

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2619/09
by Mojca Drčar Murko (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Directive 1999/22/EC, relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos: lack of implementation, enforcement and compliance

Articles 2 and 4 of Directive 1999/22/EC¹ require the competent authorities in the Member States to take appropriate steps to ensure all zoos, as defined, are licensed and regularly inspected and further, are in compliance with the requirements of Article 3 of the Directive. This requirement now applies to all Member States.

It is my understanding, from information provided by ENDCAP, a pan-European coalition of NGOs which aims to raise welfare standards for wild animals in captivity in Europe, that the competent authorities in some Member States have been failing to license and properly inspect their zoos and have therefore been placing not just the animals in their care at risk, but also the visiting public. This is deeply concerning.

Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of definitions as to what constitutes a 'zoo' and/or 'wild animal', the stipulated requirements and, in some cases, a lack of interest appear to contribute to this situation. It is also my understanding that many Member States do not maintain an accurate record of the number of zoos and may not be fully aware as to how many there in fact are in their country.

Can the Commission inform the Parliament which Member States have yet to fully comply with the requirements of Directive 1999/22/EC and what the Commission is doing to ensure their compliance is a priority?

Does the Commission not agree that more needs to be done to fully understand why some Member States and competent authorities have yet to ensure compliance with the requirements of Directive 1999/22/EC and, further, why zoos (as defined) are not licensed and inspected on a regular basis but are still open to the public?

Will the Commission not consider revising Directive 1999/22/EC to include greater clarification of the requirements and definitions, and to ensure animals in zoos are kept in the best conditions possible?

¹ OJ L94, 9.4.1999, p. 24.