

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Commissioner Dimas
DG Environment
The European Commission
200 Rue de la Loi
B1049 Brussels,
Belgium

February 6th 2007

Dear Commissioner,

I write with reference Council Directive 1999/22/EC, concerning the keeping of wild animals in zoos.

I recently raised concerns with Commissioner Rehn about Bulgaria's failure to implement this legislation and have since learnt that the same appalling animal abuses are a problem in Romania. A copy of my letter to Commissioner Rehn is attached, for information, as I would also welcome your comments in relation to both new member states.

I am currently anxious to learn more about the scope of Directive 1999/22/EC, as a constituent has brought a horrific case to my attention. Whilst on holiday in Sofia, she visited the Tzum department store and was shocked to discover that an 8 month old, female, Siberian tigress is currently being kept in a glass cage in the store, as a tourist attraction. Apparently, although the tigress is 'owned' by Tzum, Sofia zoo provides veterinary care and advice, and she will be 'given' to the zoo when she turns one year old. The Born Free Foundation, who work worldwide to protect wild animals, have had limited success in finding out whether or not the department store has a license to keep a tiger in an enclosure in this way. They also advise me that they are very worried about the tigress's welfare, as she does not have access to fresh air or natural light and is kept in far from satisfactory conditions.

I am aware that Bulgaria has until 2009 to meet all the requirements of the Directive and am calling on you to use this time to urgently address this matter with the Bulgarian authorities. I would appreciate clarification as to whether or not the terms of Directive 1999/22/EC applies to animals kept in captivity in this way and, if not, whether the Commission has any plans to introduce such legislation. I would also be most grateful if you could inform me of the current licensing procedure that Tzum has presumably had to follow and if this will be affected in any way by EU membership.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.