

**Question for written answer E-000168/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: The Zoos Directive in Lithuania

Since 2018, an unusual number of species (more than 130) protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) have died in Lithuanian zoos, and more than 50 CITES-protected species have disappeared from zoos without any attempts by the competent authorities to investigate potential trafficking in wild animals or their body parts.

92 % of the animals in the six licensed zoos in Lithuania are exotic and primarily kept for entertainment purposes (e.g. tiger cub petting or dolphin shows). None of the zoos comply with the Zoos Directive or with the national laws in force. They do not carry out public education initiatives or participate in scientific research to contribute to the protection of endangered wildlife, as required by EU law and for countries who ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Welfare conditions are grossly violated and animal health and life are seriously compromised.

The Lithuanian Ministry of Environment has failed to monitor zoo licence requirements. In some zoos not a single inspection has been carried out since their licence was issued in 2012. This has been confirmed in an official response from the Ministry.

Is the Commission aware of these shortcomings? If so, what initiative(s) will it take to ensure the proper enforcement of the Zoos Directive in Lithuania?

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