

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

AIR TRANSPORT OF LIVE SPECIMENS

The attached document has been submitted by the Secretariat at the request of the International Air Transport Association*.

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

The purpose of this information document, is to sensitize all to the need for a permanent representation function overseeing, monitoring and co-coordinating transportation as a subject matter of expertise, as well as transportation related initiatives, within the CITES secretariat and to stimulate eventual discussions that may lead towards the creation and funding of this important capacity.

Transportation of live specimens is an important aspect in the conservation and re-introduction of living species. Air transport is done on basic principles laid out in the Warsaw Convention created many years ago. Limits of liability exist but they do not cover the value of an animal unless special insurance has been taken (refer to the carrier's conditions of contract on the Air Waybill).

Under CITES, transportation is part of the interpretation and implementation process of the convention and more specifically under the trade control and marking mechanism (refer also to the Permits section).

The transportation of CITES listed species in trade, must therefore always continue and this regardless of how small or large these volumes are in the overall picture of an airline, freight forwarder or conservation operation. It must be said and repeated that these volumes are generally very low but each shipment requires special handling by not only the carriers and all staff, including regulators, must be competent to handle live animal shipments.

Whilst the implementation and interpretation of CITES decisions and resolutions is left with the Parties, the Conference of the Parties and delegated bodies, actual transportation of live specimens is done by specialized entities. In this regard it is important to note that unfortunately the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), despite its role in SAFETY, does not issue guidance in this matter, nor directly get involved with air transport of live specimens unless perhaps if it is invasive. Other international bodies such as for example the World Animal Health Organization (OIE), the European Commission or IATA do participate in the elaboration of guidance materials that affect or regulate CITES listed species further.

As is mentioned in Cop15 Doc33, road transport precedes and follows every air shipment. Indeed it is not difficult to fathom that animals have no particular purpose at an airport other than for transiting to an ultimate destination. What is important however is the continued availability of scheduled or ad hoc air services, the uplift capacity and frequency and this on a worldwide basis year-round! Coupled with the aforementioned comes the requirement of knowing how to effectively and successfully transport live specimens.

Management & scientific authorities and the CITES Secretariat in this regard play a crucial role. Indeed the subject of transportation, all modes combined, remains for the foreseeable future a permanent item on the Conference Agenda. The work done by the CITES transport group under the leadership of the Animals and Plants committees is crucial towards the well functioning of the Convention because if transportation is stopped, no trade can take place. IATA therefore supports the call for funding in the concluding remarks of paragraph 7 (CoP15 Doc. 33 – p. 2).

It would be wise for the standing committee and therefore the Conference, to look ahead and ensure that transportation as a service continues to be available to its constituents, for it to take place unhindered but well regulated within the boundaries of the Convention. This would benefit the Ministries or Agencies that must effectively manage and enforce the Convention on behalf of the Parties, as well as the stakeholders involved in transportation activities.

In closing, let me on behalf of IATA thank you all for the support over the years towards the regulations contained in the Live Animals and Perishable Cargo Regulations manuals. I wish all a successful Conference in Doha, Qatar.

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