



EAZA interacts with the European Union's policies and processes wherever possible: in 2019, EAZA produced a manifesto for the Parliamentary elections

© Tomasz Rusek

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
ELECTIONS 2019
EAZA MANIFESTO

Progressive zoos and aquariums
working together for nature

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
ELECTIONS 2019
EAZA MANIFESTO

Progressive zoos and aquariums
working together for nature

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
ELECTIONS 2019
EAZA MANIFESTO

Progressive zoos and aquariums
working together for nature

8

REPRESENTATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

As centres for science engagement and species conservation, animal care and welfare, conservation education, and scientific research, EAZA Members are continually seeking ways to improve the work they do and the effects it has on the wider world.

We believe that better outcomes in all of these areas are possible if our community works together with legislators and conservation partners to find the best possible use of its unique talents in the wider national and international policy frameworks; we can also be more effective if those frameworks help support us in our efforts to do better. It is therefore vital that EAZA and individual EAZA Members maintain close relationships and active dialogues with a wide range of stakeholders.

EAZA is not the only zoo and aquarium accreditation body worldwide. We work closely with the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA, based in the USA), the Zoo and Aquarium Association (ZAA, Australasia), and other similar associations to coordinate our work at the global scale. Many EAZA Members are also members of WAZA. This coordinated community has led to the publication of the World Zoo and Aquarium Strategies for Conservation, Conservation Education, Animal Welfare, and Sustainability, and the creation of Global Species Management Plans (GSMP) for *ex situ* conservation of several of the world's most endangered species.

EAZA, its fellow associations and individual EAZA Members are also active at global forums such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The CBD is the principal intergovernmental forum on biodiversity and is responsible for the global strategy of the United Nations to protect it. The CBD global biodiversity framework also includes targets which outline the main areas where countries need to take action, for example on promoting public awareness of biodiversity, or on the protection of habitats. Governments then draw up action plans to meet those targets. The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is the main European action plan, which is implemented locally by national governments and their appointed agencies. Zoos and aquariums play a significant role in

helping countries work towards those targets, so it is also important to act at both EU and national levels to make sure that our voice is heard and our services are included as an integral part of these strategies.

CITES is an international treaty that regulates the trade in endangered species, and which aims to ensure that organisms and the products made from them are protected from over exploitation. Given that zoos and aquariums need to move animals to maintain healthy populations, it is vital that our community not only understands the decisions made for each species, but that they also help shape them so that we achieve the best possible conservation outcomes from the EAZA network.

At the EU level, EAZA maintains an office in Brussels to help establish and maintain relationships with the main branches of the Union: the Parliament, the Council and the Commission. Staff from the EAZA Executive office and EAZA Members also meet regularly with other EU and civil society stakeholders to ensure that we identify areas of common or divergent interest and opinion, and work to find solutions that help the natural world wherever it is touched by the activities of European countries and their citizens. The Brussels office has contributed to consultations on subjects including the assessment and implementation of the EU Zoos Directive, the reform of EU animal health law and regulations for the control of invasive alien species.

EAZA counts among its Members the major national zoo and aquarium associations who engage with legislators and other stakeholders at national and local levels. Many EAZA Members are also members of their national zoo and aquarium association, and this aids a strong coordinated approach. National associations were, for example, very active in securing funding from governments to ensure the continued welfare of animals during the 2020 pandemic crisis and are closely implicated

in local and national strategies for the conservation of biodiversity and the effective education of visitors.

It is not only the big political forums where EAZA is represented. EAZA is a long-time Member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the world's largest conservation organisation, and contributes to the work of several of its specialist commissions including the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). The Species Survival Commission is the commission with which EAZA works most closely. It oversees the work of Specialist Groups (SGs) with a particular focus on specific taxa or activities, from the Antelope Specialist Group to the Asian Songbird Trade Specialist Group. The so called 'Assess, Plan, Act' cycle is a core structure behind the work of the IUCN SSC, that EAZA and its Members are fully embedded under. Various EAZA Members support Red List Authorities that help assess if, and to what extent wild populations are threatened with extinction. EAZA and several EAZA Members are strong contributors to the work of the Conservation Planning Specialist Group, that develops holistic and stakeholder inclusive conservation action plans for those species that are in need for it. The aforementioned Specialist Groups are a key player in this work as well, and experts from EAZA TAGs are members of SGs to contribute to their work (and vice versa). Several EAZA Members also host a Specialist Group, contributing an important resource for their operations. To complete the cycle, EAZA and its Members also contribute to conservation actions both within our zoos and aquariums, through our advocacy work and in the field.

Every four years, IUCN organises the World Conservation Congress, the world's forum for strategizing on species survival, protection of wild areas, lobbying for strong legal protections for nature and so on. EAZA and our Members see ourselves as a vital part of these conservation

conversations by providing scientific expertise and supporting solutions to issues. We are active in the Union at all different levels and are committed to working together as part of the diverse IUCN community.

On top of that, EAZA works in partnership with conservation organisations of a more specialist nature, and we work hard to maintain open channels to help support their work, both directly and via the connections we make in our work with the various national and international bodies. Conservation is by its very nature political, in that helping species survive usually requires human communities to adapt. There are costs involved with conservation, both societally and economically, that must be seen by all stakeholders to be to the long-term advantage of all. Achieving this long-term view and creating the circumstances in which animals and people all benefit means that everyone affected needs to agree. This combined with a holistic view of the global population of a species wherever the animals are present is emblematic of the IUCN SSC's One Plan Approach and EAZA zoos and aquariums, with their experience of stakeholder engagement both in the field and in their home communities, are ideally placed to provide support or leadership to such projects.

Leading in species conservation, animal care and welfare, conservation education, and scientific research requires an active presence at forums of all levels from the municipal to the global. EAZA and its Members continue to commit to lending their voices and expertise to these meetings to help design a future for the world in which people and animals can live together without the constant threat of extinction – just as they commit to the work of carrying out the measures to make sure that that future is possible.

CASE STUDY

SETTING THE STANDARDS FOR THE EU ZOOS DIRECTIVE

One of the reasons why zoo directors founded EAZA's predecessor, the European Community Association of Zoos and Aquaria, and then EAZA itself, was to add a united zoo voice to the political debate about the future of European zoos and their possible contributions and obligations. This debate began in the 1980's, involving the European Parliament, national governments, and animal-related NGOs. Its culminated in 1999 with the adoption of the EU Zoos Directive, through which the EU countries decided to strengthen the role of zoos and aquariums in nature conservation and ensure appropriate housing conditions for the animals. Since then, each zoo in each EU country must hold a licence that is based on this law.

EAZA is mentioned in the Directive as a standard-setter whose guidelines for the care and accommodation of zoo animals can aid the development of national standards. As a relatively short text, the Directive does not prescribe how the Member States should implement it. To fill this gap, the EU has published a 'Good Practices Document' in which EAZA's standards and the practice of many EAZA Members are broadly cited.

EAZA also represented its Members when the European Commission was carrying out a 'fitness check' between 2015 and 2018 to verify that the Directive serves its goals and remains fit for purpose. Our position statements and evidence helped build a strong case in support of the Directive's potential to boost the conservation impact not only of the progressive EAZA Members but of the entire EU's zoo sector.

Following this evaluation, the EU launched a three-year project to help the EU countries implement the Directive more thoroughly. EAZA has been part of this process, too. In trainings and in meetings with government authorities, we have been providing insights from contemporary zoo practice, with topics ranging from conservation, research, education to inspections and compliance with the licensing requirements. This way, the history of EAZA continues to be interwoven with that of the EU Zoos Directive.



EAZA conducts regular study tours for Members in Brussels to learn more about the institutions we work with.

© Tomasz Rusek