



## **European Association of Zoos and Aquariums statement on the transfer of an elephant calf from a Russian zoo to a circus**

**Amsterdam, 10 July 2020:** The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) is extremely disappointed to learn that Rostov-on-Don Zoo (Russia) has sent a female Asian elephant calf to a circus in Moscow, as announced by the zoo itself via a Facebook post dated 6 July.

EAZA does not consider circuses to be appropriate destinations for zoo animals and prohibits the practice in its Standards and population management regulations. Experts from the Asian elephant EAZA Ex situ Programme (EEP) also emphasise the importance of a family structure for elephant cows and their calves. The management procedures of the EEP state that elephant cows may only be transported to appropriate destinations if they stay together with other females that they are related to. Furthermore, calves should not be separated from their mothers especially not at such a young age. EAZA therefore calls on Rostov-on-Don Zoo to retrieve the calf immediately.

Rostov-on-Don Zoo is not a participant in the Asian elephant EEP but did recently join EAZA's Candidate for Membership programme, which supports zoos to improve their standards and work toward becoming a Full Member of the Association. Given the nature of this infraction of our Standards, which has serious implications for the welfare of the elephant, EAZA will question closely whether the management of the zoo understands the seriousness of the offence, and whether or not we have confidence that Rostov-on-Don Zoo is serious about becoming a modern progressive zoo.

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The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) is the membership organisation of the most progressive zoos and aquariums in Europe and Western Asia. The Association comprises over 400 Members in 48 countries, including zoological institutions and their partners in conservation, education, animal welfare and research. EAZA administers the EEP (EAZA Ex situ Programmes), a state of the art population management structure that provides scientifically-led *ex situ* support to holistic efforts to save and protect animal species worldwide.

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