



ALMOST 2 MILLION EUROPEAN ZOO VISITORS CALL FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE ILLEGAL TRADE IN BUSHMEAT

Today, at a special meeting at the European Parliament, a petition of almost two million signatures calling for eradication of the illegal Bushmeat trade in west and central African countries was handed over.

David Martin, Vice-President of the European Parliament, accepted the petition from Koen Brouwer, Director of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). The petition was part of a pan-European campaign run by EAZA, supported by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), with 158 participating zoos in 25 countries. The petition was presented during an especially convened roundtable meeting in the European Parliament sponsored by Robert Evans MEP and Anders Wijkman MEP.

The Parliamentary initiative is to be followed by a series of meeting with the European Commission led by Dr Richard Leakey, celebrated Kenyan conservationist (former Head of the Kenyan Wildlife Service) and politician.

Robert Evans MEP declared *“In European Zoos we can see some of the world’s finest animals. If, however, the countries of Europe do not unite to eradicate the illegal Bushmeat trade, zoos may soon be the only place to see these wonderful species.”*

The EU is being asked to take measures to strengthen its support for African Governments in their endeavours, and to target its Aid Programme to ensure that environmental factors are taken into account. These measures include the implementation of the EC Biodiversity Action Plan for Economic and Development Co-operation COM (2001) 162, which calls for environmental issues to be considered in Development Aid.

Brussels, 6 November 2001