Basic information

2022/2809(RSP) RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	Procedure completed
Resolution on improving EU regulations on wild and exotic animals to be kept as pets in the European Union through an EU positive list **Subject** 3.10.04.02 Animal protection 3.70.01 Protection of natural resources: fauna, flora, nature, wildlife, countryside; biodiversity	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
PETI Petitions	MONTSERRAT Dolors (EPP)	15/06/2022
	Shadow rapporteur BERNHUBER Alexander (EPP) MAESTRE Cristina (S&D) MÜLLER Ulrike (Renew) EVI Eleonora (Greens/EFA) ZŁOTOWSKI Kosma (ECR)	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
24/11/2022	Decision by Parliament	T9-0425/2022	Summary
24/11/2022	Results of vote in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2022/2809(RSP)
Procedure type	RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects
Procedure subtype	Debate or resolution on oral question/interpellation
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 233-p2
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PETI/9/09977

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Motion for a resolution		B9-0489/2022	16/11/2022	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0425/2022	24/11/2022	Summary

European Commission			
Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2023)79	22/03/2023	

Resolution on improving EU regulations on wild and exotic animals to be kept as pets in the European Union through an EU positive list

2022/2809(RSP) - 24/11/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on improving EU regulations on wild and exotic animals to be kept as pets in the European Union through an EU positive list.

The Committee on Petitions received several petitions which raise concerns over the welfare and health risks related to the trade in wild and exotic animals in the EU. It called for the adoption of an EU-wide positive list defining the animals that can be kept as pets.

Current information has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic may have emerged from an animal source, which shows that the trade in exotic animals requires greater attention. 70 % of the pathogens that cause diseases in humans are of animal origin and these diseases, known as zoonoses, can be transmitted by domestic or wild animals. There is an urgent need to raise public awareness about the welfare of wild and exotic animals to be kept as pets, including the worrying levels of health, behavioural and veterinary problems encountered.

Lack of harmonisation

National rules imposing restrictions on keeping exotic pets vary widely across the Member States and are, in some cases, contradictory, which makes it extremely difficult for Member States to pursue a coherent policy on this matter at European level. In addition, there are also gaps in the current national laws related to exotic pets. Legal provisions may either ban the keeping of some species of animals (a negative list or blacklist) or only allow some species to be kept (a positive or whitelist), with the negative list being the most commonly used system to regulate the keeping of exotic pets.

The current situation perpetuates existing barriers, fragments the Union’s single market and creates serious differences between those Member States which have a positive list in their legislation and those which do not.

The lack of an EU-wide positive list of animals to be kept as pets undermines the welfare and health of both humans and animals, and poses a threat to biodiversity.

Parliament stated that the EU must enact cohesive legislation that prevents these types of potential diseases which can lead to public health problems.

Positive list

Parliament weighs up the advantages of a European positive list that would regulate the trade in wild and exotic animals and restrict their being kept as pets. It took note of the call by some Member States to establish an EU-wide positive list under appropriate welfare conditions.

The Commission should: (i) carry out an impact assessment of the added value and feasibility of establishing such a list; (ii) launch a study to analyse this issue in the context of the strict and timely implementation of the EU action plan against wildlife trafficking.

Animals included in a positive list must not represent a particular danger for human health, must be easy to handle and must be kept in conditions that respect their essential physiological, ethological and ecological needs. No exotic and wild species of animals should be listed where there are clear indications that, should they escape or be released into the wild, they would be able to survive and consequently represent a risk to native ecosystems, thereby altering the subsistence of the native species themselves by becoming invasive species, once released into the natural environment.