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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 123 of the Rules of Procedure
on the silent slaughter of rhinoceros in southern Africa

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Written declaration on the silent slaughter of rhinoceros in southern Africa

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas, for years, various African countries have seen the silent slaughter of rhinoceros by unscrupulous poachers, who are the ‘tip of the iceberg’ of criminal organisations specialising in the smuggling of animal horns and skins,
 - B. whereas there are now 18 000 rhinoceros in Africa, compared with 65 000 in 1970, and whereas illegal hunting has reached record levels in 2010, putting rhinoceros in danger of extinction,
 - C. whereas the value of rhinoceros horns incites smuggling, especially to countries such as China and Vietnam, where they are prized for their great medicinal virtues, and to the Middle East, where the ivory is used to make costly dagger handles,
 - D. whereas, notwithstanding the establishment of protected parks, it takes poachers just a few minutes – using well-tested methods – to drug the animals and remove their precious horns with a chain saw,
1. Calls on the Commission and the Council to:
 - recognise that the impact of speculative poaching is absolutely tragic for African nature reserves,
 - identify ways of putting a stop to the slaughter by providing training for local staff with a view to setting up anti-poaching units able to reduce the drastic spread of this problem;
 2. Calls for consideration to be given to the possibility of introducing financial support measures;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the parliaments of the Member States.