



III. EUROPEAN UNION

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1. European Union

The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 27 democratic European countries aiming at peace, prosperity and freedom for its 498 million citizens. The EU is run through bodies such as

- the European Parliament representing the people of Europe
- the Council of the European Union representing national governments
- the European Commission representing the common EU interest
- the Court of Justice making sure that EU law is interpreted and applied in the same way in all EU countries
- the Court of Auditors checking that the EU's funds are spent legally, economically and for the intended purpose



2. Data on the 27 EU Member States

| EU Member State | Year of EU entry | Political system | Capital city | Population | Veterinarians | Currency |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Austria | 1995 | Federal republic | Vienna | 8.3 million | 2704 | Euro |
| Belgium | Founding member | Constitutional Monarchy | Brussels | 10.7 million | 13709 | Euro |
| Bulgaria | 2007 | Republic | Sofia | 7.6 million | 3422 | Lev |
| Cyprus | 2004 | Republic | Nicosia | 0.8 million | 271 | Euro |
| Czech Republic | 2004 | Republic | Prague | 10.4 million | 6655 | Czech koruna |
| Denmark | 1973 | Constitutional Monarchy | Copenhagen | 5.5 million | 2330 | Danish krone |
| Estonia | 2004 | Republic | Talinn | 1.3 million | 1081 | Estonian kroon |
| Finland | 1995 | Republic | Helsinki | 5.3 million | 2124 | Euro |
| France | Founding member | Republic | Paris | 63.8 million | 27338 | Euro |
| Germany | Founding member | Federal republic | Berlin | 82.2 million | 35098 | Euro |
| Greece | 1981 | Republic | Athens | 11.2 million | 3547 | Euro |
| Hungary | 2004 | Republic | Budapest | 10.1 million | 3500 | Forint |
| Ireland | 1973 | Republic | Dublin | 4.4 million | 3887 | Euro |
| Italy | Founding member | Republic | Rome | 59.6 million | 22604 | Euro |
| Latvia | 2004 | Republic | Riga | 2.3 million | 2256 | Lats |
| Lithuania | 2004 | Republic | Vilnius | 3.4 million | 1923 | Litas |
| Luxembourg | Founding member | Constitutional Monarchy | Luxembourg | 0.5 million | 129 | Euro |
| Malta | 2004 | Republic | Valetta | 0.4 million | No data | Euro |
| Netherlands | Founding member | Constitutional Monarchy | Amsterdam | 16.4 million | 5978 | Euro |
| Poland | 2004 | Republic | Warsaw | 38.1 million | 9321 | Zloty |
| Portugal | 1986 | Republic | Lisbon | 10.6 million | 3665 | Euro |
| Romania | 2007 | Republic | Bucharest | 21.5 million | 9562 | Romanian leu |
| Slovenia | 2004 | Republic | Ljubljana | 2.0 million | 940 | Euro |
| Slovakia | 2004 | Republic | Bratislava | 5.4 million | No data | Euro |
| Spain | 1986 | Constitutional Monarchy | Madrid | 45.3 million | 9600 | Euro |
| Sweden | 1995 | Constitutional Monarchy | Stockholm | 9.2 million | 2553 | Krona |
| United Kingdom | 1973 | Constitutional Monarchy | London | 61.2 million | 29971 | Pound sterling |

3. The EU Animal Health Strategy (2007-2013) where “prevention is better than cure” and the Animal Health Advisory Committee

The EU's Animal Health Strategy provides the framework for EU animal health and welfare measures until 2013. Given the devastating impact that serious disease outbreaks can have on farmers, society and the economy, the strategy is based on the principle that “prevention is better than cure”. The aim is to put greater focus on precautionary measures, disease surveillance, controls and research, in order to reduce the incidence of animal disease and minimise the impact of outbreaks when they do occur. However, the new strategy encompasses much more than just the control of animal diseases. It also focuses on issues which are inextricably linked to animal health, such as public health, food safety, animal welfare, sustainable development and research.

The “Animal Health Advisory Committee” includes representatives from non governmental organisations (including EAZA) across the animal health sector, consumers and governments. It is aimed at gathering specialised inputs. It provides strategic guidance on the appropriate/acceptable level of animal or public health protection, and on priorities for action and communication. It also follows the Animal Health Strategy's progress. The Committee is consulted on all impact assessments and advises the European Commission on the best means of delivering agreed outcomes.

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4. The EU's Animal Health Law

Since its creation, the European Community has had as goal the creation of a single market to allow the free circulation of different commodities, including live animals and products of animal origin. To ensure the safe trade of live animals and animal products, harmonised health requirements for all EU Member States had to be established.

The process of establishing the EU health requirements requires continual updates because these requirements need to consider a number of evolving factors, such as new scientific knowledge, and emerging animal diseases.

This process of continual updating of the legislation means that a number of different regulatory measures are now in place. Currently, EU veterinary legislation includes more than 400 different legislative acts. This large body of legislation has created difficulties for different actors, such as the Member States' veterinary authorities, commercial operators, farmers, and breeders to understand the law. This is also true for the zoo community.

To tackle this problem, the European Commission decided to review the current EU animal health legislation when it published its Animal Health Strategy in 2007. As part of its Strategy, the European Commission decided that it should create a new Animal Health Law, which would provide a single and clearer regulatory framework for all EU animal health regulation. The aims of this legal framework would be to simplify, clarify and provide greater flexibility for EU animal health legislation, and also to introduce important new elements, such as for example a preventive approach to disease control. An extensive consultation process for the EU Animal Health Law is launched end September 2009 and will end in December 2009. The aim of this consultation is to gather the views of all concerned parties and to take these comments into consideration when drafting the final legislative text. The target date for the formal adoption of the proposal by the commission is the end of 2010.

5. EAZA Position Statement on the Animal Health Strategy for the European Union

Introduction

This statement presents the position of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) on the Animal Health Strategy for the European Union (2007-2013) "Prevention is better than cure" and its resulting Action Plan. It is also endorsed by the European Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians (EAZWV) with approximately 700 individual members from zoos, zoo related research institutions and universities.



In general EAZA is pleased with the strategy and would like to congratulate the European Commission on its publication. The slogan "Prevention is better than cure" is much appreciated and reflects the approach of EAZA and its member institutions. The flexible approach to vaccination is a highly important aspect for the European zoo and aquarium community as is the link between animal welfare and animal health. A clearer and simplified regulatory framework is necessary, especially as EU animal health regulations are mostly directed at agricultural animals and the impact of such legislation for zoo and aquarium animals is often unclear or open to multiple interpretations. The development of one general EU Animal Health Law is therefore strongly supported by EAZA.

The remainder of this statement will provide further detail on EAZA's position.

EAZA's current status and general position;

- As laid down in EAZA's constitution the objects of the association are: a. to promote co-operation for the furtherance of wildlife conservation, through internationally coordinated breeding programmes of wild animals and *in situ* conservation; b. to promote education, in particular environmental education; c. to promote scientific study; d. to represent the interests of its members;
- EAZA represents 324 members from 35 countries, 300 of which maintain public collections of animals. More than 280 institutions of the total EAZA membership are located within the European Union. EAZA member institutions receive approximately 140 million visitors a year and house more than 250,000 animals, excluding fish and invertebrates. EAZA member institutions employ 20,000 staff members, 5000 of which are seasonal;
- The '*EAZA Minimum Standards for the Accommodation and Care of Animals in Zoos and Aquaria*' include extensive paragraphs on animal welfare, health, hygiene, surveillance and veterinary aspects.
- EAZA members are often important economic drivers and cultural centres in their local communities;
- EAZA has a significant social role in educating European citizens about animals, their conservation, and overarching threat processes such as climate change. Zoos and aquaria have been demonstrated to host a far more representative visitor social spectrum than either museums or science centres;

- EAZA has adopted the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (2005) which articulates the modern role of zoos and aquaria and their commitment to conservation;
- EAZA institutions in the European Union comply with Council Directive 1999/22/EC relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos;
- EAZA encourages its member institutions to apply for approval under article 13 (2) of Council Directive 92/65/EEC;
- EAZA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians (EAZWV) and supported the publication of the Transmissible Disease Handbook (2007). This is recognised as a key publication of high relevance across all sectors concerned with public health. EAZA will also be supporting the publication of the 2009 edition of this important document;
- All EAZA members must join the International Species Information System and use the Animal Record Keeping System (ARKS) software to keep up to date records of their animal collections;
- EAZA collections exchange approximately 25,000 animals annually;
- Emerging infectious disease outbreaks generally do not originate from zoo and aquarium collections. EAZA zoos have highly trained specialised veterinarians and therefore can quickly recognise newly arriving emerging infectious diseases, and thus can serve as emergent disease sentinels. Zoos and aquariums can suffer from outbreaks of diseases, through potential loss of stock, obstruction of transfers of animals between collections as part of vital conservation breeding programmes and loss of visitor revenue if the institution is within geographical areas of disease outbreak and human movement restrictions occur;
- Populations of endangered species kept in EAZA collections are often irreplaceable and some held in EAZA institutions are extinct in the wild.

We believe;

- Keeping and displaying healthy animals under good welfare conditions in EAZA collections is of crucial importance to reach EAZA's main objectives;
- Animal exchanges between EAZA member institutions (largely in the framework of EAZA's breeding programmes) are imperative to ensure healthy and sustainable populations of wild animals in human care into the future;
- EAZA's European Endangered species Programmes (EEPs) and European studbooks (ESBs) should be managed independently, where appropriate, from *ex situ* populations in other regions and from wild populations, unless specifically part of global endangered species programmes. Nevertheless, occasional imports of unrelated stock are important to ensure long-term genetic variability;
- Contamination risks in zoos and aquaria are significantly lower than in the agricultural industry, e.g. because of surveillance, housing conditions, reduced numbers of animals and individual care for most species;
- Compared to 4.3 million cattle, 21.7 million pigs and 794 million poultry traded between EU member states in 2006 the number of animals exchanged between EAZA members pose an extremely low health risk;
- Breeding programmes for endangered species are jeopardized by unclear legislation, lack of uniform implementation of EU legislation by member states and slow decision making processes making animal exchanges difficult or even impossible. This obstruction can lead to compromised welfare conditions and obstruction of conservation initiatives;
- EAZA's breeding programmes and the Animal Record Keeping System (in the process of being replaced by the Zoological Management Information System – ZIMS) are suitable means for identification and traceability of zoo and aquarium species.

What we would like to improve in the future;

- EAZA to be consulted at an early stage when the EU is formulating animal health and welfare legislation to ensure that wild animal species as held in zoos and aquaria are clearly and appropriately included in the regulatory definitions where relevant and excluded where irrelevant;
- The position of EAZA zoos and aquaria to be fully considered when designing EU animal health regulations;
- The health risks posed by animal collections of zoos and aquaria better evaluated in light of the existing EU animal health regulations;
- Exchanges of animals in the framework of recognised EAZA breeding programmes simplified and prioritised in relation to EU legislation pertaining to animal health;
- Implementation of the BALAI Directive 92/65 to be harmonized across EU Member States;
- EAZA breeding programmes and ISIS ARKS registration formally recognised as suitable means for identifying and tracing of zoo and aquarium animals;
- In relation to Council Regulation 1/2005 of 23 December 2004 animal transports between zoos carried out only by the institutions themselves should not be considered “commercial transports”. In a future review of Council Regulation 1/2005 the wide diversity of species to be transported between zoos and aquaria and thereafter their differing and specific welfare needs should be recognised;
- To continue to be able to vaccinate where appropriate in the case of emerging disease outbreaks (refer to the *‘EAZA Minimum Standards for the Accommodation and Care of Animals in Zoos and Aquaria’*);
- To have, through approval under 13(2) of Council Directive 92/65, the possibility to import wild animals from third countries where there is an agreed and demonstrable programme need, particularly in relation to recognised and accountable EAZA conservation breeding programmes, and where the import can be demonstrated to not be of any detriment, either of welfare or persistence, to wild populations.

6. The O.I.E. (World Organisation for Animal Health) (Organisation International des Epizooties)

The OIE is an intergovernmental organisation based in Paris, with a mandate from its 174 Member Countries and Territories to improve world animal health. In this capacity, the OIE is responsible for ensuring transparency of the animal disease situation worldwide, including diseases transmissible to humans, and the sanitary safety of world trade in animals and animal products. The OIE publishes international standards in all fields covered by its mandate, including animal welfare and consumer protection.

At the global level, the OIE has modernised its worldwide information system on animal diseases (including zoonoses) with the creation of WAHIS, a mechanism whereby all countries are linked on-line to a central server that collects all the compulsory notifications sent to the OIE, covering 100 priority terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases, as well as any emerging disease.

Together with the WHO (World Health Organisation) and the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations), the OIE has created GLEWS, the Global Early Warning System, a platform shared by the three organisations to improve early warning on animal diseases and zoonoses worldwide.

The OIE, WHO and FAO (with the support of UNICEF, the United Nations System Influenza Coordinator and the Worldbank) have prepared a consensus document on global measures needed to coordinate medical and veterinary health policies more effectively, taking into account new requirements to prevent and control zoonoses.

In this perspective veterinarians play a crucial role in protecting animals and society as a whole from the negative effects of diseases such as Avian Influenza, Foot and Mouth Disease and Bluetongue. Veterinarians play a crucial role at each stage of the food chain, from “stable to table”. For example, by checking that only healthy animals are slaughtered for human consumption, or by alerting the authorities at the first signs of disease on the farm or in our zoos. Veterinarians across the European Union, through their work, help to ensure that the goal of “One World, One Health” for all can be reached, encompassing both animals and people in good health. The concept “One World, One Health” urges the international community to consider the link between animal diseases and public health. It is well known that 60% of known human infectious diseases have their source in animals, as do 75% of emerging human diseases and 80% of the pathogens that could potentially be used in bio terrorism. The unprecedented flow of commodities and people gives pathogens of all kinds the opportunity to spread and multiply around the world to find genetic reassortment opportunities, and climate change can enable them to expand in their range.

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