

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



Seventy-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
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CITES MUSICAL INSTRUMENT CERTIFICATE

This document has been submitted by the United States of America on behalf of a group of musician and musical instrument stakeholders in relation to agenda items 51 and 56.* The document does not reflect the official position of the United States.

* *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.*

CITES Musical Instrument Certificate

78th Standing Committee Meeting

1. Background

Musicians perform with valuable and culturally significant musical instruments legally crafted decades and even centuries ago. A number of these instruments contain small amounts of ivory, shell, reptile skin, tree species, or other materials regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). The international use of musical instruments by musicians and professional and student ensembles is essential to advancing diplomacy, sparking artistic innovation, and supporting vital international cultural activity. For species for which CITES permits are required, individual musicians and ensembles report that the required time and financial expense of obtaining and putting to use the MIC has often left no option but to forgo travel with their best musical instruments.

In partnership with CITES parties and the conservation community, music stakeholders have undertaken efforts to increase compliance with current permit requirements while simultaneously pursuing policy improvements that will alleviate unnecessary burdens. While continued improvement and fine-tuning of existing permit procedures would be appreciated, the most effective way to minimize the burden of the permit process is to appropriately exempt noncommercial movement of musical instruments from permit requirements during the listing and annotations process, and to provide simplified procedures for those activities that do not constitute a threat to the conservation of protected species.

2. Musical Instrument Certificate - A Consolidated Permit

The Musical Instrument Certificate (MIC) is not an exemption from the permit process. It is a consolidated permit. The MIC streamlines the requirement for obtaining multiple CITES export permits when an instrument contains CITES material and is not exempted from permit requirements by an annotation or a personal effects exemption. Musicians using the MIC apply to their CITES Management Authority for issuance of single permit, which **must then be credentialed by CITES enforcement officials at each designated port through which an instrument travels.** Musical instruments accompanied by a CITES Musical Instrument Certificate may be hand-carried, in checked luggage, or transported via cargo for larger ensembles. The purpose code P is indicated on a certificate for personal use by individuals, and purpose code Q is indicated on a certificate when a larger ensemble may be considered a traveling exhibition of multiple instruments on a single permit.

The costs associated with obtaining a permit can be a barrier for musicians, and the process of issuing and credentialing these permits is extremely variable from country to country. Limited ports are available for credentialing permits, which can prevent musicians from traveling through the ports that are efficient and affordable. The process is in urgent need of harmonization in order to fully facilitate noncommercial travel with musical instruments.

3. Rapid Movement of Musical Instruments

At the 16th Conference of the Parties (CoP16), Resolution Conf. 16.8 was adopted on *Frequent Cross-Border Non-Commercial Movements of Musical Instruments*, creating a multi-use Musical Instrument Certificate. At the 17th Conference of the Parties, clarifications were adopted in [Resolution Conf. 16.8 \(Rev. CoP17\)](#) to improve and clarify related procedures. At the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18), [Decision 18.171](#) was adopted, including a directive for the Secretariat to prepare draft guidance on Simplified Procedures that “should include

consideration of other types of specimens in addition to those identified in document [CoP18 Doc. 56](#), paragraph 13, with a focus on the international movement of CITES specimens where the trade will have a negligible impact on the species concerned.” At the 19th Conference of the Parties, Decision 19.160 directed the Standing Committee to:

“consider the need for the development of further appropriate mechanisms, including guidance and capacity-building on simplified procedures in accordance with the recommendations in Part XIII of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on Permits and certificates, to facilitate the efficient international movement of wildlife samples for diagnostic purposes and/or conservation purposes and the non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display or competition, for consideration by the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties”

Musical Instrument stakeholders have participated in the working group on Rapid Movement of Wildlife Diagnostic Samples and of Musical Instruments and support the draft decisions in the Annex to [SC78 Doc. 56](#) , which would gather essential information about the implementation of permit requirements and exemptions, identify relevant challenges Parties are facing, and develop for publication on the CITES website a webpage bringing together information on the available mechanisms for noncommercial movement of musical instruments. This resource would include a register of Parties’ existing arrangements with a link to country-specific information. The proposed one-page simplified guidance would be a helpful resource to musicians and ensembles attempting to navigate these procedures. The music stakeholder community stands ready to partner in these potential next steps.

4. Electronic Systems and Information Technology

As we await opportunities for improvements to the permit process, we strongly support the efforts among CITES parties to institute an electronic permit system. Electronic permitting would help to streamline and make more efficient the process of acquiring, using, and invalidating musical instrument certificates. Currently, musicians holding individual permits must void them before their instruments are included on a group permit. Given the narrow timeframe between engagements, this is impractical. An electronic system would help speed the permit issuance and the invalidation processes, while reducing the burden on enforcement authorities. Additionally, for individual musicians who retain ownership of their instruments over time, the permit burden would be lessened by streamlining the permit renewal process. Electronic systems also hold potential for relieving the burden posed by the requirement to physically credential permits at each border crossing.

At the 19th Conference of Parties, [Decision 19.151](#) was adopted, including the following two actions directed to the Standing Committee of relevance to the Musical Instrument Certificate:

c) recognizing the importance of the requirement for endorsement of permits and certificates at export, explore possible alternatives to the physical endorsement;

and

g) consider ways in which electronic CITES permitting systems can simplify procedures for the non-commercial movement of musical instruments;

While some progress has been made to explore 2D bar code implementation for permits, [SC78 Doc. 51 \(Rev 1\)](#) indicated the following regarding Decision 19.151, g):

Non-commercial movement of musical instruments

27. Regarding Decision 19.151, paragraph g), no progress has been made on ways in which electronic CITES permitting systems can simplify the procedures for the movement of musical instruments. However, the Secretariat notes that this is linked to Decision 19.160 on the rapid movement of wildlife diagnostic samples and musical instruments and suggests renewing Decision 19.151, paragraph g) until work on Decision 19.160 as reported in document SC78 Doc. 56 has been completed.

We support the draft decision proposed in SC78 Doc. 51 (Rev 1), Annex 1, 20.BB, f), which would extend the Standing Committee's efforts to consider ways that simplified procedures for non-commercial movement of musical instruments can be supported by electronic CITES permitting systems.

This document was prepared by:

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