

Brussels, 29 June 2009

EU takes legal action against animal suffering in Spanish ZOOS.



Leopard and black panther in Spanish zoo, 2006
(© InfoZoos)

Sonja Van Tichelen, Director of Eurogroup, says:

“EU law is not just a piece a paper. It can mean a big difference for the animals’ welfare. We hope that with the threat of an EU fine, this will push the Spanish authorities to make a difference for the animals kept in Spanish zoos.”

Many people are critical of zoos as it is unlikely that wild animals can behave naturally in captivity. This is especially true for elephants, lions, bears, and other large species. The restricted space and barren enclosures affect them a lot and give the visitors a distorted view of what a wild animal is all about.

If in addition the zoos have no educational programs or do not contribute to conservation of the species they have no place in modern society and should be closed down.

Eurogroup additionally filed a complaint against Portugal and is also concerned about the situation for zoo animals in other member states.

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For more information call Véronique Schmit, Executive Officer Policy at Eurogroup, on 0032 (0)2 7400890 or email her on v.schmit@eurogroupforanimals.org.

Notes:

- By April 2005, the deadline for inspecting and licensing EU zoos, none of the Spanish regions had designated a competent authority and none had adopted rules in order to start the inspection and licensing procedure.
- Approximately 120 zoos are currently operating in Spain. This figure is accepted as a realistic estimate both by officials and NGOs.
- Twelve zoos have already been closed since Eurogroup presented its complaint to the European Commission in October 2006.
- InfoZoos is a platform of NGOs which was created in Spain to specifically address the lack of enforcement of the EU Zoo Directive. Eurogroup for Animals' member ANDA is part of this platform.
- The following reports are available [upon request](#):
 - La salud de los zoos (2006);
 - Investigation into the conditions in zoos in the Spanish Region of Valencia (February 2009, investigation summer 2008);
 - Investigation in Canarias (published October 2008 – investigation carried out early 2008).



Primate in barren enclosure in Valencian zoo (2008 – Copyright InfoZoos)