

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



Twenty-seventh meeting of the Plants Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), June 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Regional matters

Regional reports

EUROPE

1. This document has been prepared and submitted by the regional representatives for Europe.\*
2. General information
  - a) Representatives: Ms Ursula Moser and Ms Noeleen Smyth.
  - b) Alternates: Mr Daniel Wolf and Mr Hugo de Boer
  - c) Number of Parties in the region: 49
  - d) Answers were received from the following parties: Czech Republic, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Malta, Portugal, Republic of Croatia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.
3. Activities carried out regarding:

a) Significant trade

**Czech Republic** reported to have issued import permits for plants from Madagascar (source “A”) or orchids (source “A”) from Thailand. Few imports for furniture made of *Dalbergia sissoo* from India but also imports of wood from *Dalbergia latifolia* from India. As in previous years, there were exports of cacti from the Czech Republic. Regarding CITES I species, they were exported mainly from the registered nurseries (currently there are 4 registered cacti nurseries in the CZ, from which two are actively exporting cacti to third countries). In case of CITES II species, many facilities were exporting plants. Since in the CZ it is possible to base exports of CITES II plants on phytosanitary documents, export permits were not issued in such cases.

**Germany** has been involved in the RST by evaluating and assessing progress reports at PC meetings.

**Iceland** only one native species of plant on CITES appendices, *Rhodiola* spp.

**Luxembourg** stressed that there is no significant trade of CITES-relevant species.

**Switzerland** refers to online trade in «iHerb» products containing *Prunus africana* without permits. Such products are confiscated almost every week. It is also noted an increase in imports of *Rhodiola rosea* as powder, roots and extracts.

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\* 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.

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** reported an analysis of trade between the EU and UK to assess our trade trends.

b) Review of the Appendices

**Germany** has been involved in the review of the checklist of Orchids.

c) CITES-projects

**The European Union** (EU) have provided funding for or carried out a number of initiatives to support CITES implementation that are relevant to the work of the Plants Committee. In particular, 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.

**Germany** is involved in and sponsoring Projects on NDF (9-Steps and International Expert Workshop on NDF) on Resource Assessments, the implementation of CITES for tree species (CTSP) and timber ID (CITESwoodID)

**Ireland** mentioned Frankincense and Orchid products

**Switzerland** mentioned the following projects:

- Conservation status, trade and threats to the genus *Boswellia* (Frankincense), ongoing project final report expected in Mai 2024
- Project on *Illegal e-commerce in CITES species*, starts in spring 2024

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** highlighted the following projects

- Red Listing CITES species without a Red List assessment
- Red Listing species of orchids used in chikanda.
- Drafting a Pachypodium checklist.
- Collaborating with TRAFFIC on an analysis of e-commerce supply chains in products of CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plant species.
- Horizon scanning for endangered fungi species threatened by international trade.

d) Publications

**Germany** refers to the update of CITESwoodID as free available App in Appstores and as a Universal Windows programme.

Versions 4.0 of the 9-Steps NDF Guidance on perennial plants and on timber are in preparation and will be published in 2024, respectively.

Also a Guidance for resource inventories for CITES plant species will be published in 2024.

**Portugal** referred to the following publication: Red List of the Vascular Flora of Mainland Portugal [Carapeto A., Francisco A., Pereira P., Porto M. (eds.). (2020). *Lista Vermelha da Flora Vascular de Portugal Continental*. Sociedade Portuguesa de Botânica, Associação Portuguesa de Ciência da Vegetação – PHYTOS e Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas (coord.). Coleção «Botânica em Português», Volume 7. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 374 pp.]

**Slovenia** [CITES Plants of Europe \(2021\)](#) - in partnership with other countries, through European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Action18201 "An integrated approach to conservation of threatened plants for the 21st Century".

e) Others

**Czech Republic** Following on the decisions adopted at last CoP (CoP19) concerning the species *Paubrasilia echinata*, CITES Authorities in the Czech Republic met with the Czech bow makers to inform them about new duties and to agree on the next steps. It was agreed that bow makers will register their supplies of wood *P. echinata* and that they will start to issue certificates to produced bows which would serve as provement of their legal origin.

## European Union (EU):

### 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 as it is the case for *Piliocolobus temminckii* from Guinea, which introduction into the EU is now prohibited. For other species (*Cycas thouarsii* from Mozambique), the prohibition of the introduction into the Union has been lifted.

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 Scientific Review Group (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 Group also works inter-seasonally, 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 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.

### 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, as much as possible, with other Parties on issues of mutual interest and therefore invite Parties to contact the EU on any draft proposals or documents that could be the subject of possible cooperation. As the preparation of a CoP meeting requires lengthy and timely internal procedures at the EU level, Parties were kindly requested to contact and/or submit any proposal or document to the European Commission by e-mail by 30 June 2024.

**Ireland:** Public and training lectures and workshops on CITES listed plant species.

**Malta:** Awareness campaigns targeted at the general public with particular focus on newly listed species.

## 4. Capacity building activities

**Germany:** Together with the Thünen Institute Hamburg Germany has conducted a workshop on timber identification of CITES-listed tree species with enforcement staff from across Europe in September 2023.

**Ireland:** Public and training lectures and workshops on CITES listed plant species.

**Malta:** New police recruits are lectured on wildlife trade regulations.

**Portugal** reported that Portuguese CITES Authorities regularly organise capacity building activities directed to the different law enforcement agencies involved in CITES. These activities are not specific for plants issues but more or less generalist.

The possibility to organise a training course in South American wood identification directed to CITES authorities and plant health inspectors working with tree species is being studied. It will count on the expertise from the CITES authorities in Brazil.

**Sweden** reported not having completed activities since the report for PC26, although they regularly have CITES-courses on a broad range of topics for licensing, inspection, and enforcement authorities. During 2024 they will be revising material developed 2008 to support the Swedish licensing and inspection authorities when inspecting trade with traditional Asian medicine (TAM) which contains, amongst other, CITES-listed plant species such as orchids, cacti and ginseng. In 2008 the material was used by several authorities and was considered helpful.

To further improve their efforts in detecting and regulating trade with CITES listed plant species they are focusing their efforts to recruit experts able to identify a wide range of plant species and wood types. They have recently appointed an expert for cacti species. Being able to reliably identify the species in question, including those found in finished products, is central to improve and enhance enforcement capacity.

**Switzerland** mentioned that regular training for enforcement officers in identification of plant species (cacti, orchids, timber).

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** participated in one online training workshop for UKOTs on the topics of CITES implementation. Assisted with a review of CITES implementation in Turks and Caicos through a field visit. Collaborate with customs to host a CITES training course for UK customs officers four times a year.

## 5. Difficulties of implementation encountering in your country

### a) Conservation issues

**Iceland** conservation status of *Rhodiola* spp. satisfactory.

### b) Technical issues

**Ireland** stressed the small team in Ireland to deal with CITES issues.

**Luxembourg** referred to being able to determine the exact species in case of timber products. Taking samples to send to a lab is easy on bare pieces of raw wood, but in case of art works, they don't know how to sample in a manner which doesn't harm the piece.

**Malta:** mentioned that the general public is normally not aware of the permitting requirements vis-à-vis CITES listed species, as opposed to traders who are more aware and as a general rule abide by the rules of the Convention and the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations.

**Portugal** stressed the identification of timber as a paramount issue. Due to the of several tree species into CITES appendices at the last three meetings of the CoP there was an increase in applications for timber/wood products: applications for import/(re)export permits, for EU certificates or for the National CITES Registry. The entry into force of the ipé tree species listing (*Handroanthus*, *Tabebuia* and *Roseodendron* genres) will increase identification difficulties.

**Sweden** The enforcement and regulation challenges identified in our reply for PC26 remain. We would like to in particular reiterate the inspection and enforcement challenges related to fully grasping the correct scope of listings connected to annotations and specific exemptions of many plant listings. Our enforcement officers encounter difficulties in being able to identify whether a particular product encountered is covered by the listing or not. To give a specific example, annotation #4 is difficult to enforce due to the difficulties for inspection and enforcement officers to distinguish finished products derived from artificially propagated sources from those sourced from the wild and hence to determine whether the product is covered by the listing or not (e.g., cosmetics containing extracts of CITES-listed plant species without any indication of the source of the extract). To deal with this a general rule applied by authorities is that all specimens of the species utilized in products, including cosmetics, are subject to permit requirements, unless there is clear evidence indicating that the exemption would apply.

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** stated the following:

Phytosanitary certificates issued in lieu of export permits do not follow CITES nomenclature, this can cause delays at the border when verifying plant names, as the UK has stricter domestic legislation and requires a CITES import permit for such trade.

Similar delays can be caused where Phytosanitary certificates are issued in lieu of CITES export permits for cactus species that are artificially propagated or grafted onto rootstock but the paperwork does not indicate that the specimens are artificially propagated or grafted.

Common names on packaging, scientific names missing from packaging or where text on packaging is ambiguous can all lead to delays or confiscations at the border if clarification has to be sought from the exporter.

## 6. Other topics related to CITES (i.e. medicinal plants, timber....)

**Germany** will organise a workshop focusing on German stakeholders in global MAP trade and potentials to increase sustainability in supply chains of German industry and trade in this sector, including but not limited to supply chains of CITES-listed MAP species.

**Ireland** mentioned the trade in medicinal and pharmaceutical products with CITES listed species.

**Malta:** highlighted the following topics: Medicinal plants, cultivars, hybrids, and ornamental plants and their hybrids.

**Luxembourg** It would be helpful to get a kind of 'best practice'-guide, established upon all the difficulties encountered and solutions found in the member states, especially for such difficult issues as timber.

**Portugal** Due to the increase in listings of timber producing species, the Portuguese CITES authorities are frequently approached by timber traders (import/export) and traders/manufacturers of musical instruments and furniture. Due to the national regulations, all persons or companies that, on a commercial basis, possess or perform national and international movements of specimens of species listed in the Annexes of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 must register in the National CITES Registry. To complete this register, they have to declare the stocks of the species they possess (including pre-convention), for which certificates are issued.

A set of instructions was prepared to be sent to stakeholders, explaining what must be done to declare the existing stocks and to register in the National CITES Registry depending on the type of activity: timber importers/(re)exporters, musical instrument manufacturers (namely luthiers), furniture sellers and manufacturers, etc.

Recent listings increased very much the volume of timber subject to CITES controls.

**Switzerland** reported problems with Cactaceae spp. as ingredients in food supplements, MAPs and timber identification (specifically regarding the new listed species).

**Germany** participated at a conference of the 'German Timber Trade Association'. The new tree species listed on COP 19 were presented and the resulting measures for im- and re-exports were discussed in a presentation and in roundtable discussions.

## 7. Work to be done until next Plants Committee PC26 (if not already mentioned above)

**Ireland** mentioned the training for National Parks and Wildlife Service staff on CITES Issues.

## 8. Other issues

**Norway** Publications with a bearing on regulation of plants under CITES from Norwegian research environment, especially in relation to DNA-based identification:

Quatela, A.S., Cangren, P., Jafari, F., Michel, T., de Boer, H.J. and Oxelman, B., 2023. Retrieval of long DNA reads from herbarium specimens. *AoB Plants*, 15(6), p.plad074. [*Paper shows feasibility of sequencing long reads of DNA from degraded materials. These materials have similarities to plant material in trade, where short reads are known to pose challenges for species-specific identification. This development could overcome challenges and enable identification of CITES plant material in trade.*]

Mück, F., Scotti, F., Mauvisseau, Q., Raclariu-Manolică, A.C., Schröder-Nielsen, A., Wangensteen, H. and De Boer, H.J., 2023. Complementary authentication of Chinese herbal products to treat endometriosis using DNA metabarcoding and HPTLC shows a high level of variability. *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, 14, p.1305410. [*Paper expands application and development of markers and approaches for DNA based identification of plant ingredients in processed herbal products. This is a group of products that can include CITES-listed species, and development of methods empower regulatory capacity*]

Raclariu-Manolică, A.C., Mauvisseau, Q. and de Boer, H.J., 2023. Horizon scan of DNA-based methods for quality control and monitoring of herbal preparations. *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, 14, p.1179099. [*Review paper exploring the most recent innovations in DNA based identification of plants, and how these could be applied in a regulatory context. Although not directly focused on CITES-listed species, the paper is relevant as it provides an overview of methods appearing on the horizon that can also be applied to DNA-based identification of CITES-listed species.*]

**Portugal** pointed out that from 13 to 17 November 2023, the Portuguese CITES authorities participated in an Europol coordinated international operation against the illegal timber trade, involving law enforcement authorities from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. The Brazilian authorities were also involved, as well as police forces from Costa Rica and Panama, who joined this recurring operation for the first time in 2023.

Portugal, through various national entities, took part in this operation named "Legal Wood 2.0 2023", carrying out investigation and enforcement actions to combat illegal trade and crimes against wildlife, especially flora, and in particular with regard to the trafficking, exploitation, commercialisation and detention of wood in breach of current legislation.

The actions targeted environmental crimes, illegal logging, smuggling, document fraud, money laundering and tax evasion.

As part of this operation, 213 inspections were carried out by the various organisations mentioned above, including:

- 108 operators trading and processing timber and wood products inspected.
- 90 road inspections of timber and wood products' transporters.
- 15 inspections of containers in sea ports.
- 16 administrative offence notices were drawn up for breaches of the legal provisions in force relating to the illegal timber trade.

**Denmark** and **Republic of Croatia** wrote not having anything new or substantial to report.