

Richard Corbett MEP



EUROPEAN ANIMAL WELFARE NEWS



July 2008

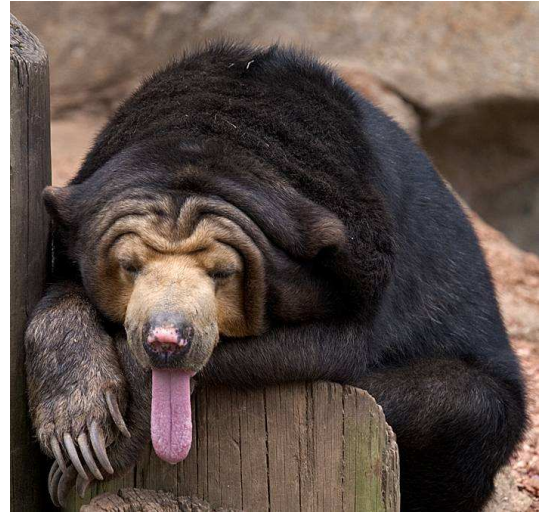


Hello and welcome to my Animal Welfare Newsletter. This has been sent to you as someone who has contacted me to express your concerns on an issue of animal welfare. I hope that this newsletter provides you with information so you can see what the European Parliament and I are doing in working for the protection of animals. I hope that you find this information useful. If you have any queries or comments please contact me at the address below.

Best wishes, Richard

Bear paw soup

I was distressed and disturbed to hear that an extremely cruel and unpleasant tradition has been taking place in Cambodia. Paws are cut from bears, often while still alive, and used as an ingredient in soup. This is despite the fact that these bears are an endangered species and should be protected by the Cambodian authorities. After hearing about this practice, I raised the issue with the EU Commission and requested that this be taken up with the Cambodian authorities as a matter of urgency.



The Commission has informed me that they are aware of this practice and are vehemently opposed to it. They have taken up the issue with the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. From the Commission's enquiries, they have discovered that the practice is diminishing, but that although Cambodia's laws are adequate, and that Sun Bears and Black Bears are included on their list of rare and endangered species, there is a lack of finances available to enforce the law completely. The Commission has ensured me that as part of their Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals, they will continue to address this issue with the Cambodian authorities until hopefully we see an end to bears' paws used in soup.

Richard Corbett, Labour Member of the European Parliament for Yorkshire and Humber

2 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds, LS2 9JG, Phone: 0113 2458978 Fax: 0113 2458992 Email: richard@richardcorbett.org.uk

Bird directive non-compliance in Bulgaria

In 1992, EU governments adopted legislation – the Habitats Directive – designed to protect the most threatened habitats and species across Europe. Along with the 1972 Bird Directive, these two laws form the basis of “Natura 2000”, which is an ecological network of protected areas across Europe. Each member state must compile a list of habitats and species contained in the two directives, and then that area will become a protected “Natura 2000” area.

All new member states must implement the “Natura 2000” legislation, but this turned out to be highly controversial political issue in Bulgaria. As such, the Bulgarian authorities reneged on many of their commitments under the agreement. Because of my concern over the actions of Bulgaria, I have raised a number of questions to the Commission (which is charged with checking that member states apply what they have signed up to) that I believe they need to address urgently. I have raised the following questions and will report back when the Commission replies:

- **Is the Commission aware that in Bulgaria sites which were initially designated Natura 2000 sites are now earmarked for development?**
- **In particular is the Commission aware that the area of Kaliakra, which was initially included in Natura 2000 as a designated Special Protection Area, was then shrunk to a third of the original proposed site to make space for a large wind farm?**
- **Is the Commission aware of the report by the BSPB that states that the placement of a wind farm in this location is 'among the least appropriate sites for wind farm development in Europe' due to the fact that this is one of the main routes of migration for birds crossing from Europe to Africa?**
- **Is the Commission also aware that there are reports from the BSPB that at some Natura 2000 sites, in particular the Yatata Reserve, the Government is failing to properly enforce the Birds Directive to protect the site?**
- **In 2007 the Commission sent a written warning to Bulgaria regarding the failure of the implementation of the Birds Directive. What action does the Commission envisage taking now to put increased pressure on Bulgaria to fully implement Natura 2000 and to ensure that these sites, which are important for the migration of birdlife across Europe, are properly protected?**



Anti-Bullfighting Summit 2008



In reaction to a bullfighting exhibition at the European Parliament held by Spain's pro-bullfighting lobby group, *Mesa del Toro*, 29 animal welfare groups from 12 countries and two continents (Europe & South America) came together in Brussels for the largest anti-bullfighting summit to take place to date. The anti-bullfighting summit took place over two days starting on Wednesday 4th June and finishing on Thursday 5th June at which 80 MEPs signed a life size bull in support of the anti-bullfighting movement.

Animal welfare experts, veterinary scientists and economists joined with politicians to call for bullfighting to be abolished. It has been estimated by Jordi Portabella, of Barcelona City Council, that in the region of €30 million are given in subsidies to Spanish bull breeders every year, some of these subsidies, paid to bullfighting breeders by the Spanish government, comes from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. This simply has to stop.

What is the Animal Welfare Intergroup?

The Animal Welfare Intergroup is an informal group consisting of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from a variety of parties who have a common concern about animal welfare. The group aims to mobilise cross party support for animal welfare and conservation. The group's executive meets every three months to consider which issues they would like the EU to discuss and deliberate on.

The group has had many important successes and helped to obtain a ban on imports of baby seal products into the European Union, and helped to phase out the battery-cage system for laying hens. The work of the Animal Welfare Intergroup is integral to ensuring that the welfare of animals is addressed at a European level, and as a member I will continue to do my utmost to ensure that I and my Labour colleagues continue our work to stop unnecessary cruelty to animals.