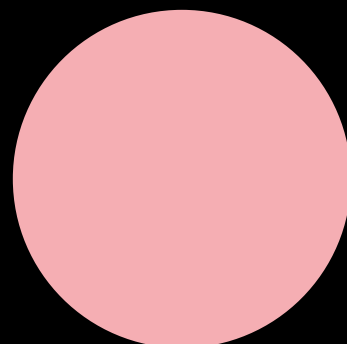
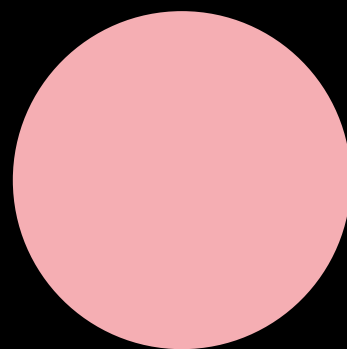


March 2021

Public Views on Using Wild Animals in Circuses



Classified: Public

Headline Report for Eurogroup for Animals

Make better decisions



Savanta:
ComRes

Introduction

The total number of wild animals currently kept in captivity in European circuses is unknown. However, estimates by the Eurogroup for Animals from 2005 say there were between 2,400 and 5,900 wild and domestic animals in circuses in Europe at that time.¹ Animals commonly used in circuses include big cats, bears, elephants, monkeys and reptiles.

Academics from the University of Bristol have collated a large body of literature on the welfare and health impacts of animals in circuses.² Concerns include poor living conditions, restricted movement, limited social interactions, frequent transportation as well as challenges with reproduction.³ Health and safety is also a concern in terms the risk of injuring or spreading disease to humans. As the British Veterinary Association has said, “This is an outdated practice where the welfare needs of non-domesticated, wild animals [in circuses] cannot be met in terms of housing or expressing normal behaviour.”⁴

Twenty-three EU Member States have already banned or restricted the use of wild animals in circuses nationally. Only last September, France announced plans to ban this practice, offering an €8 million fund to help circuses adapt their shows to not include animals. The French Ecology Minister said, “It is time that our ancestral fascination with these wild beings no longer means they end up in captivity [...and] open a new era in our relationship with these animals.”⁵ However, France, along with Spain, Italy and Germany, are yet to introduce national legislation, banning wild animals in circuses. Furthermore, it is difficult for governments to enforce legislation since circuses move frequently and there is free movement between EU Member States. Regardless, in 2017 Eurogroup for Animals and its members estimated that there are at least 300 circus facilities still using wild animals in the EU.⁶

Eurogroup for Animals brings together and represents the voices of its 70 member organisations across the EU, focusing on animal welfare and advocacy. It supports an EU-wide ban of using wild animals in circuses. It is also launching the ‘EU Stop Circus Suffering’ campaign, and 1 million citizens have already signed the Infocircus petition.⁷

Eurogroup for Animals, Animal Advocacy and Protection (AAP), and its member organisations commissioned Savanta ComRes to conduct research across 7 EU Member States to gauge public views towards the use of wild animals in circuses. Findings from this research demonstrate that the majority of respondents think the use of wild animals in circuses is cruel, unnecessary and outdated.

The research also provides evidence for public support for a ban of all wild animals in circuses issued by the European Union. Most respondents agree that circuses still using wild animals must reinvent themselves by developing high quality shows with human performers and say they would prefer to visit circuses with human performers.

¹ L. Galhardo (2005) *Animals in circuses: legislation and controls in the European Union*. Eurogroup for Wildlife and Laboratory Animals, unpublished report.

² G Iossa, CD Soulsbury and S Harris (2009) *Are wild animals suited to a travelling circus life?* University of Bristol

³ S. Harris, G. Iossa and C. Soulsbury (2006) *A review of the welfare of wild animals in circuses*. University of Bristol

⁴ <https://www.bva.co.uk/news-and-blog/news-article/bva-welcomes-ban-on-wild-animals-in-travelling-circuses/>

⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54353907>

⁶ <https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/sites/eurogroup/files/2020-05/E4ACircusReport.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.change.org/p/european-union-ban-wild-animals-in-circuses/u/22622310>

Methodology

Eurogroup for Animals and its member organisations commissioned Savanta ComRes who interviewed 7,425 adults online between 8th to 17th February 2021 across 7 EU member states: Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Spain. Data were weighted in each country to be nationally representative by key demographics such as age, gender and region. Full tables available at comresglobal.com/polls/eurogroup-for-animals-wild-animals-in-circuses-mar-2021/

EU member state	Sample size
Czech Republic	1,033
France	1,094
Germany	1,081
Hungary	1,093
Italy	1,074
Poland	1,011
Spain	1,039

Guidelines for the public use of survey results

Savanta ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council⁸ and abides by its rules. This commits us to the highest standards of transparency.

The BPC's rules state that all data and research findings made on the basis of surveys conducted by member organisations that enter the public domain must include reference to the following:

- The company conducting the research (Savanta ComRes)
- The client commissioning the survey
- Dates of interviewing
- Method of obtaining the interviews (e.g. in-person, post, telephone, internet)
- The universe effectively represented (all adults, voters etc.)
- The percentages upon which conclusions are based
- Size of the sample and geographic coverage.

Published references (such as a press release) should also show a web address where full data tables may be viewed, and they should also show the complete wording of questions upon which any data that has entered the public domain are based.

All press releases or other publications must be checked with Savanta ComRes before use. Savanta ComRes requires 48 hours to check a press release unless otherwise agreed.

⁸ www.britishpollingcouncil.org

Headline results

- Two thirds of respondents agree that the use of wild animals in circuses is cruel (68%) and unnecessary (66%), and six in ten respondents agree it is outdated (59%).
- A higher proportion of respondents *disagree* than *agree* that wild animals are a vital part of circuses (45% disagree vs 33% agree) and that circuses would *not* be as enjoyable without them (50% disagree vs 29% agree). Supporting this, six in ten (59%) agree that circuses with human performers are more enjoyable than ones that use wild animals.
- Between four and five respondents out of ten *agree* that showing wild animals performing tricks and being dominated by tamers does not have any educational value (59%), may have a negative psychological impact on children (46%) and that their use poses a risk to public safety and health (42%). However, at least two in ten (20-25%) say they *neither agree nor disagree* with the statements, indicating a lack of deep understanding of the potential social impacts of using wild animals in circuses.
- Around half of respondents *disagree* with the counterarguments often used to support the use of animals in circuses. These include *disagreeing* that using animals in circuses supports the conservation of the species (59%), is educational (56%) and working with wild animals in this way stimulates their intelligence and keeps them fit and agile (47%).
- At least six in ten respondents agree that:
 - Circuses still using wild animals must reinvent themselves by developing high quality shows with human performers (69%)
 - They would prefer to visit circuses with human performers instead of wild animals (64%)
 - Wild animals should not be used for public entertainment (68%)
 - The use of wild animals in circuses has no place in modern society (61%)
- The vast majority of respondents *agree* that the EU should guarantee that cruel uses of animals are not allowed (83%). The majority of respondents also agree that the EU should ban the use of *wild* animals in circuses (62%) and, to a lesser extent, the use of both wild *and* domesticated animals (54%).
- Eight in ten (86%) respondents are aware that wild animals are used in some circuses in the European Union, only 11% say they were not aware.
- Three quarters (77%) of respondents say they have visited a circus with wild animals at some point. This compares to two thirds (66%) who say they have visited a circus that did not have wild animals before.

Country differences

- At least three in four adults in all countries tested are aware that wild animals are used in some circuses in the European Union, with those in the Czech Republic (92%), Poland (89%) and Italy (89%) being most likely to be aware, and those in Hungary least aware (76%).
- Adults from Italy, Poland and Spain are most likely to agree with statements *against* the use of wild animals in circuses. Examples include:

- Circuses still using wild animals must reinvent themselves by developing high quality shows with human performers (Italy 79%, Spain 76%, Poland 75%) and that they would prefer to visit circuses with human performers (Italy 79%, Poland 72%, Spain 70%)
 - Wild animals should not be used for public entertainment (Italy 78%, Poland 76%, Spain 73%)
 - The use of wild animals in circuses has no place in modern society (Poland 74%, Italy 69%, Spain 68%)
- Out of the countries tested, those from the Czech Republic are *least* likely to say that:
 - They have visited a circus that did not have wild animals (55% vs 63-76% for other countries)
 - The use of wild animals in circuses is cruel (50% vs 61-78% for other countries) and unnecessary (45% vs 61-77% for other countries)
 - The use of wild animals in circuses is outdated (38% vs 53-70% for other countries) and that circuses with human performers are more enjoyable (38% vs 54-73% for other countries)
 - Furthermore, adults from the Czech Republic are *most* likely to say that wild animals are a vital part of circuses (42% vs 20-40% for other countries) and that circuses would not be as enjoyable without wild animals (41% vs 20-39% for other countries).

Q1. Before taking part in this survey today, were you aware or not that wild animals such as elephants, lions, tigers, hippos, monkeys, zebras, giraffes, bears, parrots and reptiles are used in some circuses in the European Union?

% of adults who say	Yes, I was aware	No, I was not aware	Don't know
Total	86%	11%	3%
Czechia	92%	6%	2%
Italy	89%	7%	4%
Poland	89%	9%	2%
Germany	87%	10%	3%
France	85%	12%	3%
Spain	85%	11%	4%
Hungary	76%	22%	3%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425), Czechia (n= 1,033), France (n= 1,094), Germany (n=1,081), Hungary (n= 1,093), Italy (n= 1,074), Poland (n= 1,011), Spain (n= 1,039)

Q2. To the best of your knowledge, how long ago did you last visit a circus in the European Union that may or may not have used wild animals, if at all?

Visited a circus in the EU that **used wild animals**

% of adults who say	NET: Visited	In the past year	More than 1 year ago and up to 5 years ago	More than 5 years ago and up to 10 years ago	More than 10 years ago and up to 20 years ago	More than 20 years ago	Never	Don't know or can't remember
Total	77%	6%	16%	16%	16%	23%	14%	9%
Germany	80%	4%	16%	15%	17%	28%	12%	8%
Poland	80%	7%	18%	16%	18%	21%	11%	9%
Hungary	77%	7%	21%	16%	15%	19%	16%	6%
France	76%	8%	16%	17%	16%	20%	13%	11%

Spain	75%	4%	14%	17%	17%	23%	15%	9%
Czechia	74%	5%	13%	14%	16%	26%	16%	11%
Italy	74%	4%	15%	17%	15%	23%	16%	10%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425)

Visited a circus in the EU that **did not use wild animals**

% of adults who say	NET: Visited at some point	In the past year	More than 1 year ago and up to 5 years ago	More than 5 years ago and up to 10 years ago	More than 10 years ago and up to 20 years ago	More than 20 years ago	Never	Don't know or can't remember
Total	66%	6%	16%	14%	13%	17%	22%	13%
Germany	76%	5%	18%	15%	15%	22%	13%	12%
Spain	69%	7%	18%	14%	14%	16%	19%	12%
Italy	66%	4%	16%	15%	13%	18%	21%	13%
Hungary	65%	6%	19%	14%	11%	16%	26%	9%
Poland	64%	10%	17%	12%	13%	13%	21%	15%
France	63%	8%	13%	14%	13%	14%	24%	13%
Czechia	55%	4%	9%	11%	12%	18%	29%	16%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425), Czechia (n= 1,033), France (n= 1,094), Germany (n= 1,081), Hungary (n= 1,093), Italy (n= 1,074), Poland (n= 1,011), Spain (n= 1,039)

Q3. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Note: Wild animals often used in circuses include elephants, lions, tigers, hippos, monkeys, zebras, giraffes, bears, parrots and reptiles.

% of adults who say	Net: Agree	Net: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The use of wild animals in circuses is cruel	68%	15%	44%	23%	15%	9%	6%	2%
It is unnecessary to use wild animals in circuses	66%	15%	44%	22%	16%	9%	6%	2%
The use of wild animals in circuses is outdated	59%	18%	36%	23%	19%	11%	7%	4%
Circuses with human performers are more enjoyable than ones that use wild animals	59%	15%	34%	25%	23%	10%	5%	3%
Wild animals are a vital part of circuses	33%	45%	10%	23%	19%	16%	30%	3%
Circuses would not be as enjoyable without wild animals	29%	50%	9%	20%	18%	16%	34%	3%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425)

<i>% of adults who say NET: Agree</i>	The use of wild animals in circuses is cruel	It is unnecessary to use wild animals in circuses	The use of wild animals in circuses is outdated	Circuses with human performers are more enjoyable than ones that use wild animals	Wild animals are a vital part of circuses	Circuses would not be as enjoyable without wild animals
Total	68%	66%	59%	59%	33%	29%
Poland	78%	76%	69%	64%	32%	26%
Italy	77%	77%	70%	73%	20%	20%
Spain	75%	69%	62%	66%	27%	26%
Germany	70%	71%	67%	57%	33%	25%
Hungary	66%	61%	53%	62%	40%	39%
France	61%	65%	58%	54%	40%	28%
Czechia	50%	45%	38%	38%	42%	41%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425), Czechia (n= 1,033), France (n= 1,094), Germany (n =1,081), Hungary (n= 1,093), Italy (n= 1,074), Poland (n= 1,011), Spain (n= 1,039)

Q4. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the role of using wild animals in circuses?

Note: Wild animals often used in circuses include elephants, lions, tigers, hippos, monkeys, zebras, giraffes, bears, parrots and reptiles.

<i>% of adults who say</i>	Net: Agree	Net: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Showing wild animals performing tricks and being dominated by tamers does not have any educational value	59%	17%	36%	23%	20%	11%	6%	4%
Showing wild animals performing tricks and being dominated by tamers may have a negative psychological impact on children	46%	25%	23%	23%	23%	15%	9%	6%
The use of wild animals in circuses poses a risk to public safety and health	42%	29%	19%	23%	25%	18%	11%	4%
Working with wild animals stimulates their intelligence and it keeps them fit and agile	24%	47%	6%	18%	23%	18%	29%	6%
Circuses showing wild animals is educational	20%	56%	5%	15%	20%	21%	36%	3%

Using wild animals in circuses supports the conservation of the species	18%	59%	5%	13%	19%	20%	39%	4%
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Base: All respondents (n= 7,425)

% of adults who say NET: Agree	Showing wild animals performing tricks and being dominated by tamers does not have any educational value	Showing wild animals performing tricks and being dominated by tamers may have a negative psychological impact on children	The use of wild animals in circuses poses a risk to public safety and health	Working with wild animals stimulates their intelligence and it keeps them fit and agile	Circuses showing wild animals is educational	Using wild animals in circuses supports the conservation of the species
Total	59%	46%	42%	24%	20%	18%
Italy	70%	57%	47%	14%	10%	12%
Poland	67%	58%	53%	24%	18%	10%
Spain	66%	51%	59%	20%	18%	17%
Germany	59%	41%	31%	20%	15%	14%
France	57%	38%	38%	25%	22%	23%
Hungary	48%	48%	42%	27%	32%	25%
Czechia	45%	33%	27%	36%	25%	24%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425), Czechia (n= 1,033), France (n= 1,094), Germany (n= 1,081), Hungary (n= 1,093), Italy (n= 1,074), Poland (n= 1,011), Spain (n= 1,039)

Q5. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the future of circuses?

Note: Wild animals often used in circuses include elephants, lions, tigers, hippos, monkeys, zebras, giraffes, bears, parrots and reptiles.

% of adults who say	Net: Agree	Net: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Circuses that still use wild animals must reinvent themselves by developing high quality shows with human performers	69%	12%	42%	26%	17%	7%	4%	3%
Wild animals should not be bred and kept in captivity for the purpose of performing in circuses	68%	13%	47%	21%	16%	8%	6%	2%
Wild animals should not be used for public entertainment	68%	15%	47%	21%	16%	9%	5%	2%
I would prefer to visit circuses that have human performers	64%	15%	42%	21%	18%	9%	6%	3%

instead of wild animals								
The use of wild animals in circuses has no place in modern society	61%	19%	39%	21%	18%	12%	7%	3%
It should be acceptable to use wild animals in circuses if they are treated well	42%	37%	17%	26%	19%	15%	22%	2%
Wild animals have been used in circuses for decades and should continue that way	23%	57%	8%	15%	17%	18%	40%	3%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425)

<i>% of adults who say NET: Agree</i>	Circuses that still use wild animals must reinvent themselves by developing high quality shows with human performers	Wild animals should not be bred and kept in captivity for the purpose of performing in circuses	Wild animals should not be used for public entertainment	I would prefer to visit circuses that have human performers instead of wild animals	The use of wild animals in circuses has no place in modern society	It should be acceptable to use wild animals in circuses if they are treated well	Wild animals have been used in circuses for decades and should continue that way
Total	69%	68%	68%	64%	61%	42%	23%
Italy	79%	78%	78%	79%	69%	30%	14%
Spain	76%	74%	73%	70%	68%	40%	20%
Poland	75%	74%	76%	72%	74%	39%	15%
Germany	69%	71%	69%	64%	64%	33%	20%
France	67%	63%	62%	58%	58%	40%	24%
Hungary	65%	68%	68%	60%	55%	53%	29%
Czechia	47%	51%	48%	42%	40%	60%	39%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425), Czechia (n= 1,033), France (n= 1,094), Germany (n= 1,081), Hungary (n= 1,093), Italy (n= 1,074), Poland (n= 1,011), Spain (n= 1,039)

Q6. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the role of the European Union in this matter?

Note: Wild animals often used in circuses include elephants, lions, tigers, hippos, monkeys, zebras, giraffes, bears, parrots and reptiles.

<i>% of adults who say</i>	Net: Agree	Net: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The EU should guarantee that cruel uses of animals are not allowed	83%	7%	62%	20%	9%	4%	3%	2%
The EU should be an international leader on animal welfare	77%	7%	51%	26%	13%	4%	3%	3%

The EU should ban the use of all wild animals in circuses	62%	19%	43%	19%	16%	10%	9%	3%
The use of wild animals in circuses should be managed by the EU because of the free movement of goods and services throughout Member States	55%	16%	31%	24%	22%	8%	8%	7%
The EU should ban the use of all animals in circuses, regardless of whether they are wild or domesticated	54%	24%	35%	19%	19%	13%	11%	3%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425)

% of adults who say NET: Agree	The EU should guarantee that cruel uses of animals are not allowed	The EU should be an international leader on animal welfare	The EU should ban the use of all wild animals in circuses	The use of wild animals in circuses should be managed by the EU because of the free movement of goods and services throughout Member States	The EU should ban the use of all animals in circuses , regardless of whether they are wild or domesticated
Total	83%	77%	62%	55%	54%
Italy	89%	84%	74%	62%	68%
Poland	85%	79%	72%	67%	65%
Spain	85%	84%	72%	68%	67%
Hungary	83%	80%	57%	66%	49%
Germany	81%	75%	63%	40%	49%
France	80%	74%	61%	50%	50%
Czechia	75%	62%	39%	32%	32%

Base: All respondents (n= 7,425), Czechia (n= 1,033), France (n= 1,094), Germany (n= 1,081), Hungary (n= 1,093), Italy (n= 1,074), Poland (n= 1,011), Spain (n= 1,039)

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