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## **Norway to decide if breeding of English Bulldogs and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels violates Norwegian law**

**The Norwegian Society for Protection of Animals (NSPA) works to prevent and stop unethical breeding of family pets, hereunder pedigree dogs. The NSPA believes breeding of both English Bulldogs and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels in Norway today does not meet the legal animal welfare criteria laid down in the Norwegian Animal Welfare Act of 2009. The NSPA is now taking The Norwegian Kennel Club, the two breeders' clubs and selected breeders to court.**

The wording of the Norwegian Animal Welfare Act is very strict. Breeding must encourage characteristics which give robust animals which function well and have good health. It is prohibited to pass on genes that influence the animals' physical or mental health in a negative way, reduces the animals' ability to practice natural behaviour, or which evokes general ethical reactions. Paragraph 25 which pertains to breeding was even strengthened in the new act of 2009. Below you will find an unofficial translation of the relevant provision:

### § 25. Breeding

Breeding must encourage characteristics which give robust animals which function well and have good health. Breeding, including through methods of gene technology, shall not be carried out in such a way that it:

- a. changes genes in such a way that they influence the animals' physical or mental functions in a negative way, or passes on such genes,
- b. reduces the animals' ability to practise natural behaviour, or



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c. evokes general ethical reactions.

Animals with a genetic constitution as cited in the second paragraph shall not be used for subsequent breeding.

This revised wording has not yet been tried in Norwegian courts. The NSPA believes that some breeds have now accumulated so many serious health conditions that further breeding of them will constitute a breach of this provision.

Therefore, the NSPA is now taking legal steps towards selected breeders, clubs, and The Norwegian Kennel Club to have the content and limits of this provision interpreted by the Norwegian courts.

At this point, the NSPA is of the opinion that a number of these breeds are too sick to continue breeding them. In addition, the lack of sufficient remaining genetic diversity makes it impossible to breed robust and healthy animals within the remaining population. Based on these facts, the NSPA believes that outcrossing of these breeds is the only available option that is in accordance with the relevant legislation in Norway.

“We believe that many dogs are bred unlawfully in Norway. The purpose of the law is to protect the animals from human atrocities, and what we see in this case is of major animal welfare concern.” says Åshild Roaldset, BVSc, DVM and CEO NSPA.

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