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## EU poised to ban trading in cat and dog fur

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BRUSSELS, Nov 17 (Reuters) - Think twice about buying a cuddly soft toy this Christmas -- it could be made from dog fur.

Next week, the European Commission plans to call for an EU-wide ban on trading in cat and dog fur to consolidate what several national governments have already prohibited for years.

"There is evidence that cat and dog fur is being put on the European market either disguised as synthetic fur, or other types of fur, or in an undeclared way," it said in a statement.

"EU consumers have expressed their firm opposition to the trade and sale of fur from cats and dogs. National bans from different member states have proved insufficient to tackle this global problem," it said. Animal rights groups say some 2 million cats and dogs are killed in Asia each year, especially in China, for their fur which is imported into Europe under false labels.

The traders claim that their products are either fake fur or exotic Asian species, for making soft toys, blankets, coats and fur trims on hoods. At present, only a handful of EU countries such as Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece and Italy block these imports. Sweden has for years sought an EU ban.

The Commission, the EU executive, is expected to back a proposal on Monday that would ban EU trading in cat and dog fur.

That proposal, presented by EU Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner Markos Kyprianou, would then be debated by EU agriculture ministers.

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