

EAZA Position Statement on the EU Zoos Directive 1999/22/EC



Approved by EAZA Council
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This statement presents the position of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) on the EU Zoos Directive 1999/22/EEC on the keeping of wild animals in zoos.

Since its establishment in 1999 the EU Zoos Directive 1999/22/EC has been the main guiding document for national zoo legislation in all EU Member States. The Directive clearly defines the tasks and roles of zoos and it recognizes that zoos are conservation organisations contributing to saving biodiversity in and outside of Europe. Furthermore, by outlining licensing and inspection processes for zoos the Directive has proven effective in raising and harmonising standards across European zoos. During 2016 – 2017 the EU Zoos Directive is undergoing a REFIT process whereby the European Commission, National Authorities, Zoo Associations and other stakeholders are engaged to evaluate the existing EU legislation.

EAZA and its almost 400 Members appreciate and welcome the EU Zoos Directive as a strong confirmation of and support for their roles as conservation organizations. We are of the opinion that the existing EU Zoos Directive is sufficient, relevant, and has a strong purpose relating to the functioning of zoos; therefore, it should be maintained.

EAZA believes the following about the current EU Zoos Directive:

- It strengthens the role of zoos in the conservation of biodiversity because it outlines this as a legal framework for their operations.
- It defines the conservation measures zoos shall take in regards to research, exchange of information, animal breeding and husbandry, capacity building and education.
- It includes the principle of licencing and inspection of zoos thereby promoting harmonisation and high quality standards throughout Europe.
- It is the only piece of legislation that allows the EU to demonstrate their compliance with Article 9 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which relates to *ex situ* conservation.
- It enables Member States to create national legislation that reflects their individual diversity of approaches and challenges to conservation of biodiversity.
- Implementation of the Zoos Directive is diverse in different Member States. In the opinion of EAZA this results in the risk that some institutions which are licenced as zoos are not fulfilling the obligations specified in the Articles of the Zoos Directive, and conversely, that there are some zoos that are fulfilling the Articles but have not obtained a licence

EAZA calls for:

- Maintaining the EU Zoos Directive and improving its implementation at the level of EU Member States.

- The EU to recognise Member States who have efficient and effective implementation at reasonable costs and to provide opportunities to support and share good practice amongst those who do not.
 - Creation of a stakeholder platform that advises the EU Commission on supporting EU Member States in the implementation of the EU Zoos Directive.
 - Developing reporting mechanisms from Member States to the EU Commission to show evidence relating to implementation of the Zoos Directive.
 - Licencing and inspections of zoo to be carried out by expert officials with well documented expertise and knowledge of wild animal husbandry and *ex situ* management as it relates to progressive zoos.
 - Investigating opportunities for recognition by EU Member States that accreditation by zoo associations, like EAZA, are an indicator that these institutions are meeting the requirements of the EU Zoos Directive (for example as is seen in The Netherlands).
 - The EU Commission and EU Member States to encourage zoos to join zoo associations to help promote high standards, share good practice and meet the requirements of the EU Zoos Directive.
 - The EU Commission to investigate opportunities to allocate funding for supporting adequate implementation of the EU Zoos Directive.
 - The EU Commission and EU Member States to make use of openly available EAZA documents such as:
 - EAZA Standards for the Accommodation and Care of Animals in Zoos and Aquaria (2014)
 - EAZA Conservation Standards (2016)
 - EAZA Conservation Education Standards (2016)
 - EAZA Research Standards (2003)
 - EAZA Guidelines on the definition of a direct contribution to conservation (2015)
 - EAZA Guidelines on the use of animals in public demonstrations (2014)
 - European Code of Conduct on Zoological Gardens and Aquaria and Invasive Alien Species (2012)
 (all available from <http://www.eaza.net/about-us/eazadocuments/>)
- to further support effective implementation of the Directive.

Background to EAZA

EAZA is a non-profit conservation organisation, with members across Europe and the Middle East. Its mission is to facilitate cooperation within the European zoo and aquarium community towards the goals of education, research and conservation. EAZA believes that zoos and aquariums have a strong role to play in the conservation of nature and wildlife both at our Member institutions and out in the field.

EAZA strives for its community to be a significant contributor to and driving force for global conservation and towards building the capacity, skills, and resources to prevent species extinction. With almost 400 members in 44 countries, out of which 26 are EU Member States, EAZA is the world's largest regional zoo association and is represented in EU Member States through National Zoo Associations and individual zoos. Every year 140 million visits are made to visit EAZA institutions ensuring we reach one in four European citizens.

EAZA defines zoos and aquaria as permanent establishments open to and administered for the public where animals of wild species are kept to promote nature conservation, through the provision of education, information, recreation and facilitation of research. EAZA is Europe's key centre of excellence for scientific knowledge about exotic animal welfare and management. This leads to production of a comprehensive set of Standards and Guidelines that encourage cooperative working amongst EAZA Members to professionally manage healthy, sustainable populations of threatened species.