

Minutes

**9th MEETING OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS OF THE
COMPETENT CITES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES**

Brussels, 14 November 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 8th Expert Group meeting

The summary of conclusions of the 8th Expert Group was adopted without changes.

Nature of the meeting

The meeting gathered representatives of the CITES Management Authorities of **24** EU Members States

List of points discussed

3. Update on on-going activities

./.

4. EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking

4.1 Survey on ivory trade in the EU

The Commission recalled that the public consultation had been launched on 15/9/17 and would end on 8/12/17. Around 7000 replies had already been received by 14/11/17. Most of the replies had been given by individuals, rather than by organisations or economic actors involved in legal ivory trade. The results of the survey will be reflected in the progress report of the Wildlife Action Plan scheduled for July 2018.

4.2 Stakeholder meeting on ivory trade (08/12/17)

The Commission indicated that the stakeholder meeting on ivory trade would take place at the closing date of the public consultation on 8/12/17. The meeting would primarily aim at hearing the views of the stakeholders on the consultation. The Commission underlined that it would be important to reach out to a maximum to those sectors which would likely be affected by a possible initiative on ivory trade. The meeting would be web-streamed and Member States were invited as observers.

4.3 Progress report on the implementation of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking

The Commission referred to the suggested draft structure of the progress report which had been circulated to the Member States on 31/10/2017. A formal request for contributions would be sent to the Member States in December for reply by the end of January 2018. All important measures and actions taken by the Member States in relation to the WAP would need to be reflected in the report. The report would be scheduled for adoption in July 2018 and transmitted to the Council and the European Parliament.

5. Guidance documents

5.1 Overview document

The overview document on topics for which guidance would need to be developed was tabled for information.

The Commission explained that the overview document had been the result of past discussions relating to possible issues which could either lead to the revision of EU legislation or clarification under the form of guidance and that a number of Member States had volunteered to contribute. Guidance documents as on worked specimens, ivory or rhino horns had been adopted. In other areas and notably on the topics listed in the tabled overview there had been limited progress beside the guidance on "proof for legal acquisition". The Commission hoped to make more progress in the future.

5.2 Review of guidance document on rhino horns

The Commission thanked Member States for their useful contributions. A large majority of Member States considered the guidance document on rhino horns as very useful and there seemed to be an emerging consensus for its extension. The document had been used to motivate decisions on applications for CITES documentation and in some cases upheld Court refusals.

One Member State suggested a uniform interpretation for import applications of rhino horns for personal purposes from Africa. Although there had been very little trade data, the Commission would consider this proposal in the future guidance document.

The Commission would prepare a revised document for consideration at the next Expert Group meeting.

6. Annual illegal trade reports for 2016 transmitted to the CITES Secretariat

For the first time the EU Member States had to report on illegal trade data to the CITES Secretariat. The Commission recalled that both the Enforcement and Expert Groups had agreed beforehand that the European Commission would, with the assistance of TRAFFIC, compile all reports from the EU Member States and send them in one single transmission to the CITES Secretariat.

On 31/10/17 the Commission was able to send on time 26 reports in one batch (the two remaining reports being sent afterwards). This first experience was perceived as rather positive although 10 Member States had sent their reports also to the CITES Secretariat.

The Commission stressed the importance of transmitting the latest data to the CITES Secretariat and that all data provided should be based on the seizures done in the Member States by the different authorities (customs, police inspections services).

The Commission reminded that the data would be used in the first place by the Enforcement Group.

Member States were invited to indicate by 15/01/2018 whether they would agree that their annual illegal trade report for 2016 (and subsequent years) could be made publically available.

7. EU Wildlife Trade 2016 (UNEP-WCMC)

The Commission informed that the EU Wildlife Trade report for 2016 was under preparation by WCMC.

8. Transit of whale meat through EU Member States

Following the resolution by the European Parliament on Whaling and trade in whale product adopted on 12/09/2017, Member States had been requested at the last Expert Group meeting to provide in collaboration with their custom authorities data on the transit of quantity whale meat through their respective ports for the last 5 years.

The Commission thanked the Expert Group for their feedback. In their responses Member States explained that after having checked with their custom services it would not be possible to receive a comprehensive overview of the quantity of whale meat transiting/transshipping through EU ports as there is no obligation to report such movements with sufficient details.

The Commission recalled the CITES obligation to inspect CITES goods in transit ensuring the correctness of permits.

As a result, the Commission stressed that it would ask DG SANTE for further clarification in relation to the veterinary angle and DG TAXUD in terms of the legal status of whale meat transits. Member States were requested to verify on their side and come back to the Commission. The Commission would review the matter and revert to the Member States.

9. Any other business

./.

Conclusions / 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 7 February 2017.

9th Meeting of the Group of experts of the competent CITES Management Authorities

Brussels, 14 November 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 Nature Protection	1
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	Ministry of Environment	1
GERMANY	Bundesamt für Naturschutz	1
	Federal Ministry for the Environment	2
ESTONIA	Ministry of Environment	2
IRELAND	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	1
GREECE	Ministry of the Environment and Energy	0
SPAIN	Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad	1
FRANCE	Ministère de l'écologie, de l'Energie et de la Mer	2
	Ministère des Affaires étrangères	0
ITALY	Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare	3
	Arma dei Carabinieri	1
LATVIA	Nature Conservation Agency	1
LITHUANIA	Environmental Protection Agency	1
LUXEMBOURG	Ministry for sustainable Development and Infrastructures - Environment department	0

HUNGARY	Ministry for Rural Development	2
MALTA	Environment & Resources Authority	2
NETHERLANDS	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	1
	RVO CITES Bureau Netherlands	1
AUSTRIA	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management	1
POLAND	Ministry of Environment	0
PORTUGAL	Instituto da Conservação da Natureza	1
ROMANIA	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	0
SLOVENIA	Ministry of Environment	1
SLOVAKIA	Ministry of Environment	1
FINLAND	Finnish Environment Institute	1
	Ministry of Environment	1
SWEDEN	Swedish Board of Agriculture	1
	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	0
UNITED KINGDOM	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	1