

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



Sixteenth meeting of the Plants Committee
Lima (Peru), 3-8 July 2006

IRREGULARITIES IN *GALANTHUS* TRADE

1. This document has been prepared by the Management Authority of Switzerland.
2. Annex 5 of document PC16 Doc. 10.2 contains a report on a review of export of *Galanthus woronowii* from Georgia. The report concludes that this export is of least concern for the conservation of this species. This is mainly based on the estimated potential production. However, considerable problems with the survey of production and harvesting are mentioned and hence the assessment leaves some question marks.
3. The Management Authority of Switzerland would like to add some information on observations of irregularities in *Galanthus* trade. This information was already shared with the CITES Management Authority involved as well as with the Secretariat, the Chair of the Plants Committee, the European Commission and the Scientific Authority of Germany who developed the identification method.
4. There are still certain reservations with regard to DNA identification; possibly some errors could result from the application of this method, as it is quite new. Therefore we hesitated to submit this information to the Plants Committee. However, if results are correct, then it has to be concluded that serious irregularities occurred.
5. Our office seized a commercial shipment of 18,720 *Galanthus* bulbs (CITES Appendix II) that was imported on 18 August 2005 without any CITES documents. The bulbs were declared on the invoices as *Galanthus nivalis*. The aspect of the bulbs left us with some doubts and prompted us to further analyse the shipment. A sample was sent to a laboratory for DNA analysis at the Botanical Garden of the University of Osnabrück, Germany. We received the results in early 2006. From all evidence it seems certain, that the declaration on the invoice was false and that the bulbs are certainly not *Galanthus nivalis*.
6. Interestingly, it was not possible to unequivocally identify the species. According to the report of the laboratory, it rather seems that two taxa were mixed. One taxon shows similarities to *Galanthus alpinus* from central Georgia, but is not identical to it. The other taxon shows similarities to *Galanthus woronowii* and *Galanthus lagodechianus*, both naturally occurring in the Caucasus region. However, there was no sample in the reference collection of the University of Osnabrück which would match one of the two taxa of the shipment. This reference collection contains several documented samples of *Galanthus woronowii* and many other species.

7. Based on DNA evidence, with the reservations mentioned above, we think that the case deserves further investigation in order to obtain more conclusive data. It seems questionable whether *Galanthus* bulbs in trade exclusively originate from the controlled production of *Galanthus woronowii* in Georgia and possibly, other *Galanthus* species are harvested in other regions of the Caucasus and traded in an undocumented and uncontrolled way.
8. This should be considered in the frame of the CITES review process of *Galanthus woronowii* from Georgia.