



2019 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

IFAW MANIFESTO

A world of peaceful coexistence between species cannot be achieved unless human development and animal welfare agendas ultimately overlap.

: In May 2019, citizens of the European Union (EU) will elect a new European Parliament. The EU has some of the world's highest animal welfare standards with animals recognised as sentient beings in the Lisbon Treaty.

: Animals, both domestic and wild, contribute significantly to human development, and their welfare supports human wellbeing in all its forms, both material and non-material.

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) represent citizens' interests in the EU decision-making process, including calls for improved animal welfare and conservation policies, as well as the allocation of appropriate funding to strengthen the EU's role as a global leader contributing to a better world for animals, people and the planet.

MEPs should ensure the integration of animal welfare and biodiversity protection into EU policy through the implementation of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a strong 8th Environmental Action Programme, a revision of the EU Animal Welfare Strategy, and responsible international trade and multilateral environmental agreements.

IFAW is an animal welfare and conservation organisation that protects animals and the places they call home.

With a holistic approach that links the value of the individual animal to the health of the population and ecosystem at large, we engineer solutions that benefit animals, people and the planet.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) calls on candidates to the European Parliament elections to acknowledge the critical role that ecosystems and animals play, especially considering that European policies can have far-reaching, if not global, impacts. Therefore, we believe the following themes should be on the EU's list of priorities:

WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

Wildlife crime is the fourth largest illegal global trade after drugs, counterfeiting and human trafficking, worth an estimated 8 to 20 billion Euros annually. Trafficking in wildlife is one of the world's most profitable organised criminal activities and even poses a direct security threat in some parts of the world.

The EU is not only a top destination and transit region for illegal wildlife items, but is also an important source region. In response, the EU adopted a five-year Wildlife Trafficking Action Plan in 2016 to address the root causes and

identify measures to combat trafficking more effectively while supporting global efforts. These include funding and diplomacy, along with increasing the capacity of specialised cybercrime units and amending national legislation for wildlife crime to be recognised as a serious crime.

MEPs should ensure that the commitments of the EU Wildlife Trafficking Action Plan remain after 2020 and that Member States adopt national Wildlife Trafficking Action Plans.

IVORY TRADE

Africa's elephants are in crisis and their numbers have dramatically declined, mostly due to poaching for their ivory. Elephant poaching and ivory trafficking will not stop as long as ivory remains legally on sale in markets, auctions, antique shops and on the internet in many EU countries. There is evidence that illegal, new ivory is being sold as antique, which is legal and leads to "ivory laundering" and permit forgery.

EU countries are also used as transit countries to smuggle illegal ivory from elephants poached in Africa to Asia. The Commission's guidance published in May 2017 recommending a suspension in the (re-) export of raw ivory (tusks) was welcome, but insufficient to deal with internal and external trade in worked ivory. The EU as a whole should show leadership by closing down domestic ivory trade as well as banning all exports.

MEPs should encourage the European Commission to adopt stronger measures to forbid all external and intra-EU commercial trade in ivory.





WILDLIFE CYBERCRIME

Every year, EU enforcement authorities seize thousands of shipments including millions of protected wildlife specimens. The picture gets even gloomier when looking at the internet, which is largely unregulated, anonymous, and virtually unlimited in reach, and has become the world's biggest marketplace, offering endless opportunities for criminal activities.

To combat the threat posed by online wildlife traffickers, it is critical that public and private sectors unite to improve coordination and communication between governments, inter-governmental organisations, enforcement agencies, private companies, non-governmental organisations and academics. The Global Wildlife Cybercrime Action Plan brings together critical actors in the fight against online wildlife traffickers: its implementation is critical to defeat such a criminal network.

MEPs should ensure the implementation of the Global Wildlife Cybercrime Action Plan in Europe, with a focus on the allocation of sufficient enforcement resources to detect and prosecute wildlife cybercriminals.

ANIMAL CONFISCATIONS

Wildlife trafficking is not only pushing many species to the brink of extinction, but it also compromises the welfare of animals often trafficked in inhumane conditions to satisfy the demand for live animals. Enforcement authorities face a number of challenges when live animals are confiscated from illegal trade.

The EU and Member States should ensure tools are in place for safeguarding the welfare of confiscated animals through specialised training on humane handling and support of facilities for temporary, and eventually long-term, care of animals if they are unable to be returned to the wild.

MEPs should encourage Member States to strengthen law enforcement capacities, safeguard the welfare of confiscated animals, and both fund and adopt repatriation protocols to, wherever possible, return animals to their natural habitats.

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MEPs FOR WILDLIFE

As a new MEP, we also encourage you to join the cross-party interest group MEPs for Wildlife in the European Parliament, campaigning for the EU to step up the fight against wildlife crime.



IMPACT OF SHIPPING

Cetaceans – whales, dolphins and porpoises – face more diverse and complex conservation and welfare threats today than ever before. Whether fatal or reducing the animals' ability to survive or reproduce, threats such as collisions with ships (known as 'ship strikes'), and underwater noise (man-made ocean noise) must be addressed urgently.

Tragically, whales that are not killed immediately post-collision can suffer from terrible injuries and may have a slow, painful death. Fortunately, solutions exist such as re-routing shipping lanes and adopting speed reduction initiatives resulting in decreased levels of underwater noise, risk of ship strike and greenhouse gas emissions, benefiting cetaceans and the environment as a whole.

MEPs should encourage the EU to address the environmental impact of shipping, such as ship strikes, greenhouse gas emissions and underwater noise, by calling for a reduction in ships' speed and re-routing away from critical habitats.

BYCATCH

The EU and Member States have a series of obligations arising from international laws and agreements to protect marine mammals. The EU has taken some actions to address bycatch (the unintentional catch of non-targeted marine species) but it remains a main threat to cetaceans in EU waters, with several thousand marine mammals affected every year.

Efforts are urgently needed to reinforce and harmonise cetacean bycatch solutions including adequate bycatch monitoring and fisheries data collection.

MEPs should ensure that reducing marine mammal bycatch becomes a main objective when deciding on new fisheries management methods and that legislation is properly developed and implemented.



Founded in 1969, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) is a global non-profit organization that protects animals and the places they call home. With offices in 15 countries and projects in over 40, we rescue, rehabilitate and release animals into secure landscapes around the world. In collaboration with both governments and local communities, our experienced campaigners, legal and political experts, and internationally acclaimed scientists pioneer lasting solutions to some of the most pressing animal welfare and wildlife conservation issues of our time.

For more information

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