

# Press Release

## Petition-Handover

### Will the EU become a dolphinarium-free zone?

**60,588 EU citizens say No! to the import of dolphins and the construction of new dolphinaria within the EU. The signatures, collected by a consortium of international NGOs\*, will be handed over to the EU ambassador Michael Reiterer on November 17th 2011 in Bern, Switzerland.**

In some parts of the world, dolphins are still captured from the wild for the international dolphinarium industry, including in the brutal drive hunts in Japan - as exposed in the Oscar-winning documentary film "The Cove". These captures threaten the very survival of wild dolphin populations. Breeding dolphins in captivity is difficult and so trade in wild caught dolphins has become a lucrative business. The groups are afraid that this situation will lead to further imports of wild caught dolphins into the EU.

Furthermore, it is impossible to keep dolphins under conditions which meet their biological needs, as required by EU legislation. As migratory, social animals capable of travelling a hundred miles a day, their behavioural and psychological needs cannot be met in a small, concrete tank.

Compared to their natural habitat, a dolphinarium pool is too small, too shallow, too bare and lacking in environmental stimulation. This can create a very stressful situation for dolphins held in captivity, who live shorter lives than their free-living, wild counterparts.

"Only an immediate EU ban on the construction of new dolphinaria and a prohibition on trade in dolphins will end the suffering of these magnificent animals and bring this cruel practice to an end." says Sigrid Lüber from OceanCare.

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#### Note to Editors

1 WDCS' report on dolphinaria in the EU and in association with Born Free Foundation and ENDCAP, can be found here - [www.wdcs.org/captivityreport](http://www.wdcs.org/captivityreport)

\* OceanCare, The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), Born Free Foundation, Dolphin Days, European network to END the keeping of wild animals in CAPtivity (ENDCAP), Underwater Research Society – Marine Mammals Research Group (SAD-DEMAG), Zürcher Tierschutz, KRAX, Pro Wildlife, FAADA, Fundacion para la Adopcion, Apadrinamiento y Defensa de los Animals, Robin Des Bois, M.E.E.R. e.V.

