



EAZA Statement on the war in Ukraine

Amsterdam, 1 March 2022: The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) is the community of progressive zoological institutions in Europe and West Asia. EAZA's Candidate for Membership programme, which mentors zoos and aquariums seeking to achieve our Standards, includes three zoos in Ukraine: Kyiv Zoo, Kharkiv Zoo and Mykolayiv Zoo. These institutions are as yet, according to the latest information available, still managing to keep staff safe and continue caring for their animals in very difficult conditions initiated by the invasion of Ukraine by Russian government forces; however, neither we nor the zoos themselves can predict how the situation will develop.

EAZA stands with all zoos in Ukraine, their staff and their families, the animals in their care and the communities they serve. Animals and staff of Ukrainian zoos played no part in initiating the conflict, yet these peaceful conservation and education institutions and their animals are acutely vulnerable to the societal chaos caused by war. We condemn the Russian invasion and military aggression in Ukraine and call for Russian armed forces to withdraw immediately from the country; we call on Russian forces and their commanders to respect the peaceful nature of zoos and to avoid any action that would endanger the lives of animal care staff and their families and the animals in their care, and to give a wider commitment to the safety of the Ukrainian people and the preservation of their heritage.

For the moment our Ukrainian Members are not asking for immediate assistance from other Members or from the public, but this may well change. EAZA will therefore work to coordinate communications and fundraising so that the zoos themselves can focus on the immediate situation facing them. EAZA will establish a dedicated fund, will assist individual Members with their own fundraising efforts, and work with the Ukrainian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (UAZA) to ensure that zoos and aquariums receive assistance they need when it is best able to support them.

EAZA was founded on the premise that zoos and aquariums working together can render service to animal species through concerted conservation efforts and the highest possible level of care and welfare at our institutions. Our Members show time and again that they place these values above politics and work together to save species despite serious challenges. We recognize therefore that colleagues working at Russian zoos, including our Members, are not directly responsible for the egregious actions of their President or the abuses visited on the Ukrainian people.

EAZA fully supports the sanctions on Russia put in place by the European Union, United Kingdom and other countries in Europe and across the world. These sanctions effectively exclude Russian zoos from collaborative work with institutions abroad, including the transfer of animals, participation at EAZA events and representation at EAZA Council meetings.

In the meantime, and in the interests of animals and animal populations, we will continue to encourage dialogue between colleagues from Russian and non-Russian zoos regarding animal health and welfare. We reserve the right to revisit this decision at any time, depending on further developments in the region and advice from our Ukrainian Candidates.

We look forward to a swift and peaceful resolution of the conflict.
