Question for oral answer O-000064/2021
to the Commission
Rule 136
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Subject: An EU ban on the use of wild animals in circuses

Wild animals in circuses are forced to behave in ways never seen in nature and although some of
these animals have been bred in captivity for many generations, they still exhibit the behaviour typical
of animals in the wild. The welfare of wild animals in circuses is always severely compromised.

Most Member States take the view that the use of wild animals in circuses has no educational or
cultural value and may in fact have a negative impact on the public’s perceptions of and respect for
wild animals. 23 Member States have already adopted a total or partial ban on their use.

Health controls for the movement of circus animals between Member States should be applied
through Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/2035 supplementing Regulation (EU)
2016/429. However, studies show that it is difficult to carry out controls with regard to the health, trade
and possession of wild animals in circuses. Furthermore, the use of endangered species undermines
international efforts to end illegal trade and poaching. Since circuses are not only on the move for
much of the time, but also change their names, it is difficult to monitor the births and deaths of
captive-bred protected animals such as tigers.

Finally, the use of wild animals in circuses regularly leads to accidents involving animal tamers, circus
employees and the public.

In line with the definition provided by Article 4(1) of the Services Directive, travelling circuses are
classified as a service, which the EU legislators have the competence to regulate pursuant to Article
114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Does the Commission intend to introduce a ban on the use of wild circus animals in the EU in order to
ensure that the exposure to the risks of the illegal wildlife trade and risks to public health and security
are uniformly mitigated across the Member States and to assist with the enforcement of national
restrictions for the majority of Member States that already apply them?

Submitted: 11.10.2021
Lapses: 12.1.2022

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1 https://media.4-paws.org/4/1/e/b/41eb3113a32239fa6ca2405f610c22fd86a4b23/Report_Europes-second-class-tigers_EN_FP-2020_1.pdf