

The President's Office
Boduthakurufaanu Magu,
Male' 20113
Republic of Maldives

Switzerland, Affoltern a. A., 30.03.2021

More shark protection, not less.

Dear Mr. President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih,

Dear members of the government,

Sharkproject is an internationally active marine and shark conservation organisation that has been working closely with partners from environmental protection organisations as well as tourism providers in the Maldives for many years. Our common concern is the protection of the oceans and a sustainable and successful tourism that reconciles the interests of nature with those of its people and the economy.

We fully respect the independence, laws and the political decisions of the Maldives. As a conservation organisation, however, we are extremely concerned about the current parliamentary discussion that is considering the removal of shark protection in the Maldives based on a proposal from the Ministry of Fisheries.

This issue is now causing discussions worldwide, which may also have a negative impact on the image of the Maldives as a tourism destination. The abolition of shark protection would be an enormous step backwards, especially since the Maldives was awarded the "Shark Guardian of the Year 2012". At the time, the award was given for the establishment of a 90,000 km² shark protection zone which has covered the entire territory of the Maldives since 2010. Furthermore, the trade in shark products was banned, turning The Maldives into pioneers of shark protection, while setting a clear international signal for the conservation of the marine ecosystem.

The implementation of the mentioned policies and regulations, should be continued in the future, benefiting not only the environment, but the local economy as well. Those essential decisions in the past decade, have greatly impacted the growth of the Maldivian tourism, after all. We strongly hope that this law, which is so important for both the Maldivian economy and the shark population, will continue to be upheld and hereby kindly ask you to support it.

Sharks are a very important component of a functioning ecosystem. Sustainable marine conservation means resource preservation for future generations and gives hope for livelihood security for the population for today and tomorrow. As mentioned above, tourism is a very important building block for the prosperity of the population. This can and will only function in a healthy environment that is characterised by species and marine conservation.

We would like to continue reporting on the successful efforts of the Maldives in terms of species and marine conservation. We hope that we will soon be able to spread the positive news that shark conservation will continue to be enshrined in law in the Maldives and perhaps even be more strictly controlled in the future.

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, we in Europe feel that the desire to travel is picking up again among Europeans. In many European countries, the broad vaccination campaigns are now starting, and travel will soon be possible again. We are aware that the situation in the Maldives is not easy for the population either. We ask for your patience knowing that a live shark is worth more to the Maldives than a dead shark. Tourism will bloom again and divers, snorkellers and animal lovers from all over the world should be able to enjoy the intact underwater world.

As a shark conservation organisation and regular guests, we feel very connected to the Maldives. We support local scientific projects and are happy to continue to support further scientific activities in the Maldives in the future, in order to contribute together to the conservation of the oceans. For this, however, it is necessary that the legal framework continues to ensure the protection of sharks.

We therefore kindly ask you to do everything in your power to ensure that shark protection in the Maldives is not abolished. Ideally, it should expand even further in order to protect our valuable sealife, and the population living off of tourism.

SHARKPROJECT International

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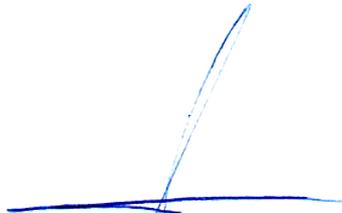
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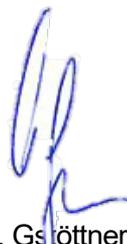
SHARKPROJECT Germany e.V.
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SHARKPROJECT Switzerland

We are very grateful for your collaboration and reply on this regard!

Best regards,



A. Smolinsky
President



C. Gsöttner
Vice President



P. Schwertfeger
Country Chair
Germany



H. Futterknecht
Country Chairman
Austria



D. Smolinsky
Country Chair
Switzerland

About Sharkproject

Sharkproject is a species conservation organisation founded in 2002 that works to protect over 500 shark species and the marine ecosystem. All employees work on a voluntary basis. All donations directly benefit shark conservation projects and the associated education and information work. In addition to the umbrella organisation Sharkproject International, there are currently country organisations in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Since 2016, Sharkproject has been a full member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the world's largest network for environmental and species protection. Please find more information at: www.sharkproject.org

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