



EAZA MANIFESTO 2024

How progressive zoos and aquariums
can help you develop and deliver
policy and legislation

EAZA IS ADDRESSING THIS MANIFESTO TO MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OTHER POLICY LEADERS IN EUROPE AND BEYOND, WHO ARE FACED WITH DECISIONS ABOUT NATURE, SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN FORCES WITH US IN

- 1** **CONNECTING CITIZENS WITH NATURE**
- 2** **SAFEGUARDING A FUTURE FOR EUROPEAN AND NON-EUROPEAN ANIMAL SPECIES**
- 3** **LINKING GLOBAL GOALS WITH LOCAL PRIORITIES**
- 4** **FOSTERING COLLABORATION AND SHARING EXPERTISE ACROSS EUROPE AND BEYOND**

EAZA IS CALLING ON YOU TO

A **ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF NATURE CONSERVATION FRAMEWORKS**

Global Biodiversity Framework, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, EU Nature Restoration Law and EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking.

B **RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY AND RESILIENT ECOSYSTEMS, RESTORED BIODIVERSITY WITH THRIVING WILDLIFE SPECIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

because of their intrinsic value but also because they help Europe tackle geopolitical, social and economic challenges and prepare for future uncertainties.

C **SUPPORT FULL AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF EU ZOOS DIRECTIVE AND RELATED NATIONAL LAWS**

to maximise the contribution of zoos and aquariums to nature conservation while ensuring appropriate conditions for animals in their care.

ABOUT EAZA

EAZA, the **European Association of Zoos and Aquaria**, is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1992, connecting **440 Member institutions** across 47 countries in Europe, including all EU Member States except Cyprus and Malta, in Western Asia and beyond.

EAZA sets **progressive standards** and facilitates the collaboration of accredited Member zoos, aquariums and their partners in animal care and welfare, science-based species conservation, research and education. EAZA Members welcome around **148 million visits** every year.

At EAZA's core is **joint management of animal populations** in EAZA *Ex Situ* Programmes (EEPs). Through the EEPs, EAZA contributes to the conservation of species and their genetic diversity and maintains a network of conservation

partnerships, based on the mutual sharing of knowledge, skills and expertise.

EAZA is dedicated to ensuring **good animal health and welfare**. Members' assessments of animal welfare are checked during EAZA accreditation, endorsed by the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria (WAZA) as meeting the **global benchmark** for animal welfare evaluation.

EAZA is a longstanding member of WAZA and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is an observer NGO in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), is an **active stakeholder in EU policy**, and works with numerous partners towards fulfilment of its mission and vision.



Conservation education in practice | photo: Dublin Zoo (Ireland)

CONNECTING CITIZENS WITH NATURE

MAKING NATURE PART OF THE SOLUTION
FOR A MORE RESILIENT EUROPEAN SOCIETY
STARTS WITH CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE.

EAZA AND ITS MEMBERS ARE YOUR VITAL PARTNERS IN:



RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EMPOWERING PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR

EAZA has decades-long expertise in fostering **empathy for the natural world**, educating millions of citizens about the importance of biodiversity and enriching the conservation education programmes in their countries. Along with national parks, botanic gardens and other partners, zoos and aquariums were recognised for this role in the **EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030**.

EAZA Member zoos and aquariums are visited by people of all ages and backgrounds. Most of the visitors live in urban areas: our Members give them a unique opportunity to learn about and **contribute to the conservation** of native and European and non-European biodiversity.



IMPROVING HUMAN HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Visiting EAZA zoos and aquariums offers a break from daily stress, promoting recreation and well-being through **encounters with nature**, in a professionally managed setting. This important role is recognised globally, with initiatives like doctors in Toronto (Canada) prescribing zoo visits to improve mental health.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted just how valued EAZA members are to their communities. During lockdowns, when 95% of Members had to close, there was a strong public push for their reopening, with supporters donating millions of euros to animal care. Once they reopened, our Members experienced a surge in visitor numbers, which underlines their role as **safe and cherished green and blue havens**.



Conservation education in action
photo: Orientarium Zoo Łódź (Poland)

→ SUPPORTING NATIONAL AND LOCAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROWTH

EAZA members significantly **impact local and national economies** as employers and tourist attractions. In 2019, they added €3 billion to the economy. They benefit from public and private investments, donations and funds, including LIFE and other EU grants.

As one of EAZA's joint strategic goals, we support Members in reducing their environmental footprint and becoming sustainable organisations, aligned with the EU's and their individual countries' ambitions.

STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT

Not only the steady post-pandemic rebound in visitor numbers, but also representative public opinion polls confirm **strong approval for zoos and aquariums among Europeans**.

For example, a 2020 Forsa study showed that four in five Germans (82%) and Austrians (81%) welcomed the presence of zoos in their countries. Equally many (82% in Germany, 79% in Austria) agreed with zoos being supported from public funds. A vast majority are also convinced that the conservation of biological diversity is a key mission of zoos, both by breeding of threatened species (93% in Germany and 94% in Austria) and through actions outside the zoo (91% of Germans, 92% of Austrians). This sentiment is echoed throughout Europe. A recent YouGov survey found that 82% of Irish and 77% of British respondents said that zoos and aquariums in their countries made crucial contributions to conservation.

Sources: *The Germans and Their Zoos* – Results of a Forsa Study 2020, *The Austrians and Their Zoos* - Results of a Forsa Study 2020, YouGov UK & Ireland Public Sentiment Survey 2022

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EAZA MEMBER ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS

440 MEMBER INSTITUTIONS



ACROSS **47** COUNTRIES

A map on the EAZA website will help you localize the EAZA Members in your constituency

148,000,000

ANNUAL VISITS TO EAZA MEMBER ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS



25,000,000 (17%)

VISITS FROM ABROAD

Foreign zoo visitors are most prominent in cities that are popular **hotspots of international tourism**, and in **border regions**.

AT EAZA'S CORE IS JOINT MANAGEMENT OF ANIMAL POPULATIONS IN EEPs

(EAZA EX SITU PROGRAMMES)

Through the EEPs, EAZA contributes to the conservation of species and their genetic diversity and maintains a **network of conservation partnerships**.



ZOO AND AQUARIUM OWNERSHIP MODELS

36%

OWNED BY MUNICIPALITIES

46%

PRIVATELY OWNED

18%

CHARITY-BASED

65% OF EAZA MEMBER ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS ARE BASED IN CITIES

EVERY YEAR EAZA MEMBERS GENERATE
€ 3 BILLION 
OF ADDED VALUE INTO THE ECONOMY

PROVIDING WORK TO **46,600** PEOPLE, EMPLOYING **31,500** STAFF AND SUPPORTING **15,100** JOBS INDIRECTLY



READ MORE ABOUT EAZA MEMBERSHIPS ON OUR WEBSITE



EAZA CONSERVATION CAMPAIGNS

EAZA's vision "**Progressive zoos and aquariums saving species together with you**" aims to include all citizens in our efforts, both through outreach by Members and through activities coordinated jointly: most notably, our EAZA Conservation Campaigns. **Fifteen have taken place since 2000, mobilizing the support of millions of Europeans.** Those that had a fundraising focus collected more than

€5 million of vital conservation funding for more than 140 projects.

EAZA campaigns have also catalysed **regulatory change**, starting with the EU recognising negative environmental impacts of bushmeat trade as a result of the EAZA Bushmeat Campaign, and to an increased CITES focus on songbirds thanks to the EAZA Silent Forest Campaign.

EUROPEAN CARNIVORE CAMPAIGN

The EAZA **European Carnivore Campaign** (2008-2010) promoted steps needed for living together with wildlife in Europe. It supported conservation projects for **iconic species such as the Iberian lynx or the European mink**. It collected 30,000 signatures on a petition against the illegal use of poison to control predators, a practice that has a major negative impact on the conservation of threatened carnivores.

APE CAMPAIGN

The EAZA **Ape Campaign** (2010-2011) not only raised €535,000 for great ape conservation projects, but also engaged citizens and policymakers towards informed consumer choices. The campaign advocated for an obligation to explicitly **label products with palm oil** as such, and not "vegetable oil" (an obligation which the EU introduced in 2014). EAZA's work on solutions regarding palm oil and imported deforestation continues to this day.

BUSHMEAT CAMPAIGN

The EAZA **Bushmeat Campaign** (2000-2001) was a partnership with IFAW which engaged 170 participating institutions and gathered **1.9 million signatures** under one of the biggest petitions ever submitted to the European Parliament. As a result, the EU recognised the importance of the bushmeat problem in relation to wildlife conservation, food security and human health. The campaign had a key role in the EU's granting €3.4 million to the Great Ape Survival Project (UNEP-GRASP).

SILENT FOREST CAMPAIGN

The EAZA **Silent Forest Campaign** (2018-2019) was aligned with the **EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking**. Together with IUCN SSC Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group, Birdlife International and TRAFFIC, we drew attention to threatened songbirds in Asia where illegal trade is causing massive declines in populations. Among the many accomplishments, EAZA led on a resolution against Asian songbird trafficking which was adopted by IUCN, and helped secure a stronger CITES focus on key songbird species.

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SAFEGUARDING A FUTURE FOR EUROPEAN AND NON-EUROPEAN ANIMAL SPECIES

THE EAZA NETWORK IS DEDICATED TO CONSERVATION OF WILD SPECIES IN HUMAN CARE (*EX SITU* CONSERVATION), ALONG WITH OTHER VITAL CONTRIBUTIONS: DONATING FUNDS AND STAFF TIME TO FIELD PROJECTS, CAPACITY BUILDING, ADVOCACY, AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE AS PART OF THE IUCN RED LISTING PROCESS.

EAZA IS YOUR PARTNER IN THE CONSERVATION OF SPECIES AND GENETIC DIVERSITY THROUGH:



INTEGRATING SPECIES CONSERVATION IN NATURAL HABITATS AND IN HUMAN CARE

Modern zoos maintain viable animal populations in human care, rather than acquiring animals from the wild. In Europe, this is enabled by the **EAZA Ex Situ Programmes** (EEPs, see the box for definition of “*ex situ*”). They help meet the requirement of the Convention on Biological Diversity for conservation to also be carried out outside the species' natural habitats. With EEPs existing over 30 years, the EAZA community has built ample expertise in animal care and welfare, management of small populations, reintroductions and other aspects that can

boost the conservation of European and non-European species.

Zoos in the European Union have experience in caring for 49% of EU's terrestrial vertebrate species (i.e., mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians) which includes 39% of all EU threatened or regionally extinct species.

EEPs, currently covering over 500 species, **connect *ex situ* conservationists with field partners and authorities**, following a jointly agreed strategy, in line with IUCN's One Plan Approach to conservation. They serve as insurance populations, and support conservation through direct actions as well as through education and research. By preserving genetically diverse populations, **EEPs help**



Bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*)
Photo: Alpenzoo Innsbruck (Austria)

**BETWEEN 2019 AND 2023,
EAZA MEMBERS DEDICATED
€ 159 MILLION AND 684,000
STAFF HOURS TO FIELD
CONSERVATION PROJECTS
WORLDWIDE.**



Find the projects on
EAZA Conservation
Map on our website.

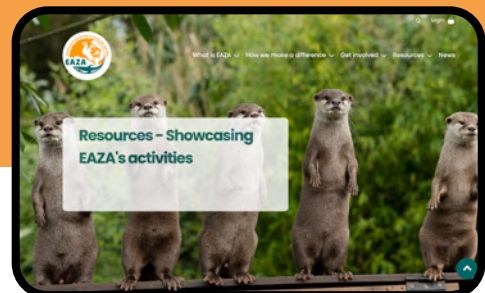


prevent extinction while natural habitats
are restored and protected.

Where possible and appropriate, EEPs
strengthen wild populations through
rewilding. The waldraap ibis (*Geronticus
eremita*), the bearded vulture (*Gypaetus
barbatus*) and the Montseny brook newt
(*Calotriton arnoldi*) are just a few examples of
European species whose wild populations were
boosted with EEP animals in the past decade.

**EAZA advocates for better integration of
ex situ and *in situ* conservation efforts**, to
ensure timely and effective application, rather
than the too-common last-minute use of *ex
situ* tools, when extinction is imminent. We
also emphasise the value of preserving genetic

diversity in wild species, having successfully
advocated for this to be included in the Global
Biodiversity Framework and the European
Council's response to the EU Biodiversity
Strategy.



→ FIGHTING AGAINST WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

EAZA takes a strong stance **against illegal, unsustainable, unsafe and unethical wildlife trade**, which impacts species survival and conservation work globally. Our mandate in this area is based on EEP principles and EAZA's rules on animal transfers which protect the animals within our care from commercial exploitation.

EAZA Members work with CITES authorities to combat trafficking (for which, unfortunately, the EU is also a prominent market), offer training,

help identify seized species and rehome thousands of confiscated animals, providing care and rehabilitation. These actions support the Global Biodiversity Framework and **align with the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking**, aiming for improved coordination of rescue efforts and of care for seized wildlife.

Trade often features in in EAZA Conservation Campaigns. Silent Forest was a prime example of a campaign that helped **establish lasting partnerships** for better protection of species against illegal trade. We have also led on IUCN resolutions on songbird crisis, but also tiger trade, successfully integrating these issues into the wider conservation agenda.



Javan green magpie (*Cissa thalassina*) | Photo: CCBC, courtesy of EAZA Silent Forest Group

WHAT IS EX-SITU CONSERVATION?

Although biodiversity worldwide is in rapid decline and in urgent need of help, not all species can be effectively protected in their natural habitats ("*in situ*"). In many cases, the ecosystems are too disrupted, usually through past and ongoing human action, and the local and/or global population of a species may be too small to sustain itself.

Ex situ (literally, "off-site") conservation addresses this challenge by **managing species in human-controlled environments** such as zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens and gene banks. It can act as insurance, buying time and helping to prevent extinction, when action in the natural habitat is not possible or not sufficient, when the wild population steeply declines, or when a catastrophic event occurs. *Ex situ* populations can serve as a **source for reintroductions**, once the wild habitat is safe and suitable. Other roles of *ex situ* conservation include **raising awareness** of environmental issues, building public and political support for conservation actions and providing **knowledge and expertise** that is not available in the field.

Through the **EAZA Ex situ Programmes (EEPs)**, EAZA is contributing to *ex situ* conservation of a number of species, including those covered by the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. The EEPs are a structured system of joint management of animal populations. They are also aided by the EAZA Biobank which stores and secures genetic material.

The **European bison** (*Bison bonasus*) is an iconic example of a species brought back from the brink of extinction thanks to human intervention through *ex situ* conservation. When it was declared extinct in the wild in 1927, due to hunting and habitat loss, fewer than 50 individuals were living in zoos and private parks. Beginning in the 1950s, zoos (today's EAZA Members) and partners have successfully reintroduced the species into protected areas. Today, with a population of around 7000, the European bison is one of conservation's great success stories, even though it still remains "Near Threatened".

As an essential tool for safeguarding threatened biodiversity, *ex situ* conservation is **supported by legislation and science**, including:

- Art. 9 of the **Convention of Biological Diversity** (CBD), mandating *ex situ* measures.
- Target 4 of the **Global Biodiversity Framework**, calling for *in situ* and *ex situ* management actions for the recovery of threatened species.
- Art. 3 of the **EU Zoos Directive**, providing a legal framework for the operations of zoos and aquariums, hence strengthening their role in biodiversity conservation.
- Guidelines on the use of *ex situ* management for conservation of the **IUCN Species Survival Commission**.

Among other roles, *ex situ* conservation is also highlighted in the [IUCN Species Survival Commission Position Statement on the Role of Botanic Gardens, Zoos and Aquariums in Species Conservation](#) from 2023.



European bison (*Bison bonasus*) at Parco Natura Viva (Italy)
photo: Giorgio Ottolini

3

LINKING GLOBAL GOALS WITH LOCAL PRIORITIES

THE SUCCESS OF GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS AND EUROPEAN POLICIES DEPENDS ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION. THROUGH THE LOCAL WORK OF OUR MEMBERS, A NETWORK OF AFFILIATED NATIONAL ZOO ASSOCIATIONS, AND EAZA'S POLICY EXPERTISE, WE ARE YOUR ALLY IN SUPPORTING AMBITIOUS AND PROPERLY APPLIED LEGISLATION.

WE CAN ASSIST YOU AND YOUR COUNTRY'S COMPETENT AUTHORITIES IN IMPLEMENTING:



EU ANIMAL HEALTH LAW AND RELATED LEGISLATION

EAZA's commitment to animal health is guided by the **One Health principle**, linking the health of humans, animals and their shared environment. Members are required to provide high-standard veterinary care, backed by solid disease prevention and management plans. EAZA facilitates the exchange of health data, also extending support to field partners to improve wildlife health in natural habitats.

During the development of the **EU Animal Health Law**, EAZA engaged with the EU to ensure that the zoo perspective was represented. In 2023, EAZA and our close partner European Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians (EAZWV) published **a handbook** to help state veterinarians apply the EU Animal Health Law in zoos, ensuring that high health standards are upheld across Europe.



ANIMAL WELFARE POLICIES

EAZA is committed to setting **high animal welfare standards** and promoting positive welfare of animals, not only in our Member institutions but also through supporting zoos and aquariums which are working towards reaching EAZA's accreditation standards. We share best practice through courses, events and publications, and constantly update our standards with latest welfare science.

EAZA's welfare evaluation meets the **global benchmark** set by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA). We are keen to share our expertise to strengthen animal welfare policies, both nationally and in the areas that are the EU's responsibility, such as welfare of animals in transport.



Noble chafer (*Gnorimus nobilis*) | photo: Copenhagen Zoo (Denmark)

→ EU ZOOS DIRECTIVE (COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 1999/22/EC) AND ASSOCIATED NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Along with raising public awareness and ensuring proper animal care, the EU Zoos Directive requires zoos and aquariums to **contribute to the conservation** of wild animal species through population management and conservation breeding, reintroductions, scientific research and staff training.

In 2018, the EU found the Directive fit for purpose but in need of better **national enforcement**. Being part of EAZA and national zoo associations was reiterated as a factor that helps comply with the Directive. Indeed, EAZA Standards align with the Directive and, in most cases, exceed its requirements.

Improved implementation can help Member States enhance the conservation role of

their zoos and aquariums. The EU's [Good Practices Document](#), available in all EU languages, mentions many EAZA Standards and practices. Building on our experience as zoo legislation stakeholders and as **tutors in zoo inspector trainings**, we are ready to help authorities enhance their zoo licensing and conservation efforts.

EAZA21+

For two years, in 2022 and 2023, the internal EAZA21+ campaign explored the opportunities coming with the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** (in particular Targets 4 and 5) and the **EU Biodiversity Strategy**. It provided EAZA and its Members with toolkits for making a more focused impact in conservation while working in alignment with the relevant national and international conservation strategies and policies.

EU LIFE PROGRAMME

The EU LIFE Programme is an indispensable funding tool for conservation. More and more EAZA Members are involved in LIFE consortia; the fund has also supported EAZA's growth as an organisation.

LIFE helps the EAZA community stay at the forefront of science-based projects that protect and reintroduce species but also foster a harmonious coexistence between humans, wildlife and their shared environments. This underlines the fund's importance not just for EAZA's mission but for Europe's nature in general.



4

FOSTERING COLLABORATION AND SHARING EXPERTISE ACROSS EUROPE AND BEYOND

EAZA MEMBERS ARE DEEPLY ROOTED IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES. AT THE SAME TIME, EAZA'S ACTIVITIES SPAN 47 COUNTRIES, THUS EXTENDING ACROSS MANY CULTURAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND LEGISLATIVE DIMENSIONS.

EAZA IS YOUR ALLY IN:

→ PROVIDING CAPACITY AND TRAINING FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF SKILLS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE ZOO COMMUNITY

Sharing of knowledge is central to EAZA's many events, with the Annual Conference being the biggest and gathering more than 900 experts. We also offer training through the **EAZA Academy**, which has delivered over 150 courses to 3,785 attendees (20% non-members) since 2010. EAZA has also developed an EU-funded **European Professional Zookeeper Qualification Framework**. Following the positive review of the EU Zoos Directive, EAZA also provided training for zoo inspectors as part of an EU effort to enhance implementation.

We give technical assistance to zoos and aquariums striving to meet EAZA Standards and become Members. Much of this support targets **EU's neighbourhood and candidate countries**, helping them prepare to adopt EU legislation, especially the Zoos Directive.

→ COLLABORATION ACROSS BORDERS

Cross-border work is integral to EAZA, particularly in exchanges of EEP animals so that populations remain healthy. Whilst most of these transfers occur within the EU, our Members have also built rich know-how with movements across the external EU border. The UK's withdrawal from the EU increased the proportion of **non-EU Members to 28%**, highlighting the need for efficient management of transfers to and from third countries. Together with national zoo associations, EAZA works closely with the EU and relevant governments towards well-aligned animal transfer rules.

Moreover, EAZA mobilises **international help** in times of crises, such as the COVID-19 outbreak and the conflict in Ukraine. An EAZA Emergency Fund has raised two million Euros, from individuals and organisations all around the world, to **support Ukrainian zoos** in maintaining animal welfare and safety during the war. We are prepared to contribute expertise towards the recovery and reconstruction of zoos and urban areas in Ukraine.



EAZA BIOBANK

Spread across four hubs (Antwerp, Berlin, Copenhagen and Edinburgh), the EAZA Biobank stores more than 22,000 genetic material samples from 900 animal species, donated by more than 250 institutions. The samples are available for a variety of research applications related to conservation, taxonomy, animal health and welfare.

EAZA Biobank sample and freezer | photo: Antwerp Zoo (Belgium)

→ GATHERING DATA AND PROMOTING SCIENCE-BASED RESEARCH

In the past ten years, EAZA Members' **research output has tripled**. EAZA's open-access Journal of Zoo and Aquarium Research (JZAR) serves as a forum for peer-reviewed research papers, reviews, reports, and case studies. We also encourage you to visit the freely available Zoo Science Library, a repository of research with zoo involvement.

EAZA believes that the professional zoo and aquarium community has significant and targeted expertise to offer parliamentarians and other policy leaders in the design and delivery of effective policy and legislation.

For all the actions listed in this document, EAZA is a credible, reliable and constructive policy stakeholder, open to sharing our Members' scientific knowledge and best practice for the benefit of nature and our communities in Europe and beyond.





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EU Transparency Register

058910411877-30

*Twelve national and subregional zoo associations
are EAZA Associate Members and your local partners:*

- AFdPZ, French Zoo Association
- AIZA, Iberian Zoo Association
- APZA, Portuguese Zoo Association
- BIAZA, British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums
- DAZA, Danish Association of Zoos and Aquaria
- MASZ, Hungarian Zoo Association
- NVD, Dutch Zoo Association
- RDPOZiA, Association of Directors of Polish Zoological Gardens and Aquariums
- SAZA/SDF, Swedish Zoo Association
- UCSZOO, Union of Czech and Slovak Zoos
- UIZA, Italian Union of Zoos and Aquariums
- VdZ, Association of Zoological Gardens (of German-speaking countries)

Read the digital Manifesto here



Design & layout

Front cover photo

Back cover photo

Vrije Stijl.com

Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), Michel
d'Oultremont, courtesy of Parc
Animalier Han sur Lesse (Belgium)

Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*),
Alpenzoo Innsbruck (Austria)

