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Dear Mr Parish,

Thank you very much for your letter of 26 February 2008.

I would like to thank you for your interest and efforts to support the application of EU environmental policy as regards species conservation. I take this issue very seriously and fully support the objectives of conservation and protection of wild animals in their natural habitat, as well as a high level of animal welfare for animals in captivity.

The Commission is monitoring EC-legislation, such as Council Directive 1999/22/EC, to ensure that it is properly transposed into national legislation and implemented. In case of a complaint, the Commission services will examine the case and, if necessary, legal action will be taken against the Member State not respecting the rules. I would like to reassure you that the Commission will do its utmost to ensure the implementation of the EU acquis in this regard.

It is worth recalling that it was in July 1991 that the Commission first made a proposal for a Council Directive on Zoos. This proposal was examined by the Council and in June 1994 on the basis of the subsidiarity principle it was decided to replace the proposal for a Directive by one for a Council Recommendation, as binding legislation was no longer considered appropriate. However, the importance attached to this issue by the European Parliament led to their repeated calls for the adoption of a Directive rather than a Recommendation. In 1998 the Council achieved consensus on a text for a Directive and finally this was adopted on the 29th March 1999. After such a long and difficult passage, it is now important to see that the directive is successfully implemented.

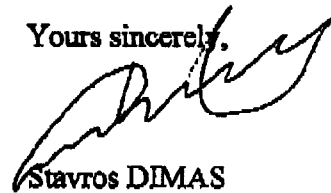
Mr Neil Parish
Member of the European Parliament
President of the Intergroup on the Welfare & Conservation of animals
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The Commission therefore is of the view that before considering a revision of the Zoo Directive it is necessary to enhance transposition, implementation and enforcement by Member States of this legislation. In this context the Commission may, however, examine possibilities to undertake an evaluation of the implementation and the effectiveness of the Zoo Directive at a later stage.

Finally, the Commission is interested in working together with experts and stakeholders on these issues of common interest. I would be grateful to receive the evidence compiled by ENDCAP in relation to the implementation the Zoo Directive in order to examine it.

I trust you find this information useful. Please feel free to pass this letter on to Mr Turner as well.

Yours sincerely,



Stavros DIMAS