



Animal protection and wildlife conservation organizations applaud European Parliament defence of endangered animals

Strasbourg, France, 10th February 2010 – The future for some of the world’s most threatened animals may become a little less precarious thanks to the European Parliament. The Parliament sent a strong message that Europeans want more protection for threatened species such as polar bears, sharks and bluefin tuna and that protection must be maintained for threatened species such as elephants and crocodiles.

Leading animal protection and wildlife conservation movement organisations congratulated the European Parliament for reflecting the desires of millions of European citizens to increase protection for threatened species in 2010, which has been declared the International Year of Biodiversity by the United Nations. The support for endangered animals came as part of a strong Motion for a Resolution on the EU’s strategic objectives for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

“We especially welcome the Parliament’s support for the United States’ proposal to transfer the polar bear to Appendix I”, said Joanna Swabe, EU Director of Humane Society International (HSI). “A ban on the commercial trade in polar bear parts and products, such as bear skin rugs, will help to reduce pressures on populations already threatened by habitat loss through climate change. We therefore strongly urge the European Commission and Member States to follow the European Parliament’s lead and support the proposal to uplist this endangered species”.

The European Parliament’s stance on the ivory trade was also applauded. As Lesley O’Donnell, EU Director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) noted, “the Parliament’s steadfast rejection of proposals to downlist African elephant populations from CITES Appendix I to Appendix II and permit limited sales in ivory sends a strong signal to all parties to CITES. Five years ago Chad had over 4000 elephants. Due to rampant poaching less than 600 remain after another ten were slaughtered last month. There is a link between one-off sales and poaching and in order to stop the poaching we must maintain the moratorium on ivory trade.”

In addition, the Parliament was also particularly praised by the animal protection and wildlife conservation movement for its support of Monaco’s proposal to transfer the Northern bluefin tuna to Appendix I. “This proposed amendment to the CITES treaty is vital given that the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) has consistently failed to take sufficient measures to protect this species”, said Daniela Freyer, European Coordinator of the Species Survival Network (SSN). “A listing on CITES Appendix I is therefore seen as the last, best and only hope for survival for the Northern bluefin tuna”.

The European Parliament’s Resolution strongly reflects the EU animal protection and wildlife conservation movement’s and EU citizens’ concerns regarding the international commercial trade in endangered species. The European Commission and EU Member States are therefore urged to take the Parliament’s opinion into account when formulating a common EU position on proposals to amend CITES at the COP15 meeting in Doha next month.

Notes

Eurogroup for Animals, Humane Society International (HSI), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), CEEweb for Biodiversity and the Species Survival Network (SSN) collectively represent the

interests of tens of millions of EU citizens concerned with the welfare and protection of (wild) animals.

[CITES](#) (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

Contact details:

Borys Kala
chair of CITES Working Group
CEEweb for Biodiversity
www.ceeweb.org
borys@salamandra.org.pl
tel. +48 61 662 86 06

Adrian Hiel
Press Officer
International Fund for Animal
Welfare
ahiel@ifaw.org
tel. +32 (0) 473 86 34 61

Dr Joanna Swabe
EU Director
Humane Society International
jswabe@hsi.org
tel. +31 651 317 004 (gsm)

Daniela Freyer
European Coordinator
Species Survival Network
www.ssn.org
daniela.freyer@prowildlife.de
tel. +49 (0) 89 81299 507

Martyn Griffiths
Press and Publication Officer
Eurogroup for Animals
m.griffiths@eurogroupforanimals.org
tel. +32 2 740 08 23