



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA

Government response to the Consultation on Legal Notice: The Keeping of Wild Animals in Zoos Regulations

23/12/2020

*Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights
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Executive Summary

Introduction and overview

1. The Legal Notice amends and updates existing legislation. It intends to address unregulated areas in the protection of wild fauna and the conservation of biodiversity by providing for the adoption of licensing, registration and inspection of zoos on the territory of Malta in order to strengthen the role of zoos in the conservation of biodiversity, protect the health and wellbeing of wild animals and to protect the public from these animals.

2. The public consultation date was 9 November 2020.

On 9 November 2020, the Government published a consultation paper setting out our proposals for a Legal Notice that intends to address unregulated areas in the protection of wild fauna and the conservation of biodiversity by providing for the adoption of licensing, registration and inspection of zoos on the territory of Malta in order to strengthen the role of zoos in the conservation of biodiversity, protect the health and wellbeing of wild animals and to protect the public from these animals.

The objective was to invite the public to review the draft Legal Notice and provide its views/suggestions on the proposed regulations, particularly on any aspects and issues that may contribute to improve the health and protection of wild fauna and the conservation of biodiversity.

3. This consultation sought views on all the Legal Notice, particularly on any aspects and issues that may contribute to improve the health and protection of wild fauna and the conservation of biodiversity.

Responses to the consultation and process used to seek stakeholder views

This document is the Government Response to this consultation and sets out the Government's decisions on these matters.

4. The consultation closed on 7 December 2020. Respondents were invited to provide feedback through a "Feedback Form" available from the Public Consultation website https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MAFA/Pages/Consultations/PublicconsultationondraftLegalNoticeontheKeepingofWildAnimalsinZoosRegulations2020.aspx

A URL to the Public Consultation website was also made available from the Animal Health and Welfare Department (AHWD)'s website <https://agrikultura.gov.mt/en/Pages/Index.aspx>

Once sent, the “Feedback Form” was received on an AHWD generic email. Feedback received through email of the responsible person of the AHWD tasked with the legislation was also accepted. In total, there were 1,407 responses. These were received from across the sector including advisory bodies, public authorities, non-governmental organisations, private individuals, veterinarians and animal keepers.

5. An information meeting was held before the consultation period. This was with the owners of zoos on 06 November 2020. Consultations with advisory bodies and public authorities were held during the consultation period. These were with the Animal Welfare Council on 12 November 2020. Direct communication was also held with the Environment and Resources Authority who then sent written submissions through the consultation portal.

Summary of responses and decisions

The following is a summary of the consultation responses received. We would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the consultation and participate in stakeholder meetings around the consultation exercise.

6. Statistics.

- Total feedback received: 1,407
- Total feedback received by individuals: 1,388
- Total feedback received by organisations: 19
- Total feedback received through email: 7
- Total feedback received through online form: 1,400
- Total feedback received by post: 0

7. Summary of feedback received.

This consultation elicited substantial media and public interest with over 1,400 messages received through the government portal by its closure on Monday 7 December 2020.

In light of this high volume of responses, including a good number of detailed submissions by advisory bodies, public authorities, non-governmental organisations, private individuals, veterinarians and animal keepers, it is quite difficult to give a detailed assessment. However the main feedback was from individuals who were against the concept of zoos to exist any longer i.e. against having wild animals kept in enclosures for the enjoyment of the public; the concept of captive breeding i.e. against the possibility of allowing zoos to conduct breeding of wild animals and thus proposing total ban; and the concept of trade in wild animals. A few responses did favour the complete neutering of wild animals in zoos. The feedback is still being analysed and emails are still being opened.

8. Your assessment and the Government’s decision (list the Government’s decisions).

In view of the detailed submissions and technical nature of the subject, the Department will be evaluating in the detail all the proposals and will decide accordingly.

Implementation

9. When you intend to implement the decisions

Given the volume of feedback was substantial and given that it is still being analysed, we cannot state when we intend to implement our decision on the amendments.

Contact Details

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact:
veterinaryregulation.mafa@gov.mt