

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

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Thirty-third meeting of the Animals Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 12 – 19 July 2024

Regional matters

Regional reports

EUROPE

1. This document has been submitted by the Regional Representative for Europe, Gerald Benyr (Austria) relating to agenda item 49.4.

## **Contributions of the European Union to the implementation of CITES relevant to the work of the Animals Committee (as part of the European Regional Report to AC33)**

This document has been submitted by the Regional Representative for Europe, Gerald Benyr (Austria). This document reports on activities undertaken in the region since the 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Animals Committee (Geneva, 19 – 23 June 2023).

### **General information**

Animal Committee (AC) members: Mathias Lörtscher (Switzerland) and Gerald Benyr (Austria). Alternate members: Mona van Schingen-Khan (Germany) and Ruslan Novitsky (Belarus). As Mathias Lörtscher has been elected as Chair of the Animals Committee, Ruslan Novitsky, as alternate, serves as the second representative of the region in the Animals Committee.

### **Financial contributions**

The European Union (EU) and its Member States have provided significant funding for or carried out a number of initiatives to support CITES implementation that are relevant to the work of the Animals Committee.

The EU has supported the CITES Secretariat in the implementation of CoP19 decisions. An allocation of USD 3 million was made for this purpose. The EU has also funded the Species+ website and status assessments for many CITES-listed species, as well as EU-Twix for the exchange of information on CITES enforcement issues.

### **Revision of EU rules governing trade in Appendix II and I specimens Revision of EU Wildlife Trade Regulations**

The most recent [Suspension Regulation \(2023/2770\)](#) was adopted on 12 December 2023. It takes into account nomenclatural changes adopted at the 19th Conference of the Parties to CITES. For some species, the prohibition of the introduction into the Union has been lifted. However, considering the most recent available information including advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES), the introduction into the EU of *Anguilla anguilla* is prohibited.

The EU is currently working on measures to comply with the decisions of SC77 regarding Res. Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) on *Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes*.

For more information on EU wildlife trade legislation, please visit the European Commission's website: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/home\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/home_en.htm)

## **Regional cooperation and priorities - Meetings and workshops**

### **The European Union Scientific Review Group (SRG)**

The SRG of the European Union with the CITES Scientific Authorities of the 27 Member States meets regularly (usually four times a year) to discuss scientific aspects of the implementation of CITES and the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations.

The introduction of Appendix A or B species into the EU requires that any advice provided by the SRG be taken into account by individual EU Member States (MS) when assessing import applications, unless new information has become available that should be taken into account, in accordance with Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97.

The SRG also works inter-sessionally, including through six working groups on specific taxa, to provide advice on scientific issues and to support the SRG.

Agendas and summaries of the meetings and further information on the work of the SRG can be found at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/srg\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/srg_en.htm)

In June 2024, a group of EU experts conducted a field visit to North Macedonia in order to better understand the situation regarding captive-breeding of live specimens of *Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, a training day for EU Scientific Authorities on “Captive breeding” was held, organised by UNEP-WCMC in order to improve the understanding of how to assess the plausibility of captive breeding claims.

In September 2023, the EU together with WCS held an event "Scaling up EU Impact to Combat Wildlife Trafficking - Renewing commitment through the revised EU WAP" in Brussels.

### **Other activities**

The European Commission contracted UNEP-WCMC to provide reports on biological and trade data for a large number of species traded under CITES, as well as a range of other scientific issues related to the implementation of CITES.

The European Commission has also contracted TRAFFIC to monitor the implementation and enforcement of EU Wildlife Trade Legislation and to provide studies and assessments on specific issues.

As part of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking, the European Commission contracted Vet Effect in order to carry out a study on demand reduction for illegally sourced exotic pets in the EU, which is currently underway.

EU Member States have been and are working on specific tools, reports or handouts to better implement the convention, that are made available online. For example, there is currently work in progress in Germany to assess the captive-breeding potential of the reptile and

amphibian species listed at CoP19. Germany has also worked on a morphological identification guide for Asian newts to assist implementation of recent listings.

The EU has funded a new section of the [Species+](#) database called “CITES processes” which can be found under the “legal” tab on the species pages. This section provides information on the status of species currently included in the CITES Review of Significant Trade (Resolution 12.8 (Rev. CoP18) and links to the Secretariat’s database on RST, as well as whether species are included in the *Review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity* under Resolution 17.7 (Rev. CoP19).

### **Preparations for CoP20**

The EU held a first online stakeholder meeting in 2024 in order to prepare for CoP20.

On May 2024, the Notification 2024/062 to the Parties on CITES CoP20 preparation, was published. The EU and its Member States would be interested in cooperating with other Parties on issues of mutual interest and invite Parties wishing to do so to contact the EU. As the preparation of a CoP meeting requires thorough preparations and internal coordination at the EU level, Parties are kindly requested to contact and/or submit any proposal or document to the European Commission by e-mail as soon as possible.