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European Parliament
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Illegal trade in bushmeat
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A5-0355/2003

European Parliament resolution on Petition 461/2000 concerning the protection and conservation of Great Apes and other species endangered by the illegal trade in bushmeat (2003/2078(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Petition 461/2000 of the European Association of Zoos & Aquaria (EAZA) in association with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) with 1.9 million signatures,
- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Biodiversity action plan for economic and development co-operation (COM(2001) 162),
- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Proposal for an EU Action Plan (COM(2003) 251),
- having regard to the resolution of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly on the hunting and killing of Great Apes and destruction of tropical forests in Central and West Africa, adopted on 22 March 1996 in Windhoek, Namibia(1),
- having regard to the resolution of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on negotiations between the ACP and the EU on trade, rules of origin and sanitary and phytosanitary measures, adopted on 21 March 2002 in Cape Town, South Africa(2),
- having regard to the resolution of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on the impact of communicable diseases on health, young people, the elderly and people living with disabilities, adopted on 21 March 2002 in Cape Town, South Africa(3),
- having regard to the resolution of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on Sustainable Development and Rio +10, adopted on 21 March 2002 in Cape Town, South Africa(4),
- having regard to the resolution on 'The Unsustainable Commercial Trade in Wild Meat' of the World Conservation Congress, adopted at its 2nd Session in Amman, Jordan from 4 to 11 October 2000,

- having regard to Rule 175(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Petitions and the opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation (A5-0355/2003),

A. whereas the term 'Bushmeat' or 'wild meat' describes the food product of wild animals in tropical areas, whether consumed locally or traded commercially; the term 'bushmeat crisis' is used to describe over-hunting of wildlife in tropical areas, particularly in Africa,

B. whereas the bushmeat crisis is a phenomenon with serious negative effects on the world's biodiversity, on the livelihoods of many people, and on sustainable development,

C. whereas the bushmeat crisis particularly affects large mammals, including the African Great Apes (Gorilla, Chimpanzee, Bonobo) and might, in the very near future, result in extinction of a range of species locally, regionally or nationally,

D. whereas the Chimpanzee is already extinct in three countries: Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin,

E. whereas a wide range of wild animals is used to provide markets with bushmeat and therefore many more species may face extinction,

F. whereas millions of people depend on wildlife as a key part of their diet and livelihood; whereas over-exploitation will deprive them forever of this source of food and income,

G. whereas the unregulated use of wild animals can be a danger for public health because animals can be carriers of diseases, some of which are fatally infectious for humans and primates such as Ebola, Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) or Monkeypox,

H. whereas there is an expanding international illegal trade in bushmeat, which poses a threat to public health and livestock, including a growing trade into Member States,

I. whereas underlying causes of the bushmeat crisis are: human population growth, poverty, bad governance, ignorance of the scale and impact of wildlife loss and the commercialisation of consumption and distribution of bushmeat,

J. whereas direct causes are: habitat destruction, commercial logging, conversion of forests and increased ease of road access, poaching, urban demand, lack of alternative animal protein sources, international trade, the use of modern weapons to increase the poaching kill, mining, and civil wars,

K. whereas all the Great Ape species as well as other species used as bushmeat, such as the Elephant, are protected under International Conventions such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS),

L. whereas the Cotonou Agreement requires that the principles of sustainable management of natural resources shall be applied and integrated at every level of the partnership,

M. whereas in some countries where bushmeat is traded wildlife legislation is adequate, but such legislation is often not implemented due to a lack of political will, finance, knowledge and capacity,

N. whereas there is growing public and international alarm at the threatened extinction of the Great Apes and the continuing failure to effectively address the prospect of this extinction,

O. whereas the disappearance of the Great Apes and other wild species from our planet would number amongst the great disasters to afflict our world with negative economic and social consequences for present and future generations,

1. Urges the Commission to integrate an EU strategy and action plan on bushmeat in the context of implementing the EU biodiversity action plan with a clear unilateral objective aimed at conserving biodiversity and protecting those species threatened by the bushmeat trade with sufficient funding to implement this objective;

2. Urges the Commission, in the course of developing this strategy and action plan, to encourage full stakeholder participation involving local populations, civil society, government, as well as the private sector, and provide all necessary support, including capacity building, to empower local populations and civil society to participate fully in this process,

3. Urges the Commission to include cooperation with other bodies and projects related to this issue in order to avoid duplication and to maximise outcomes;

4. Urges the Commission to give special attention in this strategy and action plan to: capacity building of wildlife, forestry and nature conservation authorities; law enforcement and anti-poaching measures, including restrictions on high-powered rifles and the ammunition used in such weapons; planning and management of National Parks and other conservation areas; strategic environmental assessments for proposed policy reforms; environmental impact assessments for all infrastructure, and other relevant projects; and to consider how to minimise the adverse impact of such infrastructure changes, especially road building;

5. Stresses the links between the hunting and consumption of bushmeat and the level of economic development, and points out that the issue of bushmeat hunting, and the threat it poses to endangered species, notably the Great Apes, must be addressed in the context of overall development strategy and poverty alleviation;

6. Takes the view that communities that traditionally relied on bushmeat as their principal source of animal protein must be assisted to develop the means to purchase other foodstuffs, and that commercial networks to supply other meats and fish should be encouraged and assisted;

7. Urges the Commission to support the effective management of protected areas, the development of systems of sustainable use of bushmeat species, and the establishment of alternative livelihoods; these alternatives should focus on improving domestic livestock production, as well as other projects such as ecotourism;
8. Urges the Commission to develop proposals which include environmental education in capacity building programmes for both rural and urban communities;
9. Believes that through educational and information campaigns local communities can be made aware of the economic potential of biodiversity and the need to preserve endangered species including in particular the Great Apes, which can represent a major attraction for ecotourism and thereby bring money and development to these communities;
10. Calls for EU financial support for ecotourism in order to encourage local communities to protect endangered species, particularly the Great Apes;
11. Urges the Commission to develop, together with the timber industry and the developing countries concerned, ways and means to control bushmeat hunting on concessions, e.g. by developing models for management standards, procedures and activities, criteria and indicators, to be financed by the timber companies themselves, as an integral part of their activities, and find ways and means of making these models mandatory;
12. Urges the Commission to give special attention in this Strategy to the timber companies which allow, promote and facilitate the use of bushmeat, and to propose legislation to ban the import of products of companies which act illegally and aggravate the bushmeat problem by allowing their workers to hunt for bushmeat or use their transport facilities to transport poached bushmeat;
13. Urges the Commission to include bushmeat issues, criteria and indicators in the European FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) process to ensure that timber governance and certification systems support the regulation of bushmeat hunting and trapping in timber concessions; this will include taking account of the CITES Convention and the recommendations made by the NGO Forests and the European Union Resource Network (FERN) in its report of December 2002: 'Controlling imports of illegal timber, Options for Europe';
14. Urges the Commission to incorporate the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife in the development policy of the EU, in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement and the revised version of Council Regulation (EEC) No 443/92 of 25 February 1992 on financial and technical assistance to, and economic cooperation with, developing countries in Asia and Latin America (ALA regulation)(5) in particular;
15. Urges the Commission to co-operate with countries where bushmeat is found to ensure that all their Country Strategy Papers and National Indicative Programmes pay attention to the bushmeat problem and nature conservation in general and make sure that an appropriate proportion of the available EDF and ALA funding is dedicated to these subjects, and to

renegotiate those programmes which lack sufficient attention to these problems with countries where the bushmeat problem is most critical, in particular in Central and West Africa;

16. Urges the Commission to step up the ECOFAC programme (Conservation and Rational Utilisation of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa) as well as the ABAC programme (Alternatives to Poaching in Central Africa), which are both essential to combating the bushmeat crisis and could focus on addressing forest livelihood issues, but which are both insufficiently funded;

17. Urges the Commission to participate actively in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), to provide the promised funding and furthermore to participate in the African Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) process;

18. Urges the Commission to incorporate the bushmeat issue into the environment manual for development and cooperation projects, 'Integrating environment concerns into development and economic cooperation', and to supplement the draft forest sector strategy and transport and infrastructure sector strategy with a specific strategy to address the bushmeat problem;

19. Urges the Commission, in all of its contacts and interactions with those countries from which bushmeat is illegally traded whether in Asia, Latin America or Africa, and particularly countries of Central and West Africa, to:

a) seek their recognition of the socio-economic value of the Great Apes and other wild animals, and the ever increasing negative impact of unsustainable commercial trade in these species;

b) seek their adoption or strengthening of legislation to control unsustainable hunting and commercial trade in wild meat; and the effective implementation of measures governing the proper management and conservation of their wildlife resources;

c) encourage their review of legislation with regard to logging and mining concessions to ensure that logging and mining companies are held responsible for the conservation of the Great Apes and other protected species on their concessions, and to withdraw these concessions where companies are not managing their concessions according to the law;

d) be aware that enforcement of existing legislation is frequently inadequate, often as a result of failed control mechanisms and sometimes due to corruption; stresses that this problem should be tackled in the context of promoting good governance at all levels, anti-corruption measures, and respect for the rule of law;

e) encourage the establishment of appropriate information exchange arrangements regarding the exploitation of Great Apes and bushmeat and the use of that information to formulate and implement action programmes where needed;

f) promote cooperation with the UNEP Great Apes Survival Project (GrASP), international conventions and institutions and the Commission to develop plans and financial means to protect the Great Apes and other endangered species;

g) encourage the use of the possibilities and modalities of the Indicative Programmes of the European Development Fund in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, to co-finance activities necessary for the preservation of the Great Apes and other protected species, as well those of the Tropical Forest budget line of the budget of the Commission;

h) promote continuous monitoring and control of public markets to ensure that there is no illegal trade in protected species, and the monitoring and control of main transport systems to prevent the transportation of poached meat;

20. Urges the Commission to assess measures and resources put in place by Member States to detect and prevent illegal imports of bushmeat into Europe and assess the adequacy of legal deterrents and penalties; with a view to establishing best practice recommendations and coordinating efforts to encourage the tightening-up of external Community frontier controls and end this illegal trade by blocking the importation of bushmeat for food or other uses in the interest of public health, public safety, and the protection of endangered species;

21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the EU Member States and the governments of the Member States of the Cotonou Agreement.

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- (1) OJ C 254, 2.9.1996, p. 81.
(2) OJ C 231, 27.9.2002, p. 41.
(3) OJ C 231, 27.9.2002, p. 57.

- (4) OJ C 231, 27.9.2002, p. 59.
- (5) OJ L 52, 27.2.1992, p. 1.

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