March 2020

EUROPE'S SECOND-CLASS TIGERS

Revealing the out-of-control captive tiger numbers and commercial trade

Captive tigers are rendered second-class tigers as commercial trade is still allowed

Member states do not have an accurate overview of captive tigers which enables illegal trade

Commercial tiger trade undermines international efforts to end illegal trade and poaching

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Summary and recommendations 4

1. National legislation for keeping tigers in captivity 6

2. Problems across the EU 8

2.1 FOUR PAWS investigations and recent developments 8

Malta – lack of overview of big cat population and exploding tiger numbers 8

Lithuania – zoo trader falsifying official papers 9

Spain, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Malta – tiger cubs used for selfies 10

Germany – illegal transport and keeping of a puma in an apartment 12

Austria – illegal transport and keeping of tiger cubs 12

Italy, Poland – illegal transport of 10 tigers from Italy to Russia stopped at Polish border 13

2.2 Incidents reported by the media: Spain, Italy, France, Germany 14

3. Tiger trade and seizures 15

3.1 CITES data regarding legal trade 15

3.2 EU TWIX regarding illegal trade (seizures) 19

3.3 Online advertisements from Germany, Italy, Malta, Spain, & Lithuania 20

4. Unknown numbers of tigers in captivity 21

4.1 Comparison of FOI request numbers with CITES numbers 22

5. Public concern 23

6. Confiscations and rescue 24

7. Conclusions 25

Summary and recommendations

There is a significant disparity in the protection offered to wild tigers and tigers born in captivity. Wild tigers are strictly protected, while the commercial trade in captive tigers is allowed and causes widespread cruelty and fuels an illegal trade. Furthermore, it undermines international efforts in combatting illegal trade and poaching.

The CITES SC70 Inf. 24 report [1], as submitted by the Czech Republic in September 2018 to the CITES Standing Committee, elaborates on the evidence of illegal tiger trade within the Czech Republic and significant seizures taking place at Prague airport of tiger parts and derivatives. In 2018, FOUR PAWS conducted several months of investigations into commercial tiger businesses throughout the EU and provided Czech authorities with footage of tiger trader and breeder Ludvik Berousek in a conversation with an Asian tiger trader who expressed interest in buying European tigers for his business in China.

In 2019 FOUR PAWS continued its investigations covering other EU member states such as Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Spain to illustrate that illegal tiger trade is not only a problem for the Czech Republic.

FOUR PAWS' research also included the submission of Freedom of Information requests to 28 EU member states[2] and eight neighbouring countries in an attempt to obtain the numbers of captive tigers, information on what kind of facilities they reside in, and whether there is any obligation to centrally report the births and deaths of the animals. The research period lasted from June to October 2019 and only 17 countries (of which 13 EU member states) replied with numbers, nine did not reply at all, and 10 replied but were unable to provide numbers. The authorities that did respond report a total of 913 captive tigers. These numbers do not depict the reality since 19 countries (of which 15 EU member states) were unable to share numbers. Through media reports, observations by FOUR PAWS and intelligence from local partners it is clear that the actual number of captive tigers in Europe is much higher. Also, the results from the Freedom of Information requests showed serious discrepancies when compared to data from CITES Report SC70 Doc. 51, Annex 2 (Rev.1) *Review of facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity* (2018). The system of microchipping and TRACES registers has proven ineffective as authorities still do not know the numbers of tigers in their jurisdiction. It became clear from the data and qualitative research that the authorities in the majority of EU member states do not have knowledge and/or do not keep records related to tiger numbers. Unfortunately, this does not withhold authorities from allowing commercial trade in tigers and tiger products to continue, as illustrated in this report with trade data from the CITES database between 2014-2018. The following permits were issued for live tigers:

- 43 import permits including 5 permits with CITES code 'T' for commercial purposes, and
- 181 export permits including 48 permits with the commercial code.

Although contrary to CITES decisions, member states still issue permits with the commercial code for tiger products as well:

- 81 import permits for tiger parts and derivatives, including 16 permits for commercial purposes, and
- 58 export permits for tiger parts and derivatives, including 46 permits for commercial purposes.

The research was complemented with evidence of online advertisements offering tigers and lions for sale, and an extensive list of incidents with big cats across Europe to illustrate the risk to public safety and cruelty towards the animals.

The lack of registration, along with a lack of central recording and data sharing for tracing the movements of live tigers within Europe, enables illicit traders to operate without much constraint. The EU TWIX data for 2014-2018 revealed that 18 live tigers and 1,804 parts and derivatives were seized by national enforcement authorities. The acceptance of a widespread commercial trade in (largely unregistered) captive tigers renders the captive-born tiger a 'second-class tiger' as it is not offered the same protection as wild tigers. This goes beyond even the ethical issue of animals' lives being sacrificed for entertainment or for use in such products as tiger bone wine. This is also a matter of survival for the species in the wild, as the relentless demand for tiger (and other big cat) products also increases poaching of wild tigers [3,4]. The European public strongly supports stricter measures with 91% of respondents from seven member states in favour of banning tiger trade according to a poll undertaken by Kantar Public in 2018. The EU should take proper action as part of the European Commission's EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking (EU WTAP) to which it signed up in 2016. Ending the commercial trade in tigers would be a crucial and much-needed move.

1 https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/Inf/E-SC70-Inf-24.pdf
2 At the time of this research the United Kingdom was still a member of the European Union.
3 https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/telling-numbers-wildlife-crime-cases-last-year-over-20-were-about-leopards-6154610/
4 https://www.thestar.com.my/news/focus/2019/12/29/feature-with-fewer-than-200-tigers-left-malaysia-is-facing-a-crisis?fbclid=IwAR24c-3zjBc8jbSjlMZm6hWARavW9gwOo7ckg-iNa2Lxd1YEr4qKMELmcu8#.XghPoxIwGcg.facebook

Recommendations

FOUR PAWS asks for the following measures to be taken:

1

The issuing of a Commission guidance document as a priority first step recommending that EU member states suspend the export and re-export of live tigers and tiger parts or derivatives, except in cases where it is amply clear that the permit will be used for legitimate purposes, as when:

a) live tigers are moved as part of the breeding and conservation programmes of zoological institutions such as EEP (European Endangered Species Programme), SSP (American Species Survival Plan), ASMP (Australasian Species Management Program) or GSMP (Global Species Management Plans) for non-commercial purposes and not to any facility, business, individual who is/was affiliated to or associated with a facility, business or individual implicated in either legal or illegal trade in tigers (live), their parts or derivatives.

b) live tigers are moved with the intention of rescue by officially registered and monitored sanctuaries under the condition that the animals do not reproduce and are kept in species-appropriate enclosures.

c) items are moved where:

i. the item is part of a genuine exchange of cultural or artistic goods between reputable institutions (i.e. museums);

ii. the Management Authority of the Member State concerned is satisfied that the item is a recognised piece of art and is confident that its value makes it certain that it will not be used for other purposes;

iii. the item has not been sold and is an heirloom moving as part of a family relocation or as part of a bequest; or

iv. the item is part of a bona fide research project.

This guidance document should also include Identification and Registration guidance.

This measure should be taken as a first preparatory step and should be followed by:

2

A comprehensive ban on all intra-EU and external commercial trade in live tigers and tiger parts or derivatives (imports, exports and re-exports) with derogations as mentioned under 1.

1. National legislation for keeping tigers in captivity

The breeding and trading of captive tigers for commercial purposes goes against the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) recommendations, which the European Union (EU) has consistently supported. However, throughout the EU it is legal to breed and commercially trade in captive tigers, and member states continue to import and export live tigers and tiger parts registered under the CITES code of commercial trade.

Wild tigers (*Panthera tigris*) are categorised as an Appendix I species within the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) framework which prohibits commercial trade and aims to ensure that the legal trade of live tigers, parts and derivatives has no implications on the survival of the species. However, the reality is that the relentless demand for tigers to be displayed commercially, and for their body parts to be used as luxury goods and in traditional medicine, has resulted in a lucrative commercial trade and subsequent illegal trade within and out of the EU.

The constant movement of mobile circuses makes it difficult (if not impossible) to monitor the births and deaths of tigers. These difficulties facilitate the illicit trade of tigers in the EU and demonstrate the lack of control and protection they are offered.

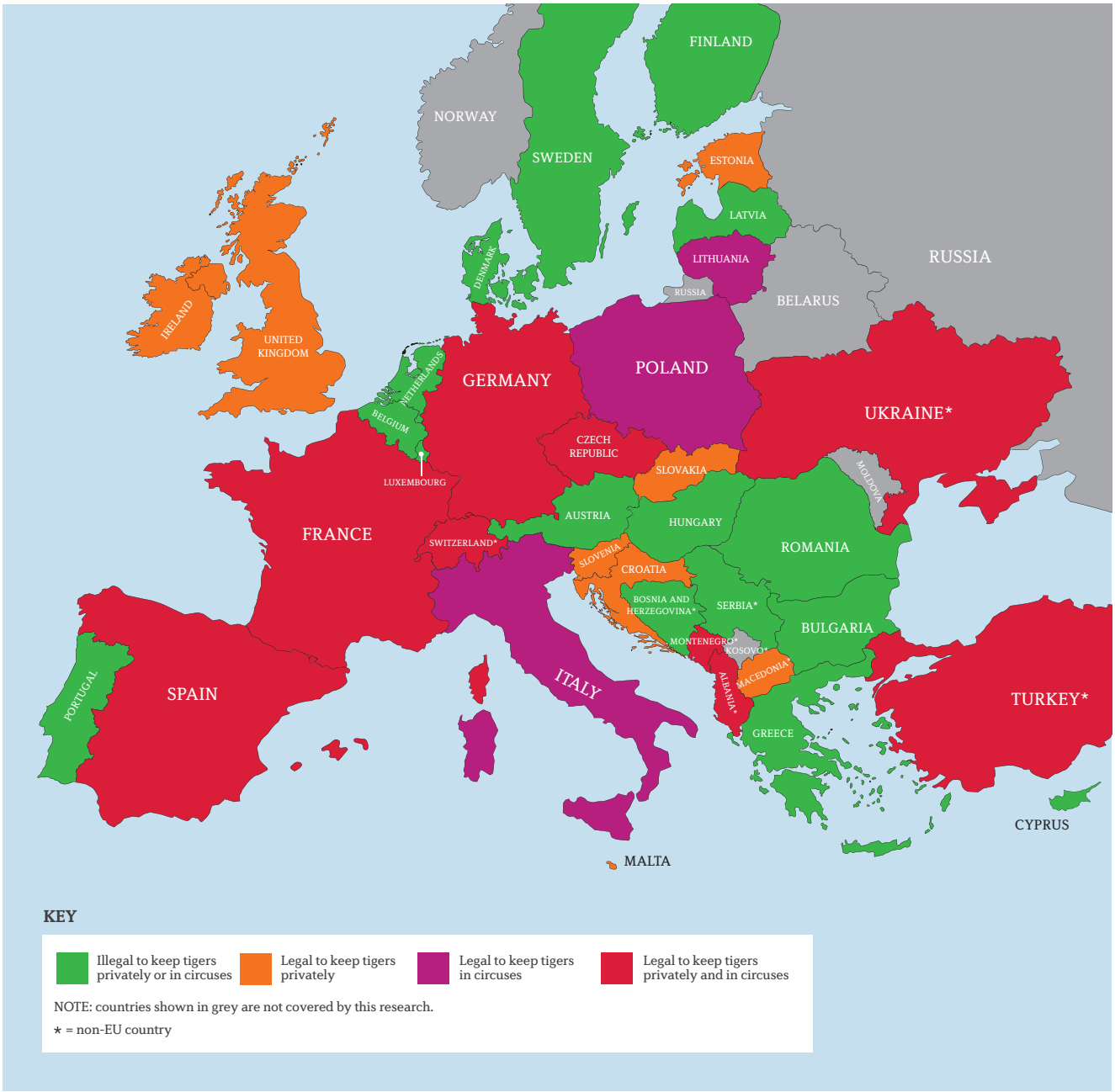
Captive-born tigers are treated as Appendix II listed species which allows for trade, and they continue to be exploited across Europe in substandard zoos and other facilities, travelling circuses, for tourism and entertainment purposes or kept as status symbol pets by private individuals. These tigers are born and raised in captivity, living their entire life behind bars in conditions that do not meet the ecological needs of the animals. The constant movement of mobile circuses makes it difficult (if not impossible) to monitor the births and deaths of tigers. These difficulties facilitate the illicit trade of tigers in the EU and demonstrate the lack of control and protection tigers are offered.

It has been documented that when the animals become too big or unprofitable there is a risk they will be exported to Asian countries where there is an increasing demand for their parts and derivatives. With an approximate 3,900 tigers left in the wild and poaching a constant threat to the species, there should be tight control and management of any captive populations. The opposite is what can be seen across the EU, the United States of America, Asia and South Africa.

In the CITES SC70 Inf. 24 report[5], the Czech Republic summarised the situation as follows: 'In Europe, there are a large number of captive tigers. These tigers are kept in zoos, private breeding facilities, circuses, etc. In many countries it is not known exactly how many captive tigers there are and what entities own them. Even within the EU, there is a variety of national legislation that leads to significant differences in the approach.'

The following map illustrates the different pieces of legislation which deal with the keeping of tigers and/or use of tigers in circuses, currently applicable throughout the EU and certain neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, this patchwork of legislation provides ample opportunities for breeders and traders to operate throughout the EU and supply a global market in live tigers and tiger products.

5 https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/Inf/E-SC70-Inf-24.pdf



6 For the purposes of this report:

FOUR PAWS considers it 'illegal to keep tigers in circuses' in countries where one of the following is applicable:

- there is a national ban on the use of wild animals in circuses;
- there is a bill banning wild animals in circuses which has been approved by the government;
- there is a negative list, which includes tigers, prohibiting animals or certain groups of animals performing in circuses; or,
- there is a positive list, which does not include tigers, stating that certain animals or groups of animals are allowed to perform in circuses.

FOUR PAWS considers it 'illegal to keep tigers privately' in countries where one of the following is applied:

- there is a national ban on keeping of wild animals by private individuals;
- there is a negative list, which includes tigers, prohibiting the keeping of animals or certain groups of animals by private individuals; or
- there is a positive list, which does not include tigers, stating that certain animals or groups of animals are allowed to be kept by private individuals.

FOUR PAWS considers it 'legal to keep tigers privately' in countries where it is allowed to keep tigers and/or where it is possible to obtain a permit/licence in cases where the applicant meets certain criteria stated within national legislation.

Please also note:

- Malta is marked with colour orange as current legislation prohibits the private keeping of big cats since 2016, however owners who already owned big cats prior to 2016 are allowed to keep and breed tigers which creates a significant legal loophole.
- Ukraine is marked with colour red because at the time of publishing this report (March 2020) the Ukrainian government is working on a draft law which would ban the use of wild animals in circuses, but this law has not been adopted yet.
- Italy is marked with colour purple because the final approval of a ban on the use of wild animals, including tigers, is still pending at time of publication (March 2020).
- Lithuania is marked with colour purple because at the time of publishing this report (March 2020) the Lithuanian government has submitted a draft law to ban the use of certain wild animals in circuses, but the law has not been officially approved yet.
- Several countries are marked with colour red since national legislation still allows the use of tigers in circuses, but in certain member states cities or regions have already banned circuses with animals.

2. Problems across the EU

Earlier FOUR PAWS' investigations mostly covered the Czech Republic and Germany, and the subsequent export to Asian countries like Vietnam and China as documented in the FOUR PAWS report Protect Our Tigers – Ban the Commercial Trade 2018/2019 [7]. This report has been extensively shared with national and EU stakeholders and was discussed at the CITES Management authorities meeting (COM86) in Brussels on July 4, 2019. In this section the current situation across the EU is illustrated with investigations and incidents in different member states related to activities such as the illegal transport of tigers, illegal keeping and the falsification of official papers.

2.1 FOUR PAWS investigations and recent developments

Malta - lack of overview of big cat population and exploding tiger numbers

In July 2019 FOUR PAWS was approached by an NGO in Malta about a private keeper who had expressed a willingness to give up his animals under the condition of not replacing them.

FOUR PAWS visited the facilities in August 2019 and combined the visit with meeting Maltese authorities to discuss the animal welfare concerns related to the high numbers of big cats in captivity in Malta.[8] Summary details of the Malta situation:

- Two facilities with big cats (one operating as a public zoo and the other with the apparent intention to do so in the future) were illegally built and then legalised, setting a precedent for future unplanned and unwanted big cat keeping.
- One facility with wild animals does not have a permit for private or zookeeping of wild animals, but nevertheless keeps big cats.
- One zoo offers commercial activities such as selfies with adult tigers and bottle-feeding of tiger cubs. The zoo houses a high number (at least 20) of adult tigers and cubs, which indicates intensive breeding and trade.
- Current legislation prohibiting the private keeping of big cats entered into force in 2016, however individuals who already owned big cats prior to 2016 are allowed to keep and breed the animals. This situation creates a huge loophole and will only lead to more surplus animals that either end up in unsuitable places or must be killed.
- **FOUR PAWS has established a positive collaboration with the relevant Maltese authorities and subsequently the Animal Welfare Commissioner has begun the process of writing a report on the topic of captive big cats, with recommendations such as banning the breeding and petting, higher minimum standards adopted for enclosures, and an increase in penalties.**

7 FOUR PAWS Tiger Report *Protect our tigers - Ban the commercial trade* 2018-019
https://media.4-paws.org/2/8/7/e/287e29e57a5938176d030360fe680be416eae4e1/EU_TigerTrade-FP-2018-2019.pdf

8 See article 'Malta's big cats at risk of illegal tiger trade', Times of Malta
https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/maltas-big-cats-at-risk-of-illegal-tiger-trade.747996

Lithuanian trader negotiating prices

Lithuania - zoo trader falsifying official papers

A big cat trader in Lithuania with connections to two zooparks was approached by an undercover investigator in July 2019 in response to online adverts selling tiger cubs. The trader offered to sell four tiger cubs which were reportedly born on June 19 at a zoopark that was open to the public. The trader confirmed that he has regular contact with European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) zoos for the exchange and commercial trade of animals. Summary details of the case:

- The trader attempted to sell tiger cubs for €6,000 each or discounted if more than one was purchased. He added that dead animals are more expensive than live ones and quoted that a dead tiger can be worth up to €10,000-15,000 and used for its skin and claws.
- The trader claimed to have sold two tigers to a wildlife park registered as an EAZA Temporary Member in the UK. He also mentioned that EAZA policy is not to commercially trade in animals [9], but that this does not seem to bother zoo employees with whom he trades regardless of the EAZA policy. Furthermore, he stated that he can easily transport big cats through Latvia, Belgium, Spain, Czech Republic or Poland, that he receives a lot of interest from Germany through online advertisements, and that he also supplies to Asia.
- The trader explained how the zoopark can manipulate registration and CITES papers, for example by writing that cubs were born at an earlier date so they can be traded sooner, by registering a puma cub as a Bengal cat to circumvent keeping prohibitions in Italy, and by using contacts with company registration numbers in certain countries (e.g. Romania) from which onward transport to anywhere can be organised.
- He added that other animals like zebra and giraffe have been brought illegally from Africa to Malaga by ship and from there traded onwards within Europe.
- **The transcript of the video footage has been provided by FOUR PAWS to the Lithuanian CITES authorities in support of enforcement efforts.**

9 2019 April EAZA *Population Management Manual: Standards, procedures and guidelines for population management within EAZA*, page 88: 'In order to ensure the non-commercial status of EEPs any selling of EEP animals must be avoided.' https://www.eaza.net/assets/Uploads/Governing-documents/EAZA-Population-Management-Manual-Final.pdf

See also: https://www.eaza.net/assets/Uploads/EAZA-Documents-Other/2018-EAZA-Position-Statement-on-tiger-trade.pdf

Spain, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, France, Malta – tiger cubs used for selfies

Tourists in Spain walking with tigress

Media articles feature cruel and inappropriate conditions in tiger farms across Laos, China and South Africa where tigers are intensively bred for the trade in their parts and derivatives[10]. But intensive breeding is not just a problem in Asia or South Africa, it also happens in EU member states as young cubs provide all sorts of commercial opportunities such as charging for selfies with the cubs and feeding activities. This means the cubs are taken away from their mothers at an early age with subsequent psychological and physical abuse for both mother and cubs. It also creates a cruel cycle as the female goes back into oestrous sooner and can therefore breed again and produce more cubs (i.e. intensive breeding), far from what would happen in the wild and what is natural for this species. When the animals become too big to handle safely and 'lose their commercial value', the question remains what happens to these animals.

In 2019 undercover investigators visited several zoos and facilities across Europe which allow for human interaction with the animals or other commercial entertainment and/or seem to house higher numbers of big cat cubs and adult animals. Commercial activities such as tigers and cubs used as photo props and for selfies were offered at facilities like zoos and circuses in Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and in the countries mentioned below.

Spain: Investigators visited a facility in Spain run as a family business which houses more than 100 animals and takes in 'rescue' animals, which have come from circuses, private collectors or other zoos. The animals are rented out for cinema and TV productions. All the animals are kept in empty, unstimulating enclosures. Visitors can sign up for courses to become animal handlers and/or to undertake 'wildlife photography'. A tigress spends

10 McCoy, T 2019, 'Tiger farms in Laos fuel demand for tiger parts on black market', Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/tiger-farms-poaching-laos/?

Exhausted lion cub used for photo session in France

Zoo owner in Malta shows tiger cub

her days as tourist prop, with tourists taking selfies and/or walking with her for hours on end in a barren field the size of two football pitches. As a game, her handler will ask guests if they want to be chased by the tigress, putting both her and the tourists in danger. One of the visitors was badly scratched on his back by the tigress when investigators were present at the facility.

France: Investigators visited a facility in France which is registered as a foundation and as such can only be open for 14 half-days per year. However, through its own Facebook page it is clear that visitors are received all year long. They have several tiger and lion cubs and visitors can pay extra to spend up to an hour with the cubs to pet and feed them. Visitors pay €50 for every ten minutes of interaction within the enclosure. Children and even babies are allowed into the cages and can interact with tiger cubs, which inevitably puts their safety at risk. Only one staff member is certified to feed the animals, but numerous other staff (and visitors) also feed the animals. They continually ask for donations: to rescue certain animals, to build additional enclosures and to interact with the animals. It is also possible to pay €300 to spend the night in a cabin at the facility.

Malta: Investigators visited a specific zoo which allows visitors to take selfies with tiger cubs and adult tigers. Tourists can also pay to pet and bottle-feed the young cubs. The zoo owner showed two-week and four-week-old cubs to any tourist interested, risking the health and survival chances of the cubs.

Germany - illegal transport and keeping of a puma in an apartment

Illegal transport and keeping is not limited to tigers but also affects other wild cats such as pumas. In 2018 a puma cub was illegally transported from the Czech Republic to Germany and was confiscated by German authorities. The puma cub was handed over to FOUR PAWS Animal and Species Protection Centre TIERART to provide long-term care. Summary details of the case:

- Shortly before Christmas 2018, authorities discovered and confiscated a male puma cub in a private apartment in the German city of Lahr.
- The then two-month-old exotic pet was legally bought in the Czech Republic but smuggled into Germany. The young puma was purchased from a Czech breeder for €2,300 and brought to Germany by car. The buyer, however, had no permit to keep the puma, nor proper documents to drive the animal from the Czech Republic to Germany.
- The animal's papers showing his vaccination record and origin were switched with the papers of his sibling, which was sold to a (zoo) park in Germany. As the puma had no record of rabies vaccination, he had to be put into quarantine immediately and vaccinated to avoid a potential risk of infection.
- **Since the quarantine stay, the puma has been housed in a species-appropriate home at FOUR PAWS Animal and Species Protection Centre TIERART in Maßweiler. It is not possible to release the puma into the wild, as he was solely exposed to human contact and would not be able to survive.**

Austria - illegal transport and keeping of tiger cubs

In August 2019 the Austrian authorities confiscated two young tiger cubs in a private home in Austria. Summary details of the case:

- Two tiger cubs had been illegally transported from Slovakia to Austria by a woman working at a zoo which claims to be a sanctuary/institution for the protection of species, but which also commercially breeds and offers interactions with the animals. The woman transporting the animals claimed that their mother had abandoned them and that they needed urgent medical attention, which she said could only be provided in nearby Austria.
- She kept them in inappropriate conditions in her Austrian apartment's bath tub under a heating lamp.
- After the confiscation, authorities decided to transfer the animals to an Austrian zoo with appropriate staff and expertise on handling tiger cubs. Unfortunately, the tiger cubs died not long afterwards. A third sibling of the cubs also died at the facility in Slovakia.
- **Court case outcome (October 14, 2019): According to the prosecutor, the subject of the trial was not the inappropriate keeping of the animals but the transport of an endangered species without proper documents. The judge offered diversion, and a fine of €600 related to the financial situation of the accused and the fact that she had been a law-abiding citizen. With the payment of the sum within 14 days the court proceedings were closed.**

Der Standard

Italy, Poland – illegal transport of 10 tigers from Italy to Russia stopped at Polish border

LAV archive photo

- **In Italy the transport was authorised by public health and CITES officials. Both authorities apparently never checked the transport conditions because officials could not have allowed a farm animal transport company with inappropriate cages to transport tigers. Furthermore, the trip should not have been given permission as it was declared to last 23 hours with destination Dagestan while a transport from Italy to Poland takes already more than 60 hours. Italian NGO LAV has initiated legal proceedings against Italian authorities and the circus family linked to the transport.**

In October 2019 a truck with 10 tigers was stopped by authorities at the Polish-Belarusian border in Koroszczyn after six days of transport.[11] One of the tigers died and the rest were confiscated by Polish authorities. Summary details of the case:

- The tiger transport, organised by circus family Montico and undertaken by a farm animal transport company, started in Italy, and crossed Austria, Czech Republic and Poland. The destination was allegedly a zoo in Dagestan, but it was verified by investigative journalists at the time that there were no operational zoos in Dagestan. On the transport documents it was stated that the receiver was a meat and alcohol import company registered in Dagestan.
- Polish authorities confiscated the tigers on animal welfare grounds and certain papers for the animal transport were lacking and other papers contained incorrect data.[12] One tiger died due to the conditions of transport (lack of oxygen, cages too small, excessive duration of transport among others). Officials from Poland and NGO representatives from Italy expressed suspicions that the tigers were heading for the Asian market to be used for the production of traditional medicine.
- FOUR PAWS offered Polish authorities assistance for the rescue of the tigers, but luckily in this case local organisations were able to find a solution for the tigers on short-term. Five tigers were later transferred onwards to a sanctuary in Spain and the remaining four could stay at two Polish zoos. The Polish zoos emphasised that they were not able to cover the costs for the care of these animals and had to raise funds for the construction of enclosures.
- At an event organised by the European Alliance of Rescue Centres and Sanctuaries (EARS) in the European Parliament on November 13, 2019 this case was highlighted to the European Commission as it clearly illustrates that the transport was allowed to pass through several member states in horrible conditions without proper paperwork. In this case the burden fell on Polish authorities to find solutions and try to cope with insufficient capacity for rescues and financing of such rescue operations. This case further highlights the involvement of circuses and how such transport and trade affects several member states and needs an EU-wide solution.

11 https://tvn24.pl/magazyn-tvn24/bulion-z-kosci-jak-tygrysy-ida-na-czesci,243,4203

12 https://zoo-137.business.site/#summary

2.2 Incidents reported by the media: Spain, Italy, France, Germany

FOUR PAWS has registered the many incidents across Europe involving captive tigers and other wild cats to illustrate the increasing danger posed to both animal and human safety. In the following paragraphs certain incidents are highlighted [13] which clearly indicate the extent of the trade, the risk to human or animal health resulting from private keeping and trade, and the different ways of manipulating the system by falsifying trade documents.

See Annex 2[14] *List of incidents across EU and neighbouring countries 2017-2019* for a more extensive list of incidents in different member states and neighbouring countries.

Spain and illegal trade by taxidermist

3/6/2019 article 'Six investigated after more than 200 illegally stuffed animals seized in Spain' (*The Independent*):
More than 200 stuffed endangered animals were seized from an illegal taxidermy workshop by police in Spain. Some of the animals' body parts were put directly into the sewage system, which posed a considerable risk to public health.

Italy and falsification of microchip and papers

23/1/2019 article 'Palermo, Carabinieri seize circus tiger Simba' (*La Stampa*):
The Carabinieri of Palermo pressed charges against a circus manager for inappropriate keeping conditions and falsified papers regarding a female tiger with a microchip corresponding to another animal which died three years earlier. The man was also charged with an administrative offence and fined €10,000 for failure to record the deaths of specimens.

France and escalation of private keeping as image-booster

4/5/2019 article 'Man arrested in France for keeping white tiger' (*France24*):
Investigators in southeast France seized a white tiger cub at the home of a suspected exotic animal trafficker, while pythons and endangered marsupials were found at his mother's house.

19/9/2019 article 'A panther roams the roof of a building' (Dhnet.be):
In Armentieres a black panther was seen walking on the roof of a building. A joint operation by police, firefighters and a veterinarian managed to tranquilise the animal, which was turned over to the Animal Protection League.

23/10/2019 article 'Police seize lion cub from Paris suburb apartment' (*NewsAsia*):
French police seized a six-week-old lion cub from an apartment in Paris and arrested its owner. The female cub was discovered in a child's bed in the apartment of neighbours of the suspect, who was found hiding in a closet. Police were alerted by videos circulating on social media, in which a man offers the cub for sale for about €10,000.

13/11/2018 article 'Lion cub found inside luxury car in Paris' (*AFP Phoenix Sun*):
A lion cub was discovered inside a hired Lamborghini during a police search on the Champs Elysees, a busy luxury shopping street in Paris. The driver was taken into custody.

Germany: illegal private keeping and rescue by FOUR PAWS

25/10/2019 article 'Tigers rescued in Germany begin new life in SA' (*News24*):
Two tigers were rescued from an inappropriate private facility and transferred to FOUR PAWS LIONSROCK Big Cat Sanctuary in Bethlehem, South Africa.

13 Text from articles summarised by FOUR PAWS.

14 https://tigertrade.four-paws.org/big-cat-incidents

3. Tiger trade and seizures

The exact number of tigers kept and traded within Europe is unknown. Movements of tigers within the EU do not require CITES import and export permits and member states do not share information/data on trade within the EU either. The EU Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange (TWIX) database, which records the seizures of illegal trade, is not publicly available for scrutiny but seizure data was shared with FOUR PAWS by enforcement authorities for the purpose of this report. To gather the best possible overview of the trade flows in both live tigers and tiger products, FOUR PAWS commissioned follow-up research[15] into:

1) the CITES database (period 2014-2018) providing details of the **legal trade** with import and export permits issued by CITES authorities for trade from or to non-EU countries, and

2) the EU-TWIX database[16] (period 2014-2018) providing details submitted by national enforcement officers about the **seizures of illegally traded live tigers and tiger parts and derivatives** within the EU.

There are several difficulties when looking at CITES data and information related to transfers and movement of tigers:

- Intra-EU trade documentation as issued by EU member states for captive-bred Appendix I species (individually marked with a microchip transponder) is not recorded in the CITES trade database.
- It is not possible to determine the number of live captive-bred tigers for which an EU certificate is issued unless this information is collected from each individual member state.
- The details of movements and transfers of these live tigers are not centrally recorded and often not shared between involved member states.
- The number of permits issued for import to/export from the EU is an imperfect indicator of trade, as authorities can issue permits for imports/exports which do not actually take place. Unfortunately, not all authorities correct their figures at a later stage.

Section 4 of this report further highlights the inability of some member states to provide any statistics on the number of tigers kept in zoos, sanctuaries or private homes within their territories. In conclusion, there is no clear overview of the number of tigers kept in the EU, nor of the movement of tigers between member states.

3.1 CITES trade data regarding legal trade

The breeding and trading in captive tigers for commercial purposes goes against CITES recommendations which the European Union has consistently supported. However, throughout the EU it is legal to breed and commercially trade in captive tigers, and member states continue to import and export tiger parts registered under the CITES purpose code T - 'commercial'.

The CITES database provides details regarding the legal trade of live tigers and parts or derivatives from and to non-EU countries. The below data was extracted on December 11, 2019.

The following numbers detail how many live tigers were imported and exported by member states during 2014-2018:

- 43 live tigers were imported
  - **including 5 live tigers under the CITES code for commercial purposes**
- 181 live tigers were exported
  - **including 48 tigers under the CITES code for commercial purposes**

The following numbers detail how many parts and derivatives from tigers were imported and exported by member states during 2014-2018:

- 81 parts and derivatives were imported
  - **including 16 parts and derivatives under the CITES code for commercial purposes**
- 58 parts and derivatives were exported
  - **including 46 parts and derivatives under the CITES code for commercial purposes**

The business is lucrative: A live tiger captive-bred in Europe attracts up to €22,000 on the Asian market. A kilo of tiger bones is available for about €1,700 and a litre of tiger wine – an allegedly healing broth made from tiger bones – can be found for €85 on the black market, according to Czech authorities.

15 Please note that the research period for both CITES data and EU TWIX data was 2014-2018 because national authorities had not submitted all the records of seizures yet for 2019 at the time of research for the report.

16 The EU TWIX data was extracted on October 14, 2019 and the data was obtained with the authorisations from the relevant law enforcement agencies from 28 EU member states.

CITES trade data 2014-2018

Import - live tigers

Importer	*Importer reported quantity*
Germany	14
Latvia	8
France	7
Hungary	5
Netherlands	4
Denmark	2
United Kingdom	1
Ireland	1
Estonia	1
Total	**43**

CITES trade data 2014-2018

Import - live tigers for commercial purposes

Importer	*Importer reported quantity*
Germany	5
Total	**5**

CITES trade data 2014-2018

Export - live tigers

Exporter	*Exporter reported quantity*
Germany	42
Czech Republic	28
Italy	23
Belgium	11
Malta	10
France	9
Austria	9
Latvia	8
Spain	8
Denmark	7
Netherlands*	6
Hungary	5
Greece	4
Cyprus	3
Slovakia	2
Lithuania	2
Poland	2
United Kingdom	1
Ireland	1
Total	**181**

* Please note: In 2016 six tigers were transferred from FOUR PAWS FELIDA Big Cat Centre in The Netherlands and the FOUR PAWS LIONSROCK Big Cat Sanctuary in South Africa.

CITES trade data 2014-2018

Export - live tigers for commercial purposes

Exporter	*Exporter reported quantity*
Czech Republic	13
Belgium	11
Malta	10
Germany	7
Spain	6
Slovakia	1
Total	**48**

CITES trade data 2014-2018

Import - parts and derivatives

Importer	*Importer reported quantity*
United Kingdom	42
Belgium	15
Netherlands	9
Italy	4
Denmark	3
Austria	2
France	2
Germany	1
Czech Republic	1
Hungary	1
Croatia	1
Total	**81**

CITES trade data 2014-2018

Import - parts and derivatives for commercial purposes

Importer	*Importer reported quantity*
Belgium	**13**
skins	*10*
bodies	*3*
Denmark	**2**
skins	*1*
skulls	*1*
United Kingdom	**1**
trophies	*1*
Total	**16**

CITES trade data 2014-2018

Export - parts and derivatives

Exporter	*Exporter reported quantity*
Netherlands	30
United Kingdom	8
Belgium	5
France	5
Spain	3
Italy	2
Austria	2
Germany	2
Denmark	1
Total	**58**

CITES trade data 2014-2018

Export - parts and derivatives for commercial purposes

Exporter	*Exporter reported quantity*
Netherlands	**27**
skins	*15*
bodies	*11*
trophies	*1*
United Kingdom	**7**
skins	*4*
bodies	*1*
rug	*1*
trophies	*1*
Belgium	**5**
teeth	*3*
bodies	*1*
skins	*1*
France	**3**
skins	*2*
bodies	*1*
Germany	**2**
bodies	*2*
Italy	**1**
bodies	*1*
Denmark	**1**
bodies	*1*
Total	**46**

Based on the table regarding the export of parts and derivatives for commercial purposes, it should be especially noted that The Netherlands issued permits for 10 (out of a total of 11) tiger bodies, 15 tiger skins and one trophy, for export to China.

Below is a table which includes the number of export permits, for both live tigers and parts and derivatives over the period 2014-2018, issued to specific non-EU countries where there are numerous problems regarding illegal wildlife trade and crime[17]. Four countries mentioned below are key players in the Asian market, and South Africa is included due to its recognised link to Asia regarding the trade in lion and tiger skeletons and intensive breeding for commercial purposes[18].

Numbers of export permits to Belarus, Ukraine and Russia have also been added because transport of live tigers overland passes regularly through these neighbouring countries on its way to final destinations in Asia (see Poland case study in section 2.1).

In the table below it is clear that there are serious discrepancies between importer and exporter-reported quantities which make it difficult to draw conclusions and/or compare data.

CITES trade data 2014-2018

Export of live tigers and parts and derivatives from EU countries to below listed non-EU countries

Importer	*Exporter reported quantity*	*Importer reported quantity*
China	**30**	**25**
skins	*16*	*10*
bodies	*13*	*3*
trophies	*1*	*8*
specimens	*0*	*3*
rugs	*0*	*1*
Vietnam	**19**	**24**
live	*19*	*24*
Thailand	**11**	**10**
live	*11*	*10*
Malaysia	**0**	**1**
trophies	*0*	*1*
South Africa	**6**	**0**
live	*6*	*0*
Russian Federation	**17**	**4**
live	*16*	*4*
bodies	*1*	*0*
Ukraine	**11**	**15**
live	*11*	*15*
Belarus	**1**	**2**
live	*1*	*2*
Total	**95**	**81**

17 See for example: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-45472159

18 https://e360.yale.edu/features/the-ongoing-disgrace-of-southafricas-captive-bred-lion-trade

3.2 EU TWIX data regarding illegal trade (seizures)

The EU TWIX database collects all the data from across the EU regarding seizures of live tigers and tiger parts and derivatives. The data as presented below[19] has been obtained with the authorisation of relevant law enforcement agencies from EU member states and was extracted on October 14, 2019.

The difficulty with this seizure data is the interpretation of the results; significant numbers of seizures could signal strong enforcement efforts from that specific member state, but the numbers could also be influenced by different methods of counting by authorities (e.g. submitting numbers of pills instead of bottles/boxes). However, high numbers could also signal that more illegal trade is happening within or through that specific country.

Seizures of live tigers and products during 2014-2018 by current EU member states:

- **18 live tigers were seized**
- **1,804 parts and derivatives were seized**

In the period 2014-2018 a total of 1,804 items (products) were seized by EU member states.

Of those items 91.7% (1,654 items) were recorded as Medicine (MED) such as pills, capsules, and plasters containing *Panthera tigris*. These products may contain a small percentage of tiger parts, most probably tiger bone.

Another 2.7% (48 items) were recorded as Claws (CLA), 1.3% (23 items) as Skins (SKI) and the rest were recorded as Bodies (BOD), Derivatives (DER), Bones (BON), Skulls (SKU), Teeth (TEE), Skin Pieces (SKP) etc.

EU TWIX data 2014-2018

Seized live tigers

Importer	*Importer reported quantity*
Spain	10
Italy	5
France	**3**
Total	**18**

EU TWIX data 2014-2018

Seized parts and derivatives

	number of specimens
Medicines	1,654
Claws	48
Skins	23
Derivatives	18
Teeth	17
Bodies	14
Bones	7
Skin pieces	7
Skulls	7
Trophies	4
Fur products large	2
Extract	1
Jewellery	1
Skeletons	1
Total	**1,804**

These were the countries that submitted the seizure data during 2014-2018:

EU TWIX data 2014-2018

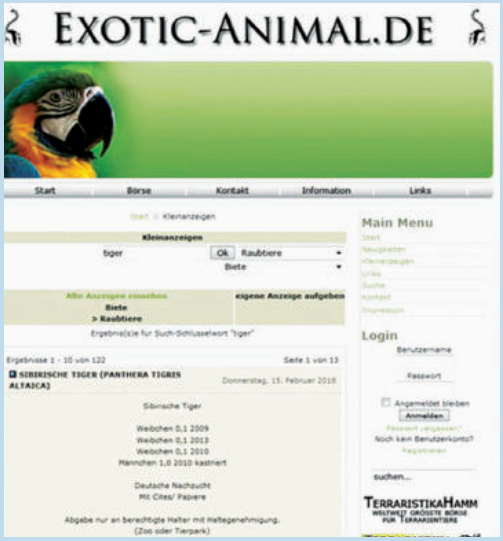
Seized parts and derivatives

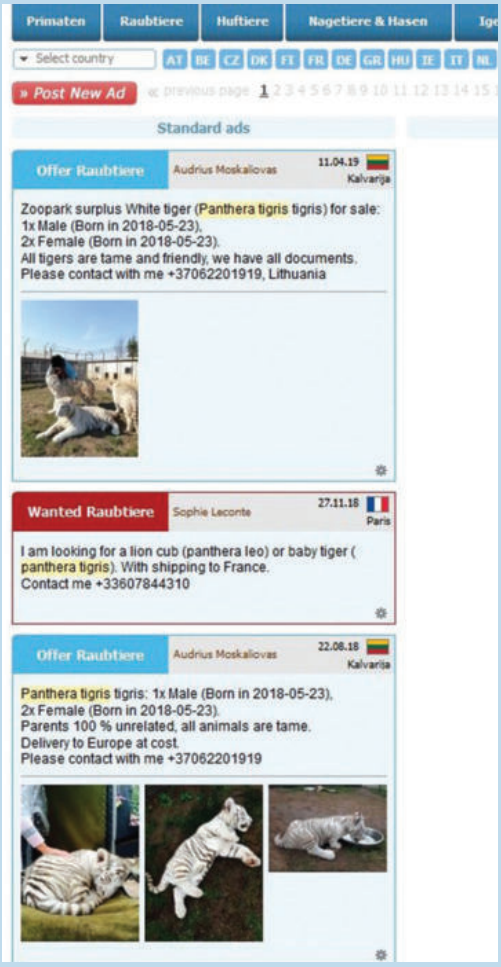
Countries	*number of specimens*
Netherlands	908
Austria	420
United Kingdom	360
Germany	81
France	11
Czech Republic	7
Spain	5
Hungary	5
Belgium	3
Croatia	3
Sweden	1
Total	**1,804**

19 The data provided in 'mass' measurement (such as kilograms or litres) was counted as one unit irrespective of the indicated mass.

3.3 Online advertisement examples from Germany, Italy, Malta, Slovakia, Spain and Lithuania

Adult tigers and tiger cubs are offered online as commercial commodities on different platforms throughout the EU. In certain countries the trade takes place through the dark/deep web, while in other countries advertisements can easily be found through publicly accessible platforms such as www.enimalia.com. These easily accessible advertisements are mostly found in countries where private keeping and/or use of wild animals in circuses is still allowed. Below are some examples of online advertisements in different member states.





Clockwise from top left:

Advertisement by a German trader who offers four tigers for sale, seller unknown, February 2018

Advertisements placed by a Lithuanian trader, offering white tiger cubs for sale, and an individual from Paris posts a demand for lion and tiger cubs, June 2019

Advertisements from traders in Slovakia, Spain and Malta [20, 21]

20 http://www.enimalia.com/de/raubtiere-kaufen?subcategories%5B%5D=45&client_countries%5B%5D=&type%5B1%5D=OFFER&query=Tiger
21 http://www.enimalia.com/de/raubtiere-kaufen?subcategories%5B%5D=45&client_countries%5B%5D=&type%5B1%5D=OFFER&query=panthera+tigris

4. Unknown numbers of tigers in captivity

During earlier investigations by FOUR PAWS it became clear that there is little overview of the captive tiger population in Europe. To gather more knowledge about the registration obligations in different member states, and to obtain registered numbers of captive tigers, FOUR PAWS officially submitted Freedom of Information requests (FOI) to all responsible authorities in 28 member states and eight neighbouring countries.

We asked national authorities how many tigers were present in 2018/2019 in their respective territories, at what kind of facility (i.e. circuses, zoos, rescue centres, private keeping) and whether there was an obligation to centrally report on births and deaths of captive tigers.

The authorities that did respond report a total of 913 captive tigers. These numbers do not depict the reality since 19 countries (of which 15 EU member states) were unable to share numbers. In Italy alone, an estimated 400 tigers are kept in zoos, private homes and circuses.

In each of the 28 member states and eight neighbouring countries the equivalent to the Ministry of Environment and/or the Ministry of Agriculture was contacted. Nevertheless, in countries like Austria, Germany, Switzerland and United Kingdom this information is not held centrally, and FOUR PAWS was advised to contact authorities at a local and/or regional level, increasing the number of requests and authorities contacted. The original research period of two months was extended to send reminders to authorities that did not reply to the FOI within the deadline according to their respective legislation, and/or to approach local/regional authorities. The research period lasted from June to October 2019 and only 17 countries (of which 13 EU member states) replied with numbers, 10 replied but were unable to provide tiger numbers and nine did not reply at all. A total of 641 authorities (national/regional/ local) were contacted during that period by FOUR PAWS (e.g. for the UK 410 authorities had to contacted to receive the numbers).

Numbers received through the FOI requests are compared with numbers extracted from CITES report 'CITES Decision 17.229 (a): review of the number of facilities keeping Asian big cats, 2018'[22], but it is clear from the data presented on the chart on page 22 that the numbers show serious discrepancies. The CITES review did not cover all countries, and in some cases there are no FOI figures due to the authorities' lack of knowledge on tiger numbers or because FOUR PAWS did not receive any response to the request.

Please see Annex 1[23] *Numbers of tigers in captivity, following Freedom of Information requests* for detailed information per member state or neighbouring country (signalled with *) on whether the authorities responded with tiger numbers. Below is a summarised version of the results:

- **Countries that replied with numbers:** Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Macedonia*, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Serbia*, Slovakia, Sweden, UK.
- **Countries that replied but were unable to provide numbers:** Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Montenegro*, Poland, Spain, Ukraine*.
- **Countries that did not reply to the FOI request by FOUR PAWS:** Austria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Switzerland*, Turkey*.

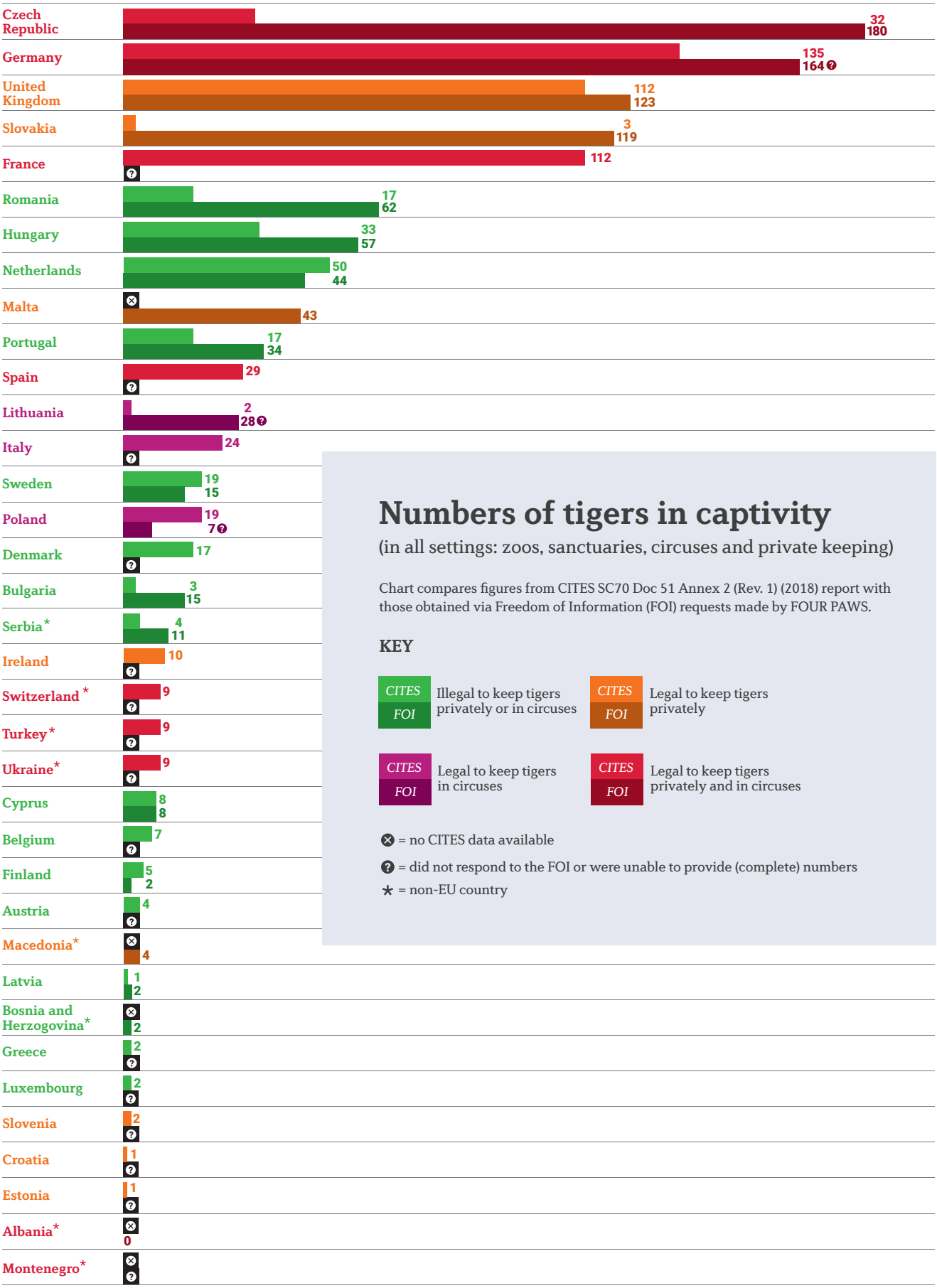
The authorities that did respond report a total of 913 captive tigers. These numbers do not depict the reality since 19 countries (of which 15 EU member states) were unable to share numbers. Through news stories about incidents, observations by FOUR PAWS and intelligence from local partners it is clear that the actual numbers of captive tigers across Europe must be much higher. For example, in Italy alone, an estimated 400 tigers are kept in zoos, private homes and circuses.

22 Staerk, Johanna & Conde, Dalia. (2018). CITES SC70, Doc. 51, Annex 2 (Rev.1). Review of facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity. CITES Decision 17.229 (a): review of the number of facilities keeping Asian big cats. https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/E-SC70-51-A2-R1.pdf

23 https://tigertrade.four-paws.org/foi-numbers

4.1 Comparison of FOI request numbers with CITES numbers

See below for the discrepancies between the numbers of tigers as reported by CITES and the numbers which we received from national authorities (if any were obtained).



Numbers of tigers in captivity

(in all settings: zoos, sanctuaries, circuses and private keeping)

Chart compares figures from CITES SC70 Doc 51 Annex 2 (Rev. 1) (2018) report with those obtained via Freedom of Information (FOI) requests made by FOUR PAWS.

KEY

CITES / FOI — Illegal to keep tigers privately or in circuses

CITES / FOI — Legal to keep tigers privately

CITES / FOI — Legal to keep tigers in circuses

CITES / FOI — Legal to keep tigers privately and in circuses

⊗ = no CITES data available

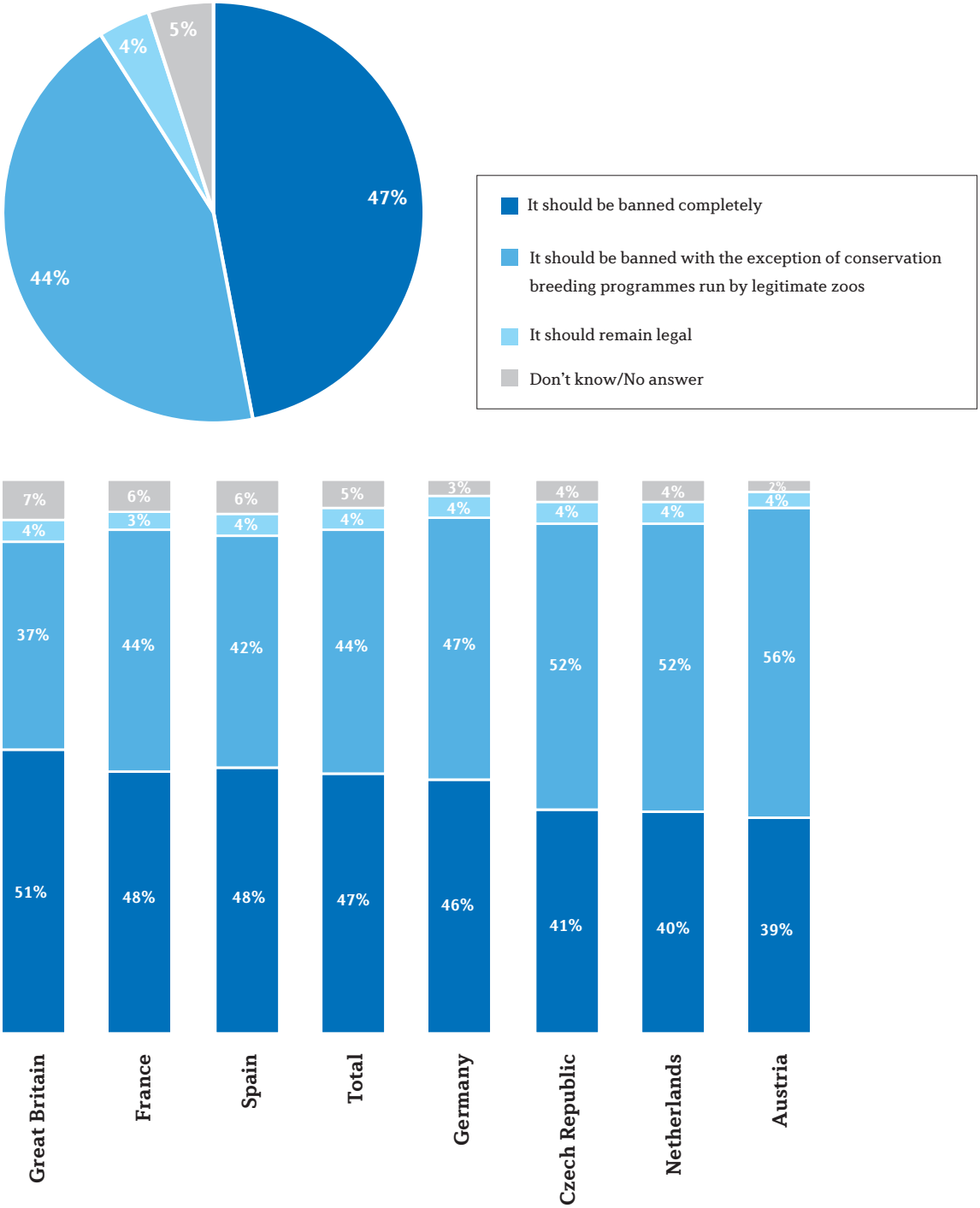
? = did not respond to the FOI or were unable to provide (complete) numbers

★ = non-EU country

5. Public concern

FOUR PAWS commissioned a public polling exercise from Kantar Public which performed the polling through an internet omnibus survey in seven EU member states (Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, and United Kingdom) between August 2-6, 2018. In total 7,223 respondents answered five polling questions related to trade in live tigers and their parts. The main results are listed below.

Attitudes towards a ban of trade in captive bred tigers



6. Confiscations and rescue

Closure of substandard zoos and the increasing public opposition to the use of animals in entertainment are vital developments, but unfortunately also result in extra pressure on sanctuaries and rescue centres. Twenty-four EU member states have already adopted restrictions or bans on the use of either all animals or certain animal species in circuses, and hundreds of municipalities no longer permit the use of wild animals in circuses. Additionally, the increased focus on combatting wildlife trafficking and trade places more strain on enforcement.

CITES parties have established that seized or confiscated live animals should be placed in a suitable location that guarantees the welfare of the animals and prevents them from re-entering the illegal circuit. The challenge is to find suitable homes for the animals concerned while Europe is coping with an insufficient capacity of sanctuaries and rescue centres to provide appropriate long-term homes.

FOUR PAWS owns and operates several bear and big cat sanctuaries and is continually approached with rescue requests regarding numerous species in different countries. However, FOUR PAWS has to decline the majority of requests due to their sheer volume and the limited species-appropriate housing available.

When asking national authorities about the challenges related to wildlife trade, they often refer to the insufficient capacity to house the animals, which ultimately also forms an obstacle to amend legislation and/or strengthen enforcement. At the European Parliament event 'Breaking point: Solving the European Wildlife Rescue Crisis' (November 2019) the attending stakeholders from the parliament, European Commission, national authorities, and NGOs discussed the many challenges that sanctuaries and rescue centres face daily [24]. Obstacles mentioned at the event were the conditions being placed on the management of animals, inconsistent interpretation of rules pertaining to seizure and transport of animals, as well as unrealistic expectations placed on rescue facilities asked to take in animals at short notice. The lack of funding for wildlife rescue underlies many of the capacity problems. It was stated at the meeting that, while it is the responsibility of member states to ensure proper funding for enforcement efforts and care for seized and confiscated wildlife, funds should also be allocated at the EU level and be made available to member states to ensure consistent support is provided.

National authorities often refer to the insufficient capacity to house the animals, which ultimately also forms an obstacle to amend legislation or strengthen enforcement. FOUR PAWS has and will continue to offer support and expertise to national authorities to ensure sustainable solutions.

The EU has a clear role to play in supporting and promoting cross-border co-ordination for the housing of animals to ensure animals are placed in the most appropriate facilities rather than just in those closest or within EU borders. The EU should also co-ordinate closely with neighbouring countries as sanctuaries and rescue facilities are often approached with requests coming from countries such as Albania and Kosovo.

FOUR PAWS has and will continue to offer support and expertise to national authorities to ensure sustainable solutions are sought for all big cats seized in trade or in need of rescue from inappropriate conditions.

24 See here for the agenda of the event: https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/save-the-date-13-november-breaking-point-solving-the-european-wildlife-crisis

7. Conclusions

We would like to reiterate the concluding remarks by Czech authorities in the CITES SC70 Inf. 24 report: 'In the opinion of the Czech enforcement authorities, the trade in tigers including captive-bred tigers, should be significantly reduced in the future and stricter rules should be applied, together with detailed rules on the conditions and purpose of keeping in addition to the requirements for verification of suitable breeding facilities. Contact zoos, cuddling, excessive production of cubs, canned hunting or other commercial exploitation of tigers and other big cats should be completely banned, not only in the Czech Republic but in all CITES member countries, as it is in stark contrast to the protection of endangered species.'

While the EU takes a leading role at international level in combatting wildlife trafficking and even funds initiatives to tackle illegal wildlife trade, the EU continues to face a lack of effective regulation concerning the trade and the use of tigers for commercial businesses within its own territory. This further endangers the population of tigers in the wild and causes serious animal welfare problems. Without effective record-keeping of captive tiger numbers in EU member states and control on the trade within the EU, cases of illegal trade and subsequent cruelty will continue to flourish.

Referring to the many examples illustrated in this report, we can conclude that the Czech Republic is not the only member state that is affected by an illegal tiger trade closely linked to legal companies and legal trade activities. Other EU member states need to recognise the cross-border issues of illegal transport of traded tigers, the high numbers of privately-kept animals without proper registration nor overview and the easily accessible commercial trade in tigers. EU member states continue to issue import and export permits for live tigers and parts and derivatives for commercial purposes which goes against the CITES recommendations consistently supported by the EU.

Public concern has been highlighted by the number of signatures to different petitions[25] and the in-depth polling exercise which showed 91% of the respondents from seven EU member states were in favour of banning the trade in tigers.

> The only way to truly protect both wild and captive-bred tigers is with a comprehensive ban on all intra-EU and external commercial trade in tigers and tiger products with limited derogations for legitimate zoos and genuine sanctuaries.

As a first step, the EU must issue a Guidance document recommending that EU member states suspend the export and re-export of live tigers and tiger parts and derivatives. The purpose of such an EU Guidance document is to ensure the consistent application by the member states of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein. The continued trade in tiger products for commercial purposes by different member states, as touched upon within this report, justifies such measures. However, the only way to truly protect both wild and captive-bred tigers is with a comprehensive ban on all intra-EU and external commercial trade (imports, exports and re-exports) in tiger parts, derivatives and live tigers – whether originating from the wild or captive-bred – with realistic derogations for legitimate zoos participating in conservation breeding programmes and for genuine sanctuaries, under the condition that the animals do not reproduce and are kept in species-appropriate enclosures.

25 E.g. FOUR PAWS petition asking the European Commission to ban the commercial trade in tigers and tiger products, see here: https://help.four-paws.org/en/ban-eu-tiger-trade

FOUR PAWS is the global animal welfare organisation for animals under human influence, which reveals suffering, rescues animals in need and protects them.

Founded in 1988 in Vienna by Heli Dungler, the organisation advocates for a world where humans treat animals with respect, empathy and understanding. FOUR PAWS' sustainable campaigns and projects focus on companion animals including stray dogs and cats, farm animals and wild animals – such as bears, big cats, orangutans and elephants – kept in inappropriate conditions, as well as in disaster and conflict zones. With offices in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Switzerland, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, Hungary, the UK, the USA and Vietnam, as well as sanctuaries for rescued animals in twelve countries, FOUR PAWS provides rapid help and long-term solutions.

More information and contact details

VIER PFOTEN International (FOUR PAWS)
Linke Wienzeile 236
1150 Vienna, Austria
tel: +43-1-545 50 20-0
office@four-paws.org

FOUR PAWS, European Policy Office
Av. de la Renaissance 19/11
1000 Brussels, Belgium
tel: +32-2-7400888
office@vier-pfoten.eu

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