

### MEPs demand action on bear farms

A European Parliament resolution calling on China to ban the farming of bears for their bile was passed in January. The Resolution was approved by more than half of the Parliament's 732 members, with cross-party support, making it official European Parliament policy.

Asiatic Black Bears (Moon bears) are incarcerated in tiny wire cages with rusting metal catheters implanted in their abdomens through which bile is extracted for use in traditional medicines. The procedure causes extreme agony. Although the Chinese Government has closed down some farms, there are still more than 7,000 bears imprisoned in cages on over 200 farms across China. Moon bears can expect to live up to 30 years in the wild, but life expectancy falls to 10-12 years for caged bears.

Condemning the practice Peter Skinner MEP said: "These farms are still legal in China, and the barbaric torture continues. We intend to keep this issue alive so the Chinese government will have to close the farms before the international press descends on them in 2008."

The Resolution has been forwarded to the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the Member States.