



**INTERGROUP  
ON THE WELFARE  
& CONSERVATION  
OF ANIMALS**

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Established in 1983

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Brussels, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Ref. ER/19/2013

Dear President,

In our capacity as Members of the parliamentary Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, we would like to express our enormous dismay following the brutal murder of Jairo Mora Sandoval, a 26-year-old conservationist dedicated to the protection of sea turtle eggs from poachers, which took place on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2013 at *Playa Moín* on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica.

We call on your leadership for immediate justice: the murderers need to be identified, prosecuted and punished to the full extent of the law. It is of extreme importance to send a clear message to all citizens, conservationists and tourists, that sea turtle poachers and drug dealers do not rule Costa Rica's beaches.

Costa Rica is respected around the world for its history of ocean and environmental conservation and for its peaceful, safe society that supports ecotourism. Now that brave Jairo Mora Sandoval has been murdered, all anti-poaching activities by the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network - WIDECAST (the organisation Mora Sandoval used worked for) will be suspended in order not to risk human lives, as already announced by Costa Rica Coordinator Didiher Chacón. Sea turtle protection is at stake, as conservation projects rely on tourists from all over the world to participate in night beach patrols. Now that Jairo Mora Sandoval's atrocious murder has shown that not only sea turtle eggs, but also human lives are jeopardised on Costa Rican beaches, the entire economy related to ecotourism is endangered.

We call on you to take prompt and firm action and send a clear message to all sea turtle poachers across the Country that their illegal actions will no longer be tolerated. Law enforcement should be multiplied in order to protect sea turtle eggs and guarantee volunteer safety. It would also be appropriate to start an investigation in order to exclude any possible omission or complicity by the local authorities involved.

We hope that this tragic death will at least mark a historic turning point towards the end of violence on sea turtle nesting beaches and towards the end of poaching in Costa Rica.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Andrea Zaroni,

Member of the European Parliament and Vice President of the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals

Dan Jørgensen,

Member of the European Parliament and President of the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals





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