



European Zoo Community Honours Dr. Miklós Persányi

Amsterdam 2 October 2020: The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), the representative body of the continent's leading *ex situ* conservation and science engagement centres, today bestowed its highest honours on Dr. Miklós Persányi. Dr. Persányi is the recently retired Director of Budapest Zoo, and former Minister of the Environment and Water for the Republic of Hungary, and receives from EAZA a Lifetime Achievement Award, and Honorary Membership of the Association.

Dr. Miklós Persányi assumed the role of Director of Budapest Zoo in 1994, five years into a new and uncertain era for Hungary. With a short interruption in the 2000s when Miklós championed nature on behalf of the Hungarian state as Minister of the Environment, his Directorship continued until February of this year. In that time, the Budapest Zoo has developed into a centre of excellence in the country, the wider region, and Europe as a whole, undergoing significant restoration and development over the course of Miklós' tenure. Budapest's influence and expertise have also allowed several zoos in regional developing countries to progress along the same route that the zoo itself has taken.

Dr. Thomas Kauffels, Chair of EAZA, paid tribute to Dr. Persányi, himself a former Chair of the Association in an introductory speech to the EAZA Annual Conference, this year held online:

"I would like to express the respect and affection of the wider EAZA community for Miklós", he said. "He has always been a strong voice for his beliefs and I have no doubt that Hungary's commitment to improving environmental outcomes has been driven to an extent by his tenacity". The EAZA community, consisting of nearly 430 Members across 48 countries, and employing thousands of scientists, conservationists, animal health and care professionals recognizes the great achievement of Dr. Miklós Persányi, and wishes him well for a long and happy retirement.

The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) is the Membership organisation of the continent's most progressive zoos and aquariums. With nearly 430 Members in 48 countries, EAZA is one of the world's largest regional associations and coordinates joint work on *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of animal species, zoological research and public education, with the aim of building coalitions to prevent the extinction of species and encourage their recovery.

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