Information Board (PRIA) and local governments. These persons will also be informed of their obligation when visiting a veterinarian for their pets' routine rabies vaccinations.

Under current law, there is no state-level requirement to register a dog, cat or ferret within a specified period. With the introduction of the new requirements, it is necessary to ensure that when individuals travel to Estonia from another country and take up residence with their pets,

records of these animals can be kept and their traceability ensured. When travelling to Estonia on a short-term holiday or work trip with a pet, it is not necessary to register the animal in the animal register. However, when taking up residence in Estonia, it is important that the pet can be returned to its keeper in the event of its loss and subsequent recovery. When travelling to Estonia from abroad with a dog, cat or ferret, the animal must be marked with a microchip, have a valid health certificate or an EU pet passport. In order to register information in the national pet register, it is necessary to contact a veterinarian. Data concerning the pets of EU citizens, residents of foreign states, and residents or citizens of Estonia shall be deleted from the register if the animal is permanently taken out of Estonia and the relevant information has been submitted to the national pet register. To this end, the pet keeper has an obligation to keep the data up to date. In cases where a pet keeper fails to update the data in a timely manner, the registrar will periodically send notifications to pet keepers to verify the accuracy of the information entered in the register.

Microchipping a pet is a one-time expense for the pet owner among all other animal-related costs throughout the animal's lifetime. The impact is rather minor and affects pet owners who have not yet had their pet microchipped or who have not yet registered their microchipped pet.

2) Economic impact

The obligation to chip and register will have an impact on business. This mainly affects veterinarians, regardless of whether they are operating in a conventional animal clinic or in a shelter. The state's obligation to register the relevant data in the animal register after microchipping increases the administrative burden on veterinarians, but also the demand for their services, as at least half of the dogs and cats kept in Estonia are not microchipped or registered. Revenue from microchipping products and services (linked to increased demand) is expected to grow more rapidly in the medium term (3-5 years) and then stabilise. The burden on veterinarians will be alleviated by the fact that, under the proposed amendment, the veterinarian who implants the microchip in the pet will also be responsible for submitting the data on the pet and its keeper for entry in the animal register. This provision of the Veterinary Act allows the veterinarian to choose whether to submit the data personally or to arrange for the data to be submitted by an assistant acting under their responsibility.

The entrepreneurs affected include importers and distributors of microchips for pets, as there are no manufacturers of such microchips in Estonia. The revenue of microchip distributors will increase as the demand for microchips grows, so the impact will be positive.

The cost to households or individuals keeping pets varies by region and depends on the specific local authority and on whether the local obligation to microchip pets had already been fulfilled before the introduction of the nationwide requirement. As mentioned above, in rural areas, access to the services of a veterinarian may be restricted or a visit by a veterinarian may be costly. At the same time, the consultation fees charged by veterinary clinics operating in cities may differ by several tens of euros, as the presence of competition (i.e. good accessibility), or the clinic's brand and reputation, allow higher prices to be charged. There are no separate studies on the economic opportunities (revenues) of households and the number of pets to be chipped, but we expect household expenditure to be low or medium (depending on the level of income) in the context of achieving the law's impact objective (societal benefit). At present, the fee for implanting a chip with a veterinarian, along with the necessary steps for registration, is about 20-35 euros (the price

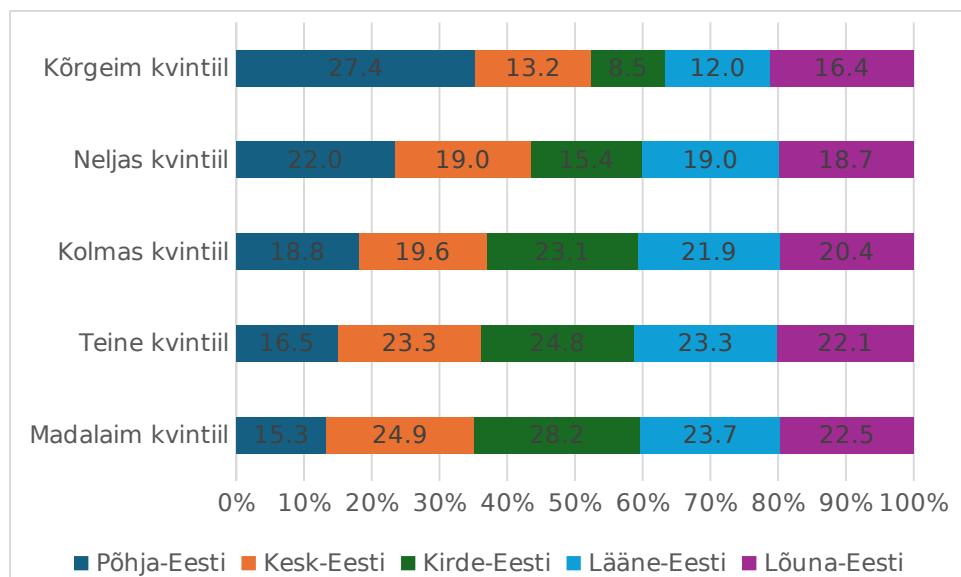
list is set by the service provider). A state fee will be added to it in the future. It is important to note that microchipping and registration are currently two separate procedures, which means that it is possible to have a microchip implanted without registering it. This Draft will eliminate that possibility – the implantation of the chip must be followed by the submission of data to the register.

The veterinarian is entitled to charge a fee for the service offered, so the price of the service is unlikely to change at the veterinarian's premises. Until now, animal registration has been free of charge for animal owners in most municipalities, as the cost has been covered by the local government. In the future, however, neither local governments nor the state will cover this cost for their residents – instead, animal owners will have to pay it themselves. The direct impact is associated with the introduction of a state fee for making a registry entry, which is done by the registrar (PRIA). According to preliminary calculations, the fee will be EUR 12 for each animal registration in the name of the keeper. The same fee will apply when the animal is re-registered under a new keeper's name. This means that, in addition to paying the veterinarian for their service (approximately EUR 20-35), a state fee of EUR 12 must also be paid. This means that the total cost for the initial registration will be approximately EUR 32-47 per animal. The impact on households will be one-off and spread over the animal's lifetime. A transition period is planned to allow for adjustment to the new requirements, and some clinics will offer deferred payment or instalment options.

The additional cost associated with this obligation may influence consumer behaviour regarding the decision to acquire a pet, whether by purchase or by receiving one free of charge or as a gift. Making an informed decision about getting a pet and being able to care for it is an important step in ensuring the future health and well-being of your pet. Keeping a pet can cost several hundred euros per month (food, toys, cat litter, dog training, grooming services such as visits to the pet hairdresser, and other such expenses). There will be additional medical costs arising from routine anti-rabies vaccinations and other possible health problems. The introduction of this obligation will help improve Estonia's culture of responsible pet ownership, as it serves as a reminder of good animal care practices.

The expected magnitude of the impact on the population by income quintile (based on 2022 data²) can be assessed from Figures 3 and 4. At the same time, when drawing conclusions from these figures, it is important to take into account that there is no data available on the actual number of pets kept in different regions of Estonia (including the proportion of dogs that are microchipped or registered, the number of keepers, and the number of changes of keepers per year). This lack of data makes it difficult to adequately assess regional impacts, including the extent to which, and the proportion of, residents in different areas are actually affected by the change.

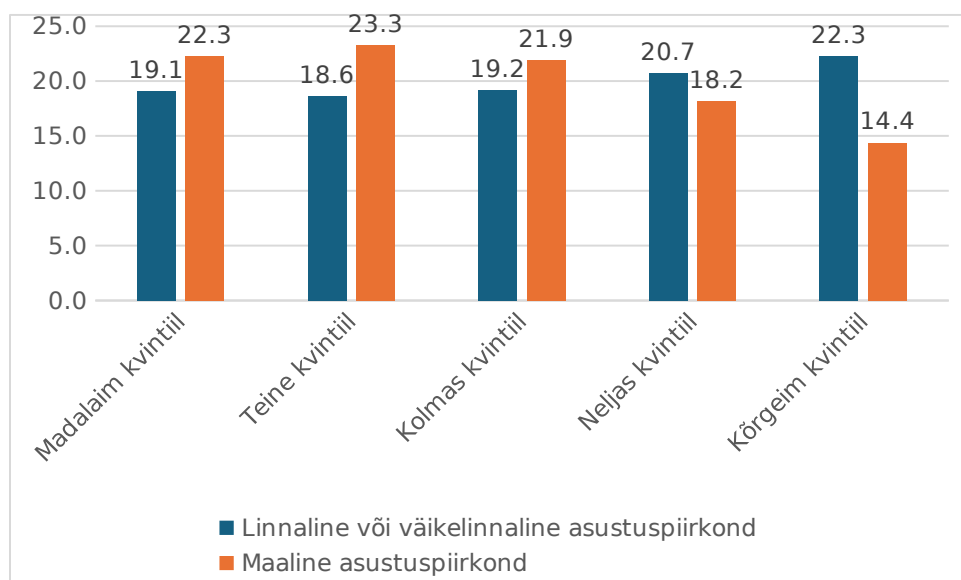
² Statistics Estonia database [e-database]. ST03 https://andmed.stat.ee/et/stat/sotsiaalelu_sissetulek/ST03



Kõrgeim kvintii, Neljas kvintii, Kolmas kvintii, Teine kvintii, Madalaim kvintii
Põhja- Eesti, Kesk-Eesti, Kirde-Eesti, Lääne-Eesti, Lõuna- Eesti

Highest quintile, Fourth quintile, Third quintile, Second quintile, Lowest quintile
Northern Estonia, Central Estonia, Northeastern Estonia, Western Estonia, Southern Estonia

Figure 1 Income quintiles by place of residence



Madalaim kvintii, Teine kvintii, Kolmas kvintii, Neljas kvintii, Kõrgeim kvintii
Linnaline või väikelinnaline asustuspiirkond, Maaline asustuspiirkond

Lowest quintile, Second quintile, Third quintile, Fourth quintile, Highest quintile
Urban or small urban settlement area, rural settlement area

Figure 2 Comparison of income quintiles in rural and urban/small town settlement areas

These figures show that the costs associated with keeping animals, including the payment of a state fee for making a registry entry, have a greater impact on people living in rural areas compared to those living in cities and small towns. There is a clear distinction between Northern Estonia (Harju County), where the impact of the changes on the population is lower than in the rest of the regions.

The cost of transmitting the data will increase to some extent for animal keepers, shelters and veterinarians, as slightly more data on the pet will have to be submitted. However, the collection of additional data helps to ensure the well-being of pets and to identify unethical breeding activities.

Updating the data in the database, such as a change in the contact details of the animal keeper, the registration of a change of animal keeper, as well as the inclusion and updating of information on the veterinary procedures carried out on a given animal, will result in an increase in the administrative burden for data that are not centrally collected by the state (in particular, those not included in the population register or the business register). This change will not entail direct costs for households that already have their pets microchipped and registered. However, for animal keepers who have not previously dealt with entering identification data into the register, the entry into force of the Act will result in a short-term increase in administrative burden and a one-time cost related to microchipping and data registration (including the time required to fulfil the information obligation). Currently, these activities are partly indicative and therefore more conscientious animal keepers in particular fulfil this obligation.

The impact on the burden and income of veterinarians is moderate. The administrative burden on veterinarians will increase slightly due to the need to submit data on veterinary procedures to the database. However, as this is a service for which animal keepers are charged a fee, it is assumed that the additional administrative workload will be offset by the increased income resulting from higher demand for the service.

The impact on the non-profit sector is small, as it is already common practice in animal shelters to microchip and register an animal before it is rehomed. A positive effect may be a decrease in the workload of shelters. In implementing the obligation to microchip and register cats (as most of the animals arriving at shelters are cats), shelters will mainly be concerned with finding keepers for ownerless animals, since animals that already have owners and are microchipped are quickly returned home.

3) Environmental impacts

If pets are microchipped and registered, the increased sense of responsibility among pet owners is expected to lead to better preventive treatment of pet diseases and parasites, and to reduce the risk of tapeworms spread by outdoor cats contaminating children's playground sandboxes. However, the overall impact of the change on the natural and living environment is estimated to be minor.

4) Impact on public administration

The change will have a significant impact on the organisation of work at the PTA, as it will enable a shift from clue-based supervision to data-driven and risk-based supervision. The current task of approving microchips will be maintained. The PTA will also retain the obligation to

approve and publish on its website a list of authorised microchips by manufacturer, confirming that their use is permitted in Estonia. A positive effect is the improved overview of the labelling tools available on the market and the possibility to suspend the approval of a product in case of problems by removing it from the list. PRIA will also be assigned the task of authorised processor of the national pet register.

The introduction of the obligation to microchip and register dogs, cats, and ferrets will reduce the self-governing powers of local authorities. The introduction of a national microchipping obligation has largely been requested by local governments themselves and is expected to have a positive impact on them. Although local governments are not required to use the national pet register, it is no longer appropriate to use any other database for collecting data on pets and their owners. Essentially, the tasks of local governments will not change, as this is a matter of local affairs and public order. The main change is that the state will take over the maintenance of pet records from local governments.

The amendment will allow local authorities to obtain more targeted data on pets kept on their territory. Based on this data, it will be possible to improve the quality of services needed by animal keepers, make their provision more efficient, or introduce new necessary services that have not been available until now. It also helps optimise costs – local governments no longer have to use their own funds to maintain pets belonging to keepers who live in other municipalities, or pets that actually have an identified owner, because the chip number makes it possible to determine who the keeper is and in which municipality they reside. How much and for what purpose local governments decide to use this data is up to each local government.

Following the implementation of the amendment (mandatory chipping and registration), the cost of catching and maintaining stray animals for local governments is expected to decrease, which means that the impact on the budget of local governments will be positive in the long term. As local governments are autonomous in their activities, including budget planning, they may allocate different amounts to activities related to stray animals in different years, and it is therefore not possible to specify a specific amount of savings. Further savings will also depend on the overall extent to which the new requirement is met in each local government. Local governments where the impact of the change on the local government's budget is positive can use the released funds for other purposes that support the local community. A positive impact is also seen when the amount allocated in the budget for activities related to stray animals does not decrease, but the money lasts for 12 months instead of 9 months, for example.

5) Impact on information technology and society

Although keeping records of pets in the animal register makes many tasks for veterinarians, shelters and local authorities dependent on information technology, electronic record keeping has been proven to^{3,4} be still the most effective tool for managing stray animals – not only for local authorities but also for shelters. Since pet owners do not have to register their pets themselves,

³ C. Sietou. Evaluating the recently imposed English compulsory dog microchipping policy. Evidence from an English Local Authority. Preventative Veterinary Medicine: 2019.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0167587718305099>

⁴ P.A. Dingman, J.K. Levy, L.E. Rockey, M.M. Crandall. Use of visual and permanent identification for pets by veterinary clinics. The Veterinary Journal: 2014.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1090023314002068>

this is only done by a veterinarian, there is no negative impact on elderly people or those with limited computer skills, who might otherwise be at a disadvantage. According to data from Statistics Estonia, 92.9% of Estonian households use the internet. Among 16-54-year-olds, 95% are internet users, among those over 54, the percentage falls below 90%, and among 65–74-year-olds, the proportion is around 70%.⁵ Local authority officials who have so far provided support to residents in relation to the registration of companion animals and PRIA county service offices located in all counties, whose daily work also includes the use of technological tools and the internet, can help with updating the data in case of low or no internet usage. They also have an obligation to provide explanations under § 36-of the Administrative Procedure Act. All service offices of the PRIA shall have the technical infrastructure and staff to assist pet keepers.

6) Impact on national defence and foreign relations

Among EU Member States, 24 countries require mandatory microchipping and registration of dogs, but three countries (Estonia, Poland, Germany) do not have such a requirement. Seven countries have imposed this obligation on cats⁶. As illegal trade is a major problem throughout the EU, recording the details of the animal and its keeper in the register helps to address issues related to the movement of pet animals and illegal breeding facilities in Estonia. The amendment contributes to creating a positive image of Estonia and promoting a sound economic environment in the EU.

7) Impact on internal security

The implementation of the amendment will ensure the availability of data, which will increase the capacity of the Police and Border Guard Board (PPA), MTA and PTA to prevent, deter or resolve offences.

8) Impact on regional development, including urban, rural and coastal areas

The amendment will have an impact on residents in both urban and rural areas, as the record-keeping requirements for pets in the country will be harmonised and these will be the same everywhere. The amendment reduces the differences between regions, as in the event of the loss of a pet, there will be equal opportunities in each region to identify the keeper and return the animal to them when the animal is found.

To date, the methodology for keeping records of pets has been left to the discretion of the local authority. Figure 1 shows which local authorities have entered into a contract with a pet register service provider, which means that the obligation to chip (mainly) dogs has been established in the local authority, which in turn allows for efficient record keeping, and Figure 2 shows the scope of the requirement to chip (mainly) dogs in counties, taking into account the number of inhabitants.

⁵ The website of Statistics Estonia. The internet is used by 92.9% of Estonian households, social media is increasingly popular, 16.09.2024. <https://www.stat.ee/et/uudised/internetti-kasutab-929-eesti-leibkondadest-sotsiaalseadistajajest-populaarsem>

⁶ EU Dog & Cat Alliance. National Legislation, 15.09.2024. <https://www.dogandcatwelfare.eu/national-legislation/>

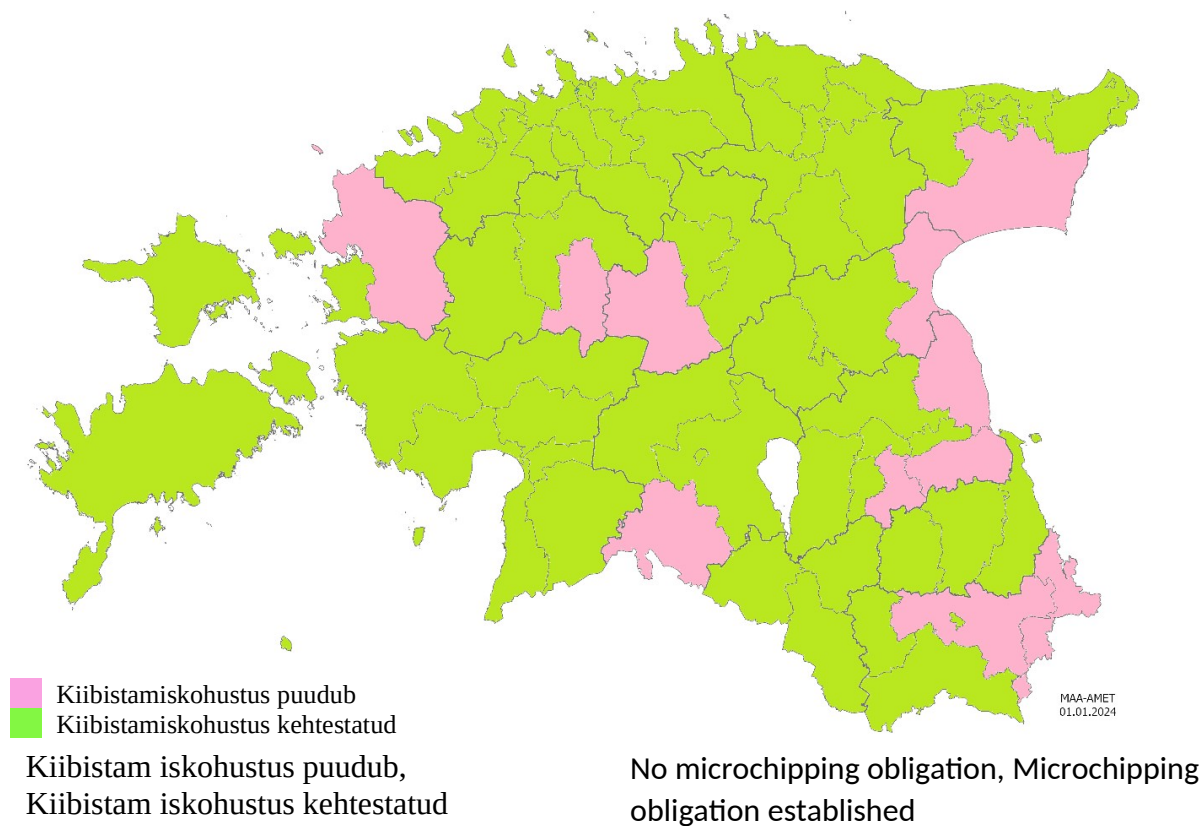
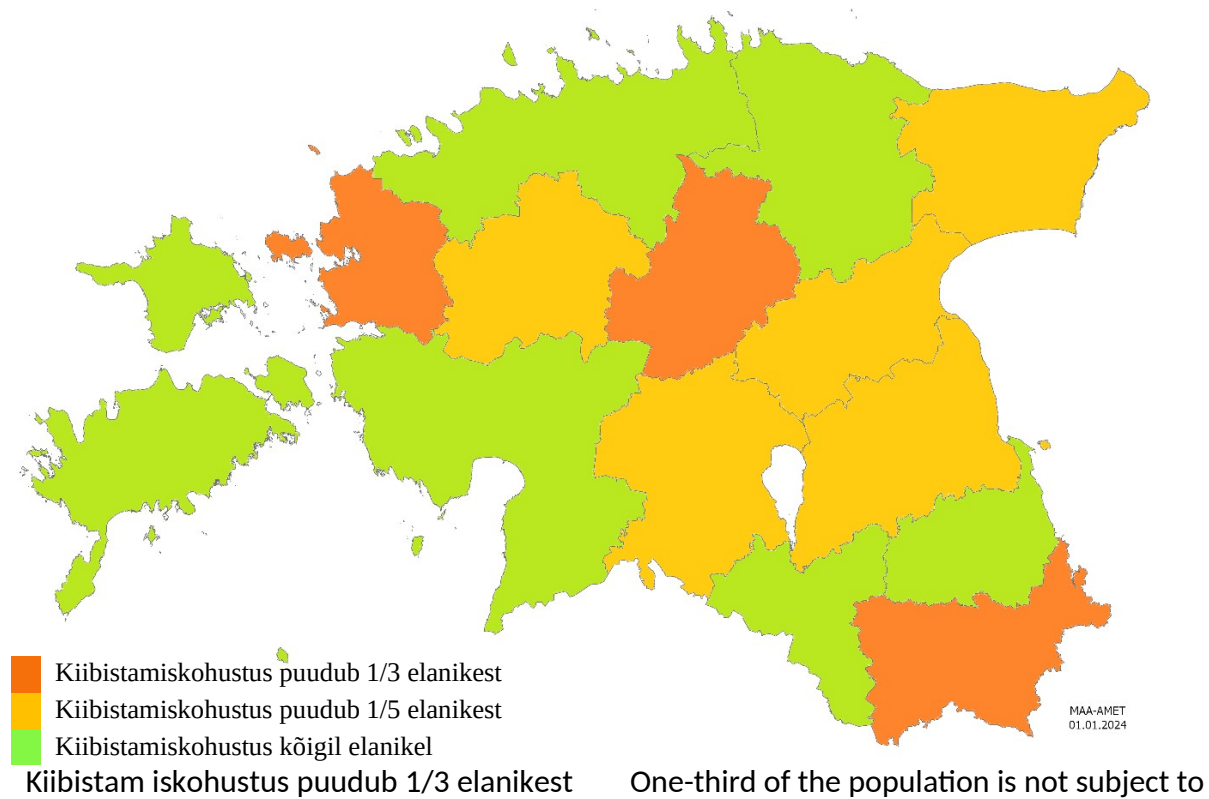


Figure 3 Microchipping obligation for dogs in local authorities



Kiibistam iskohustus puudub 1/5 elanikest	the microchipping requirement. One-fifth of the population is not subject to the microchipping requirement.
Kiibistam iskohustus kõigil elanikest	Chip implantation is mandatory for all residents

Figure 4 Proportion of inhabitants without a compulsory dog microchipping requirement by county

Compared to the total population of Estonia (1,374,687 people as of 1 January 2024), 6.5% of the population (90,044 people) are not subject to the requirement to have their dogs microchipped⁷. Not all of them are dog owners. Most of them live in rural areas and mainly in local governments located in the border regions of Estonia. Although Estonia is a country with rabies-free status, it is important that animal keepers consistently vaccinate their dogs, cats and ferrets in order to maintain rabies-free status. In local authorities located in border regions, it is particularly important to maintain records of pet animals (dogs, cats, and ferrets) in order to assess the coverage of rabies vaccination among these pets. Border regions face a higher risk of rabies transmission due to the movement of animals, including wild species. Rabies is a viral disease that spreads through the saliva of infected animals and can infect all mammals, including humans. Once the disease has developed, it is untreatable and always ends in death. The nationwide obligation to microchip and register dogs, cats and ferrets makes it possible to obtain data on the extent of rabies vaccination among these pets and supports local governments in border areas in cooperation with the PTA in preventing the spread of rabies among pets and, consequently, among humans.

The impacts are described in detail under the social and economic impacts.

6.1.2. Proposed amendment: establishment of a register under PRIA and introduction of a state fee (draft § 1 points 22, 27, 28, 32, 34, 35, 42 and §§ 2-6).

1) Social impacts

The introduction of a unified register will ensure that all animal and pet owners have an equal opportunity to have their cat, dog, ferret, or other pet referred to in § 32(3) of the Veterinary Act returned to them in the event of its loss, as pet records will be maintained on a uniform basis throughout the country. Pets are often considered family members, so knowing that a pet is linked to its owner and that there is a good chance of getting it back if it is found can have a positive effect on the property protection, well-being and mental health of pet owners.

From the point of view of **the protection of personal data**, when using the common database, the data required for all keepers of animals, including undertakings, are primarily those that are necessary for contacting the keeper of the animal (telephone number, address, e-mail address) and identifying the keeper (name, personal identification code/registry code). The address of the keeper of animals is necessary for local governments to know how many keepers of animals there are and what services to offer and in which area of the local government. Supervisory authorities may, where necessary (e.g. in the case of routine checks or tip-offs), verify the link between the animal and its keeper, including when the animal is being transported for commercial or non-

⁷ Statistics Estonia database [e-database]. RV021https://andmed.stat.ee/et/stat/rahvastik_rahvastikunaitajad-ja-koosseis_rahvaarv-ja-rahvastiku-koosseis/RV0291U

commercial purposes. Most of the data processed in the database are pet data. However, it must be ensured that persons with access to the data set can only access the intended amount of data necessary for their activities. Considering the scope, context and purposes of the processing of personal data (personal data is necessary, in particular, to establish a link between the keeper and his pet animal in order to return the animal to the keeper in the event of loss, in special cases to the supervisory authorities to verify the legality of border crossings and compliance with the requirements for keeping animals), there is no high risk to the rights and freedoms of natural persons. No personal data are transferred to other countries (Europetnet is a pan-European search engine linking pet registers; it returns the details of the register in which the pet is recorded, but not data about the animal's keeper), nor are special categories of personal data processed. The specific impact on data protection is described in the data protection impact assessment.

2) Economic impacts

There is a negative impact on entrepreneurship. The creation of a national pet register and making registration in that register mandatory will have a direct impact on the revenues of both operators currently providing services to local authorities, as their services are unlikely to be used anymore. The provision of the national pet register service is not the sole or main activity of either undertaking providing the service to local authorities, but may nevertheless have a certain impact on the subsistence of the undertaking. Similarly, the creation of a national register would not incentivise other operators wishing to provide such a service to enter the market.

The amendment is not expected to have a direct impact on the costs, revenues, or administrative burden of non-profit associations (MTÜs). Shelters that have joined the platform offered by Spin TEK already enter data on found animals on an individual record created for each animal that arrives at the shelter. In the future, shelters will submit data to the shelter module to be established within the Animal Register.

3) Impact on public administration

Although no significant changes in state budget revenues or expenditures are expected, there may still be some impact on the state budget. The cost of IT developments for the creation of a new database is approximately 400,000 EUR. The labour and management costs associated with the maintenance of the database need to be covered from the state budget. A state fee shall be established for making a registration entry (registration as an animal keeper, including a change of animal keeper), which shall cover the running costs. The state fee is paid into the state budget and funds are allocated from the budget to cover the costs. State budget revenues are not expected to increase. It is necessary to establish links with the population register, the business register, the National Veterinary Doctor's Register, the State Treasury, the criminal register, Europetnet with the data set to be created. When introducing the new database, data should, where possible, be transferred from existing databases that currently store pet information, in order to avoid imposing additional obligations on keepers who have already microchipped and registered their pets.

The proposed solutions are in line with the "Agriculture and Fisheries Development Plan 2030"⁵ (Chapter 3.2), one of the sub-objectives of which is to develop and implement the necessary measures to improve the welfare of pet animals.

The amendment will introduce an additional task for PRIA as the authorised processor of the new database, making it responsible for ensuring its effective operation and implementation, commissioning necessary further developments, and providing customer support. The creation of the database will contribute to the cooperation between national authorities and the operationalisation of the proposed possibilities of the database (ensuring the welfare of companion animals in a variety of ways) would contribute to the positive image of these public authorities in Estonian society.

The state will take over the task of keeping records on pets from local governments. The task of catching and keeping stray animals, putting them down and disposing of carcasses will remain the responsibility of local governments. However, the organisation of work will change, as all local governments will be able to use the state register, including those local governments that currently do not keep records in the electronic database. This simplifies the execution of tasks by making the work organisation fit for purpose.

The introduction of the national pet register is expected to improve the quality of task performance and service provision to residents, even if local government officials initially need time to familiarise themselves with the new way of working. The introduction of the national pet register ensures that the service (returning a found pet to its owner) is available in all local governments on the same basis.

4) Impact on information technology and society

IT developments are needed to create the register. The developer will be identified through the procurement procedure and the earliest deadline for the completion of the national inventory is 2027. This assumes that the amendment to the Veterinary Act will be adopted in 2026. The e-service will be of high quality and accessible to all local authorities and residents in all parts of Estonia.

In particular, it is in the interest of the keeper to get the animal back in the event of the disappearance of the pet. To this end, the register must contain the data necessary for contacting and identifying the animal's keeper, as well as information verifying the connection between the animal and its keeper. It is important for local governments to know how many and what types of pets residents have in order to ensure the provision of necessary services. In addition, it is important to have an overview of the organisation of the capture of stray pets and their keeping in shelters. The same information about the keeper of the pet is necessary for the local government, which is important for the keeper of the pet. It is important to identify the owner of the found pet and return the animal to them. The functions of the PTA, the MTA and the PPA differ in some respects, but are broadly similar. It is important to have data that enable the linking of an animal keeper with their pet, so that a found animal can be returned to its keeper if necessary and information about the animal's health status and documentation (e.g. pet passport details) can be accessed, including for movements carried out for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. When establishing the national pet register, PRIA will remain the authorised processor of the register.

As a result of the amendment, an electronic database for keeping records of pets will be introduced, which can be used by all local governments. Although this will make several tasks of veterinarians, shelters and local governments dependent on information technology, it is still the

most effective tool for dealing with stray animals not only for local governments but also for shelters. Since pet owners do not have to register their pets themselves, but only submit the information for entry in the register, this does not have a negative impact on elderly people or those with limited computer skills, who might otherwise be at a disadvantage. The updating of the data will also be assisted by officials of the local government and the PRIA service offices, whose daily work also includes the use of technological tools and the Internet, so no negative impact on the provision, availability, use or content of information society services is foreseen. They also have an obligation to provide explanations under § 36 of the Administrative Procedure Act.

The solution will have an impact on the state information systems. When establishing the national pet register, it will be necessary to create links with the Population Register, the Business Register, the National Register of Veterinarians, the State Treasury, the Criminal Records Database, and Europetnet. Users of the information system will have access to a unified e-service environment, allowing all parties to use the system conveniently (through secure login), with all pet-related data stored in a single database. The availability of the e-service is of high quality and accessible to all persons residing in Estonia, regardless of their place of residence. The establishment of the state register will contribute to the objective set out in the work plan of the Government of the Republic to integrate the IT systems and services of local governments and the state into a unified personalised state system. In addition, it helps to improve the quality and availability of services provided by the state and local government units and to ensure the secure storage of data. The state can proactively offer residents the opportunity to keep their pet details up to date in the register.

The solutions of the database do not affect data or cybersecurity, but these requirements (the Estonian Information Security Standard) must be taken into account in the provision of the database service. It is relevant to note that, as a payment agency, PRIA holds an ISO 27001 information security certificate, which it is required to hold under the accreditation conditions.