

Ms Agnès Pannier-Runacher
Ministre
Ministère de la Transition écologique, de l'Énergie, du Climat et de la Prévention des risques
Hôtel de Roquelaure
246, Boulevard Saint-Germain
75007
Paris
France

13.12.24

Re: Marineland Antibes Orcas : Why A Sanctuary Must Be Considered

Dear Ministre Pannier-Runacher:

Further to our previous letter to you in January this year, I write to you again on behalf of the Dolphinarium-Free Europe coalition with regard to the two remaining orcas, Wikie and Keijo, currently held at Marineland, Antibes.

As the court has ruled the orcas must remain in France for now, we urge you to adopt transfer to a sanctuary as the best alternative, rather than consent to these orcas being moved to another commercial captive facility, even if it is within the European Union. Orcas are highly intelligent, socially complex, wide-ranging animals who suffer when placed in a small concrete enclosure. While no captive environment can truly mimic their wild habitat, a sanctuary would provide them with more space, more natural conditions and greater variation in surroundings, which would vastly improve their lives. They would no longer have to perform for food reward in bland confined conditions, lessening stress and providing a better quality of life. Authentic sanctuaries do not breed to prevent another generation of animals suffering in captivity.

Dolphinaria-Free Europe fully supports the establishment of Seaside Sanctuaries and has developed a [criteria document](#) for such facilities. Several sanctuary projects are in various stages of development and we urge the government to give serious consideration to this option, which we believe is in the best interests of the two Marineland orcas. It is vital that Wikie and Keijo are housed together to keep their family bond intact. By giving them the opportunity of retirement at a sanctuary where they can live much healthier, far more fulfilled lives, France would become the first country to give ex-display orcas the opportunity of living the remainder of their lives in as natural surroundings as possible, with the focus truly on animal welfare.

We hope that you will consider our request and we remain at your disposal should you have any questions or wish to discuss this in greater detail.

Yours sincerely



Margaux Dodds

Chair

Dolphinaria-Free Europe Coalition

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Animal Welfare Institute ▪ Anima International ▪ British Divers Marine Life Rescue ▪ Born Free Foundation ▪ Djurrattsalliansen ▪ Free Morgan Foundation ▪ Kyma Sea Conservation ▪ LAV ▪ Marine Connection ▪ Ocean Care ▪ One Voice ▪ Sea First Foundation ▪ Vilde Delfiner ▪ UAnimals ▪ Whale and Dolphin Conservation ▪ World Animal Protection ▪ & individual members