

Minutes

**8TH MEETING OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS OF THE COMPETENT
CITES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES**

Brussels, 19 September 2017

Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of the previous meeting

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Summary of conclusions of the 7th Expert Group meeting

The summary of conclusions of the 7th Expert Group was adopted without changes.

Nature of the meeting

The meeting gathered representatives of the CITES Management Authorities of **26** EU Member States.

List of points discussed

3. Update on on-going activities

The Commission informed about the current state of the revision of the Suspension Regulation. In the context of the consultation a limited number of technical comments had been received. The Commission would circulate a revised version soon and launch the internal process for adoption.

4. EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking (WAP)

4.1 Survey on ivory trade in the EU

The Commission pointed out that the [public consultation on ivory trade in the EU](#) had been launched on 15/9/17 and would end on 8/12/17. Member States were invited to widely share this information with their stakeholders.

The aim of the consultation would be to gain a better picture on legal and illegal ivory trade in the EU and the possible link with global illegal trade in ivory. The evaluation of the replies would show whether a new initiative on ivory trade would be justified.

Moreover, the Commission indicated that it would organise early December a consultation meeting on ivory trade with stakeholders from the industry, civil society / NGOs and experts on ivory trade for which it would welcome suggestions for relevant participants from the Member States.

Furthermore, the Commission stressed that revision of a report on ivory trade in the EU by TRAFFIC would be finalised and be circulated in the coming weeks.

4.2 Next steps

The Commission gave an update on the latest developments in respect to the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking (WAP) at domestic and international level.

It recalled that environmental crime had been recognised as one of the priorities for the EU strategy against organised crime. Under the lead of DG HOME, a Multiannual Strategic Plan for 2018 – 2021 for addressing environmental crime has been designed and an Operational Action Plan for 2018 will be elaborated at a meeting with Member States at Europol on 5 and 6 October 2017. Wildlife trafficking and waste trafficking are identified as the main priorities for this strategy. Europol is likely to receive reinforcement for environmental crime.

Furthermore, 2.5M€ should be made available for environmental crime under DG HOME's internal fund for Security later in 2017. The Commission invited Member States to reflect on projects and programmes to be funded under this initiative.

At international level, the UN General Assembly adopted on 11/9/17 a resolution [on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife \(adopted on 11 September 2017\)](#) on Wildlife trafficking.

The Commission reminded that it would need to report on the implementation of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking by July 2018. Member States would receive more information regarding the structure and timeline of the report in the coming weeks. The report would be transmitted to the Council and EP for their consideration.

5. Guidance documents

5.1 Overview document

The Commission stressed that further work would still needed to be done.

5.2 Guidance on ivory trade – follow-up further to adoption on 16 May 2017

The Chair reminded Member States to ensure implementation of the document adopted in May.

5.3 Review of guidance document on rhino horns

The Expert Group discussed a draft proposal laying out the steps for a possible review of the guidance document on the "export, re-export, import and intra-Union trade of rhinoceros horns" published in January 2016.

It was decided that the Management and Enforcement Authorities of the Member States would be asked to reply to a number of questions set out in this document by 13/10/10 taking into consideration the CITES context. The Commission stressed the importance of liaising to this extend with the stakeholders at national level.

Concerns were expressed on the evolution of the domestic legislation of South Africa on trade in rhino horns. The Commission representative explained that a number of discussions had taken place at various levels with South Africa on this issue, where the

Commission stressed the importance for South Africa to have a clear legislation in place and to adhere to CITES rules.

6. EU Wildlife Trade 2015 (UNEP-WCMC)

6.1 Analysis of the European Union and candidate countries' annual reports to CITES 2015

The Commission underlined the importance of the report by WCMC. Moreover, its representative noted the long two year time span between the publication of the report and the data it referred to, which could be bridged by the publication of the of the first (general) part at an earlier stage.

Member States acknowledged the high value of the report as a good source of information. The procedure and documents used as basis for the production of the report were discussed.

The Commission invited Member States to provide their contributions on the 2015 report and the future process by 13/10/2017.

6.2 Addendum Possible discrepancies in EU Wildlife Trade 2015

See 6.1

6.3 Recommendations and potential transgressions for EU CITES Authorities

See 6.1

7. Intra-EU Working group on trade in rosewood species

The Commission's representative recalled that the last meeting of the Management Committee in June had decided to create this working group to a) prepare an EU document for the next CITES Standing Committee (27/11 - 1/12/2017) and b) share information on the challenges associated with the implementation of the listing of *Dalbergia* spp. and the solutions to address them.

Moreover, the Commission thanked Member States for their contributions to the document submitted to the Plants Committee. The outcome of the Plants Committee had been very positive, though further outreach to third countries will be needed in view of the Standing Committee meeting.

The Chair of the Plants Committee would recommend to the Standing Committee the adoption of an interim interpretation of annotation #15, in line with what was recommended by the Plants Committee. The Commission was therefore advised by the CITES Secretariat that it would not be necessary for the EU to submit an additional document to the Standing Committee.

In addition, the suggestion to amend annotation #15 and delete the term "non-commercial" at the next CITES CoP received positive feedback from a number of stakeholders during the Plants Committee meeting. The Standing Committee Working Group on annotations would be leading the process and try to identify a way towards the next COP. The Chair of the Standing Committee Working Group on annotations would also include in its report to SC69 the preliminary results of the CITES timber tree study initiated a few years ago, but unfortunately never completed, with a view to

informing discussions regarding the potential need to streamline certain existing timber annotations.

The Commission further reported about a bilateral meeting with Indonesia in the margins of the Plants Committee and the fact that Indonesia would be issuing both CITES export permits and FLEGT licenses for CITES timber shipments, though EU Member States authorities were formally only obliged to verify CITES documents.

8. CITES Annotations – Annex B Appendix II – *Pericopsis elata* (BE)

The group exchanged experiences about cases where shipments of *Pericopsis elata* had undergone a limited transformation, with the effect that it was questionable whether the shipments would be covered by annotation #5 or whether these would escape CITES controls.

The Commission asked Member States in such borderline cases to contact the relevant authorities in the exporting countries. Member States were also invited to share any relevant information and material, including with the EU working group on timber established under the Enforcement Group.

The Chair recalled that inspections were in place to ensure legal trade and that the necessary information should be shared with the Competent Authorities in charge of the EU Timber Regulation. Moreover, he pointed out the importance of a harmonised approach towards such situations.

9. Draft Resolution by the European Parliament on Whaling and trade in whale products

The Commission explained that the resolution which had been adopted by the European Parliament on 12/09/2017 related to the hunting of whales in Norway but also to the trade of whale meat under CITES. In its resolution, the EP requested the Commission to collect data on shipments of whalemeat transferred through EU ports, as well as to ban the transit of whale meat through EU ports.

Some Member States questioned whether this request needed to be dealt with by the CITES authorities as the transit of the species was legal and suggested that it should be dealt with by the Fishery authorities instead.

The Commission underlined that it had to reply to the Parliament and provide the requested data. Member States were thus asked to deliver, in collaboration with their customs authorities the necessary data on the transit of whale meat through their respective ports for the last 5 years by 20/10/2017.

The Commission would give more information to the Expert Group in November.

10. EU approach to address biodiversity threats linked to the Bsal pathogene

The Commission representative informed that the new proposal for a "draft Commission Implementing Decision on certain animal health protection measures in relation to the fungus *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal)" had been tabled by DG SANTE for discussion in the PAFF (Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed) on 18-19/09/2017.

The Commission would inform the Member States on the further developments and the adoption.

11. Information on EU funded-programmes linked to wildlife trade

The Commission gave an update on the projects funded / to be funded by the EU. At domestic level, the internal fund for security management (DG HOME) would provide 2.5M€ for environmental crime which would include wildlife trafficking. In 2018, the LIFE programme would offer new possibilities to fund projects linked to governance and wildlife issues.

The Chair informed about the [Environmental Implementation Review](#) (EIR), a recent DG ENV initiative and tool to improve implementation of EU environmental law and policy. Aiming at sharing expertise and best practices Member States would be able to benefit from the TAIEX-EIR peer 2 peer mechanism for which they could revert to the Commission.

At international level the EU provided 2.25M€ to the CITES secretariat for the implementation of the last CITES COP decisions, with a specific focus on marine issues, as well as 7M€ for the CITES tree programme. For the first time the EU decided to support the African elephant fund (1M€). By the beginning of 2018, the EU would also dedicate substantial funding for the ICCWC¹.

One Member State inquired about the Commission's support for the EPIX system allowing for the digitalisation of CITES certificates. The Commission invited the MS to provide more information on this issue.

12. Any other business

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Conclusion / recommendations / opinions and next steps

Conclusions and next steps have been indicated above for each agenda point.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Expert Group is scheduled for 14 November 2017.

¹ International Consortium for Combating Wildlife Crime

8th Meeting of the Group of experts of the competent CITES management authorities

Brussels, 19 September 2017

List of participants

MEMBER STATE	ORGANISATION	PARTICIPANTS
BELGIUM	Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain and Environment	2
BULGARIA	Ministry of Environment and Water	1
CROATIA	Ministry of Environment and Energy	2
CZECH REPUBLIC	Ministry of the Environment	1
	Permanent Representation of CZ to the EU	0
	Agency for Nature Conservation	0
CYPRUS	Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment	0
DENMARK	Environmental Protection Agency	1
GERMANY	Bundesamt für Naturschutz	1
	Federal Ministry for the Environment	1
ESTONIA	Ministry of Environment	1
IRELAND	Irish CITES Management Authority	1
GREECE	Ministry of the Environment and Energy	0
SPAIN	Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad	1
FRANCE	Ministère de la Transition écologique et solidaire, Direction de l'eau et de la biodiversité	2
ITALY	Ministero dell'Ambiente – CITES Management Authority	2
	Arma dei Carabinieri – CITES Enforcement Authority	1
LATVIA	Nature Conservation Agency	1
LITHUANIA	Environmental Protection Agency	1
LUXEMBOURG	Ministry for sustainable Development and Infrastructures - Environment department	1

HUNGARY	Ministry of Agriculture, CITES SA	1
MALTA	Environment and Resources Authority	2
NETHERLANDS	Ministry of Economic Affairs	1
	MA CITES – RVO	1
AUSTRIA	Ministry of the Environment	1
POLAND	Ministry of Environment	1
	State Council for Nature Conservation	1
PORTUGAL	Instituto da Conservação da Natureza	1
ROMANIA	Ministry of Environment	1
SLOVENIA	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenian Environment Agency	1
SLOVAKIA	Ministry of Environment	1
FINLAND	Finnish Environment Institute	1
	Ministry of Environment	0
SWEDEN	Swedish Board of Agriculture – CITES MA	1
	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	0
UNITED KINGDOM	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	1