



## European zoos and politicians meet in support of vital legislation

**Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 29 November 2017:** The European Commission is currently conducting a review of its keynote legislation for the regulation of zoos across the Union, the EU Zoos Directive. At a special event held yesterday at the German Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels, key figures from national and European legislative bodies met with the European zoo community to express continued support for the Directive as a driver of conservation, zoological research, and public education.

The event, organized by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) and the Association of Zoological Gardens ("Verband der Zoologischen Gärten - VdZ), was aimed at outlining the key benefits of retaining the legislation, which could, following review by the Commission, be removed from the statutes. Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director of Natural Capital at the European Commission's Directorate General for the Environment acknowledged the role that accredited zoos play in biodiversity conservation and environmental education, and pointed to the Zoos Directive as a key driver of good practices and high standards in European zoos. The Directive is supported unanimously by EAZA and VdZ Members. EAZA Chair Dr. Thomas Kauffels rightfully pointed out that zoo associations have helped to improve implementation of the Directive through capacity building and accreditation programmes which aim to improve continually levels of animal welfare, conservation impact, research, education and communications.

Efforts by accredited zoos to increase their capability in these areas have not gone unnoticed by authorities across Europe. Dr. Elsa Nickel, Director General for Nature Conservation at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety paid tribute to these efforts: "We are proud to have strong and competent zoos on our side, which have helped us to successfully list endangered species in the CITES<sup>1</sup> and CMS frameworks." Kira Mileham, Director of Partnerships at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission (IUCN SSC), stressed that the significant results of accredited zoos working to fulfill and surpass the terms of the Zoos Directive are sometimes overlooked by the general public: "We genuinely believe that the work of zoos under the Directive should be a source of pride to the communities that host them – without zoos and the services they provide, conservation of species would be considerably less effective," she said.

The EU Commission is expected to decide on the future of the EU Zoos Directive early in 2018. EAZA and VdZ call on the Commission to recognize the value of the Directive in maintaining high standards of animal care and welfare, public education, scientific research and species conservation, and to retain it in its current version in European law.

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species and Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals respectively: UN sanctioned measures to reduce human impact on wildlife conservation.

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**About EAZA:**

The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria is a conservation organisation that brings together over 400 progressive zoos, aquariums and other partners to collaborate on the protection and conservation of nature, research and education. With Members in 45 countries across Europe and the Middle East, EAZA is also active in advocating for nature with local, national, and regional governments, and is a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the world's largest conservation coalition.