

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



Seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee
Rosa Khutor, Sochi (Russian Federation), 1-5 October 2018

Regional matters

Report of regional representatives

EUROPA

This document has been submitted by Portugal as the Regional Representative for Europe.*

1. Introduction

This Report covers activities of the Parties within the European Region in the period between the 69th meeting (Geneva, November-December 2017) and the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee (Sochi, October 2018).

It is presented in the format provided in Document SC 59 Doc. 23 at the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee (March 2010) and adopted by the Standing Committee at that meeting.

This Report was compiled using contributions received from Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey and United Kingdom.

Additional information for the European Union (EU) and its 28 Member States was received from the European Commission.

Regional Representatives from Europe are: Hungary, Israel, Portugal and Russian Federation

Alternate Regional Representatives from Europe are: Albania, Belgium, Georgia and Poland.

2. Overview of major developments

Currently there are 48 Parties to the Convention in the European Region, from which

35 Parties adopted the Gaborone Amendment to article XXI of the Convention.

Belgica

No major policy developments are to be reported for the period under consideration as far as the Belgian CITES authorities are concerned.

Since 2014, the Belgian government is one of the donors of the *African Elephant Fund* and is member of its *Steering Committee*. Belgium has contributed financially up to now a total USD130.000 to this fund and has pledged another €50.000 for 2018.

Belgium also provided financial contributions to:

* *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.*

- €25 000 to the development of AFRICA-TWIX and €15 000 for the maintenance of EU-TWIX
- € 50 000 to the Museum for Central Africa for project focusing on sustainable timber production and legal trade in Afromosia.
- €50 000 to VZW Fonds Virunga Belgium (parc Virunga)

Since the 1st of January 2018, Belgium is the facilitator of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP). One of the two priorities for 2018 of the CBFP is security and the fight against poaching.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 08th of March 2017, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Decision on conditions and manner of implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Decision was published in the Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the 15th of May 2018 and it is now in force, but it will be fully functional and applicable six months after that date.

The Decision is translated into English and will be sent to the CITES Secretariat, for consideration, during the next few days.

Czech Republic

An interdepartmental working group consisting of representatives of all relevant ministries incl. the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Finance has been established in order to share information and to prepare National Action Plan against wildlife trafficking (to be adopted in 2019).

A substantial case of illegal trade in captive tigers, tiger parts and derivatives has been revealed in the middle of July 2018 by CITES Enforcement Authorities showing the link between tigers bred legally in the Czech Republic and illegal trade in tiger parts. 3 persons (a private tiger breeder, a taxidermist and a Vietnamese citizen) were taken into custody, the investigation is ongoing.

The Czech Republic suspended issuing CITES permits for (re-)export of live captive bred tigers from the Czech Republic (in force from 29th July 2018 - International Tiger Day) for commercial purposes as a form of stricter domestic measures and also strengthened conditions for issuing EU certificates for internal trade in captive bred tigers within the EU.

European Union

The EU is providing large volume of bilateral support to developing countries and regions to protect biodiversity and manage protected areas. Since the adoption of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking in 2016, significant new EU funds (around € 340 million) have been mobilised under the EU development and cooperation policy to support regional and international projects contributing to fight against wildlife crime.

This includes regional programmes against cross-border wildlife crime in Central and Eastern Africa, as well as in support to conservation for ACP countries (**African**, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States) and national support to specific countries (for example Guinea).

The EU global programme is designed to reinforce law enforcement and combatting wildlife and forest crime through financial support amounting to €43.5 million. The first component of this programme consists of reinforcing the operational capacities of the International Consortium for Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) against wildlife trafficking, through grants to Interpol and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) which are members of the Consortium alongside with CITES, the World Customs Organisation and the World Bank. This component (amounting to €13.5 million) should improve wildlife and forest law enforcement in targeted countries as well as international coordination. The second component of this new programme (amounting to €30 million) will consist of support to civil society organisations active against wildlife trafficking in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The European Union provided 7 M Euro for the period 2017-2020 to the CITES tree species programme aiming to assist Parties in taking conservation and management measures to ensure that their trade in timber, bark, extracts and other products from CITES-listed tree species is sustainable, legal and traceable."

The EU provides financial support to the project "Minimising the Illegal Killing of Elephants and other Endangered Species (MIKES)"; the programme is running in the period 2014-2018 (12.3 Mio EUR granted to the CITES Secretariat) (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1193_en.htm)

The EU provides financial support (€ 1.1 million) to the project "LIFE for Danube Sturgeons",2016-2020 (<https://danube-sturgeons.org/the-project/>) aiming at improving enforcement of laws and regulations against sturgeon poaching and illegal caviar trade in Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. The LIFE programme has also been providing considerable support to projects against the illegal killing of birds throughout the EU.

In November 2017, a call for proposals for projects aiming to boost operational activities of the Member States on environmental crime including wildlife crime was launched under the EU Internal Security Fund - Police programme, with an overall budget of €2.5 million (<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/isfp/topics/isfp-2017-ag-env.html>).

Support to the Secretariat for the implementation of CoP 17 decisions (total for the period 2017-2020: 2.250 Mio EUR), Species+ and monitoring of the status of several CITES-listed species (1.5 Mio EUR granted to UNEP-WCMC for the period 2017-2020)

Revision of EU rules governing trade in Appendix II specimens

Revision of EU Wildlife Trade Regulations

- The Commission is currently reviewing the Commission Implementing Regulation (Commission Regulation (EC) No 865/2006 of 4 May 2006 (Official Journal OJ L 166, 19.6.2006, p.1). The adoption of the new Commission Regulation is expected for second half of 2018.
- The Commission is in the process of reviewing the *Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2017/1915* in order to reflect decisions taken at AC 29.

Other activities

UNEP-WCMC has been contracted to provide reports on the biological and trade data regarding a large number of species traded under CITES as well as a number of additional scientific matters relating to CITES implementation. A number of reviews carried out by UNEP-WCMC as a basis for SRG work can be accessed on the European Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/reports_en.htm

TRAFFIC has been contracted to monitor the implementation and enforcement of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations, and to provide studies and assessments on particular topics. More information on the EU wildlife trade rules can be obtained via the specific webpage of the European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/home_en.htm.

With respect to the implementation of the Appendix II listing of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), the European Union has established measures aimed at achieving the recovery of the species. These measures include temporary prohibition on fishing of European eels measuring 12 cm or longer (overall length) in Union Waters of ICES areas including the Baltic Sea for three consecutive months (to be determined by each Member State between 1 September 2018 and 31 January 2019), to protect spawners during their migration. The status of, and trade in, the species has also been reviewed frequently by members of the EU CITES Scientific Review Group (SRG; see paragraph 16 below). The SRG has concluded that it is not possible at present to make a non-detriment finding for the export from, or import into, the EU of specimens of European eel. EU Member States have notified the CITES Secretariat of a zero annual export quota for European eel since 2011.

Georgia

Georgian national legislation is placed in category 2. To fulfil conditions for category 1, amendments to the legislation were prepared by the CITES MA. In 2016 the draft law was reviewed by the secretariat and also informal consultations with the legal officer of the secretariat were held in July 2017. In June 2018 after the discussions with the stakeholder agencies and public hearing, the amendment project was registered in the parliament and currently the draft law is being reviewed by the parliament committees.

The CITES MA and FFI (The Fauna and Flora International) country office have conducted three training sessions for the customs officers. Around 100 officers were trained.

Two ongoing projects on conservation of sturgeons and raptor birds involve component concerning illegal wildlife trade. The projects are implemented by the WWF Caucasus office and FFI country office.

In September 2018, with support of the US Embassy in Georgia, 9 representatives of the enforcement agencies have attended the training course “Wildlife Trafficking Investigators Program” conducted by the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Budapest, Hungary.

The CITES MA has funded the project aiming to improve implementation of the convention towards Snowdrop (*Galanthus woronowii*). The project was also supported by the German International Cooperation Society (GIZ). During the project stock assessment was undertaken for wild populations, as well as cultivation sites. The project also explored options to improve monitoring system for snowdrop populations, management and control of cultivation sites, etc.

This project is the first case of obtaining state funding for CITES related projects. State funding for follow up project in 2019, as well as project concerning another Appendix II plant species *Cyclamen coum* is also secured.

The CITES MA has created the Facebook group for Georgian enforcement officers, where summary of CITES regulations, as well as relevant news are posted.

FFI country office has supported number of awareness raising activities, including launching of second exhibition of the confiscated specimens in the customs area and banners concerning the illegal wildlife trade.

The CITES MA is undertaking review of both legal and illegal trade (including online trade) of wildlife in Georgia, to prepare relevant recommendations for the enforcement authorities.

Hungary

The priority of the Hungarian Management Authority was to enhance cooperation and communication between authorities responsible for enforcement of CITES by contributing to the establishment of a national taskforce handling environmental issues. The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has submitted a grant application to finance the establishment of a cooperation and coordination framework on environmental law enforcement, a National Environmental Security Taskforce (NEST). The NEST is a thematic interagency expert's network based on interagency agreements between participating authorities, agencies, since authorities are fragmented which reduce effectiveness of enforcement and communication. It is planned to enhance cooperation, provide effective and mutual information exchange, establish an interagency committee – which will consist of the head of police, customs, environmental agencies and prosecutors – to help information sharing, set up a data analysis based national strategy, create a platform to plan future investigations, launch training programs and overall help both national and international cooperation in environmental issues. The possible launch of NEST is due to October of 2018.

Latvia

Between the 69th and 70th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee Latvia have continued to strengthened enforcement of CITES by raising capacity and awareness of enforcement officers through special training program. Fight against illegal online trade in CITES species has retained as main national enforcement priority. Regarding enforcement Latvia also took part in the international operation Eel-licit organized by Interpol. Awareness about CITES in general public as well as in special stakeholder groups have been raised through several awareness raising events and actions such as celebration of World Wildlife Day, media day and special publications in press, radio, social networks and TV, lectures in Universities etc. During this period national protection plans of several native CITES listed species (Lynx lynx, Canis lupus, Ursus arctos, Lutra lutra) have been finalized and for several species of birds of prey and owls these plans are currently under development. Within all of these plans CITES aims have been emphasized and special tasks devoted to achieve CITES goals. New project have been started to reconstruct or establish CITES exhibitions in the national zoological garden, botanical garden and museum of natural history. New quarantine facilities have been opened in national zoological garden which is set in the national legislation as place where all confiscated live specimens have to be kept.

Norway

The new Norwegian Cites-legislation entered into force July 1st 2018. According to the legislation an import permit is required for the import of Cites Appendix II listings (Appendix B-listing according to the new regulation). Furthermore, marking of species and an ownership certificate for appendix I (A) listings and certain appendix II (B) listings. In connection with the new regulation, the format and design of the different permits and certificates are updated and renewed.

As a part of the Norwegian Governments Digitalization Strategy, we have been working on the digitalization of Cites. As of July 2018 Swiss importers can use their API when applying for a Norwegian import permit. The application process is fully digitalized, and we are working on the digitalization of the case handler Cites system.

Together with the other Nordic countries, we have been awarded funds from the Nordic Council of Ministers for a study on the digitalization of Cites within the Nordic region. A report is expected December 2018.

Portugal

Recognizing the problem of the illegal wildlife trade and in particular of ivory specimens which contributes to the severe increase of poaching of African elephants in recent years, Portugal as a country with strong relationships namely with some African Portuguese speaking countries has built its efforts to tackle that issue.

Trade of legal pre-Convention ivory specimens is strictly regulate with each item always accompanied with an EU certificate issued after analyzes from Portuguese CITES Management Authority. Furthermore, each company that transfers ivory specimens, even if it is not commercial trade, need to be registered in CITES MA and update all details every year.

The Portuguese CITES MA together with the judiciary Police have made progress in their investigation tackling the illegal trade of birds specially parrots. The investigation is ongoing and is leading for new persons.

Prevent and control of eels illegal trade is a priority and Portugal works very closely with the Spanish authorities.

Portugal has just approved the new national action plan for enforcement for the period 2018-2019.

Portuguese legislation that regulates CITES was changed in 2018 and new ordinances related with Decree-Law nº 121/2017, 20Th September are published. The main objective was to clarify some of the procedure steps to possess and legalize CITES specimens.

Russian Federation

To preserve biodiversity, as well as reduce the threat to a number of rare species of interest to international trade, the Russian Federation has strengthened control over international trade in rare species.

In order to ensure compliance with the obligations of the Russian Federation arising from the CITES, for species of wild fauna and flora threatened with extinction, beside sturgeon species, The Government of the Russian Federation has identified 2 scientific bodies that ensure the fulfillment of the obligations of the Russian Federation arising from the Convention. Such bodies are the Federal State Budgetary Institution "All-Russian Research Institute of Environmental Protection" and the Federal State Budgetary Institution of Science Institute of problems of ecology and evolution named after AN Severtsov of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

At the legislative level of the country, in terms of exporting from the territory of the Russian Federation the species of wild fauna and flora that are under threat of extinction, their parts or derivatives subject to the Convention, except sturgeons and their products, including caviar, is allowed with permission (certificate) issued by the Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources Management, defined as CITES Management Authority in the Russian Federation.

The Federal Service for the Supervision of Natural Resources Management, as the CITES Administrative Authority in the Russian Federation, is doing a lot of work. Currently, work is underway to tighten national legislation in terms of increasing the level of responsibility for illegal actions with CITES species both on the territory of the Russian Federation and when crossing state borders. In addition, the issue of increasing penalties for administrative offenses and terms of imprisonment for criminal offenses is being considered.

The Russian Federation continues to work on the preparation of an updated edition of the Red Book of the Russian Federation, an official legal document which regulates the protection of rare species of animals at the federal level, and which contains the data necessary to determine the conservation status of a rare species (area, number, limiting factors) and a list of measures to be taken to conserve this species. The Red Book of the Russian Federation also includes a number of endangered species on the territory of the Russian Federation and species protected by the Convention.

Also the rules and procedures for handling samples of CITES species, stated as material evidence in criminal proceedings which cannot be returned to the owner for any objective reasons or released into the habitat, are being developed and approved.

Thus, the Russian Federation is carrying out dynamic work to improve national legislation, toughen penalties for illegal actions, and takes all possible measures to maximize humane attitudes towards living specimens.

Turkey

Natural Flower Bulbs Plant Protection Project is carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, General Directorate of Crop Production, Department of Seed Department for 2016-2018. Natural Flower Bulb Plant Protection Project is supported by the Ministry of Development. *The aim of this project;*

- a) Natural flower bulbs, nature collection, storage and marketing due to lack of information due to millions of natural flower bulb dismantling and storage (subsieve) Prevention of being wasted due to the lack of education during operations
- b) The awareness of the personnel taking part in the works related to natural flower bulbs in the provincial organization of the Ministry and the elimination of the defects in audits.
- c) Private sector, to eliminate the lack of knowledge about the cultivation of natural flower bulbs.
- d) Formation of a standard planting method on rootstocks and production plots which must be formed within the scope of the regulation on natural flower bulbs.
- e) To ensure proper storage and packaging of natural flower bulbs, which are removed from the nature and harvested at the end of production.
- f) Our country is rich in the population of natural bulbs because of the lack of information in the producers to eliminate. Thus, it is aimed to prevent the destruction of nature and to protect the nature.

Natural Flower Bulb Plant Protection Project, meetings are scheduled twice a year in spring and autumn, including the period. Between 20-22 June 2018, a project meeting was held in Trabzon with the participation of General Directorate and provincial organization. An autumn term project meeting will be held between October and November.

National Biodiversity Inventory and Monitoring Project:

-The main aim of the Project is inventory and monitoring of vascular plants, vertebrate animals at each province level

-The Project will be completed for 81 provinces between 2013-2018 years (6 Years).

Purpose of the Project:

1-Determining current situation of flora and fauna taxa of Turkey with literature based studies.

2-Collecting new data (Flora, Fauna, habitat types.....) with field inventory surveys and update the current flora and fauna data in cooperation with universities, NGO, etc.

3- Grouping the data according to endemism, CITES, IUCN, BERN and other significant criteria.

4- Monitoring indicator species, their habitats and ecosystems.

5-Determining threats on taxa and habitats and recommendations on removal of threats.

6-Obtaining GIS data and prepare maps which will be helpful in conservation studies.

7-Uploading the data to Noah's Ark database.

United Kingdom

Key developments and activities:

1) The UK Government introduced the Ivory Bill into Parliament on 23 May. The Bill will enact a ban in commercial dealing in ivory in the UK that could directly or indirectly fuel the poaching of elephants. The ban will be subject to narrow and limited exemptions, for items that do not fuel the continued poaching of elephants. The ban will come into force no less than six months following Royal Assent.

2) The UK has also been coordinating the 4th Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Conference which is due to take place this October. The conference will make sure IWT stays at the top of the political agenda, and that participants deliver on existing commitments and instigate new partnerships for action. The Conference will strengthen international partnerships across borders and beyond government and focus on three key themes: tackling IWT as a serious organised crime, building coalitions, and closing markets.

3) In July 2018 the UK announced that, through Round 4 of the IWT Challenge Fund, £14.5m has been awarded to 14 new projects targeting the Illegal Wildlife Trade. Applications to Round 5 are currently being assessed by the IWT Advisory Group, with successful projects expected to be announced early next year.

3. Activities of the regional representatives

All Parties in the region were contacted by the European regional representatives in September 2018 to invite their contributions to this report.

Hungary and Portugal are members of the CITES Standing Committee since 2013. Being the regional representatives of the European Union in the committee, they represent the coordinated position of the EU which supports strong decisions and resolutions on wildlife trafficking.

The Russian Federation host and prepared for the 70 meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in Sochi, which will be held from October 1 to 5, 2018.

4. Regional cooperation

Belgica

Belgian Customs and Federal Police make regular use of the EU-TWIX list-server to share information on seizures and other enforcement related subjects with colleagues of CITES authorities in other EU Member States.

Belgium also participated in May 2018 in Operation Thunderstorm, organised by Interpol at international level:

- The CITES Management Authority organized training for local and federal judicial police officers: 4 days (14-15 – 21-22/05) for the Dutch speaking police officers: prox. 100 pers. and 1 day (23/05) for French speaking police officers: prox. 20 pers.

- The CITES Management Authority launched an ivory surrender campaign on the 15/5 that ran until 12/08 (World Elephant Day). During this public awareness action, citizens were given the opportunity to dispose of their unwanted ivory or ivory for which no certificate could be granted. The action was done together with two major zoos in Belgium and in total 500 kg of ivory was collected which will be destroyed.

The purpose is to destroy all ivory collected between that period that people voluntarily deposited at one of three collection points (Royal Zoo of Antwerp – Pairi Daiza zoo – CITES MA office in Brussels).

-The CITES Inspection department gathered intelligence concerning an ivory control campaign (with information from UK and Netherlands) and started inspecting some of the biggest auction houses in Belgium.

Czech Republic

Following the declaration on cooperation in the field of CITES implementation signed between the Czech Republic and Viet Nam (in 2015) an expert mission of the Czech delegation consisting of representatives of CITES Management and Enforcement Authorities was held to Viet Nam (Hanoi) in April 2018 to strengthen cooperation in the field of CITES implementation and raising the public awareness. A short clip about CITES in the Czech Republic has been dubbed into Vietnamese and made available to Vietnamese community living in the Czech Republic to address demand reduction for illegal CITES specimens.

European Union

The Scientific Review Group of the European Union with the CITES Scientific Authorities of the 28 Member States meets regularly (usually four times a year) in order to discuss scientific aspects of the CITES and EU Wildlife Trade Regulations implementation, including the importation into the EU of several animal species. In particular, the SRG monitors non-detriment findings (NDFs) regarding imports into the EU of species from several exporting countries, as well as exports from the EU of CITES-listed species. The Group also works inter-sessionally to deliver advice on scientific issues.

Further information on work done by the SRG can be found under the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/srg_en.htm

A number of reviews carried out by UNEP-WCMC as a basis for SRG work can be found on the European Commission register of expert groups website:

(<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=365&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1>).

- Update to the Analysis of 2017 CITES export quotas
- Analysis of EU Annual reports 2015
- EU Wildlife Trade 2015 Analysis of European Union and candidate countries annual reports to CITES 2015
- Review of species selected from the Analysis of 2017 export quotas. Part I
- Review of species selected from the 2015 EU Analysis
- No opinion ii since SRG 76
- Review of Annex D species Part I

Hungary

On Czech request, in December 2017 National Bureau of Investigation has launched a criminal procedure to prepare the legal criteria of joining a Eurojust assisted Joint Investigation Team (JIT), targeted illegal rhino trade in Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.

Norway

Norway has frequent contact with the Swedish and Danish MA on ongoing issues.

The Norwegian Environment Agency participated in a training of Norwegian and Swedish custom officers together with the Swedish Board of Agriculture at Charlottenburg at the Norwegian-Swedish boarder.

Furthermore, Norway have had skype-meetings with the Swiss MA, Swedish MA and the Danish MA as regards to the work on digitalization on CITES.

Portugal

Portugal participated in several operations at international level organised by Interpol (May 2018 in Operation Thunderstorm), EUROPOL and worked closely with Spain in controlling the illegal trade of wildlife.

Russian Federation

The Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources Management actively communicates with the administrative authorities of the countries parties of the Convention on various issues, including on the verification of the origin of the samples and the validity of CITES permits.

Serbia

Serbia was called to participate in the activities of the EU funded project "Contribution to CITES implementation in Bosnia and Hercegovina", EuropeAid/137-042/DD/ACT/BA, through holding 2 workshops for their enforcement

authorities (border police and customs namely), delivering the basic training on measures necessary for CITES implementation

5. Meetings and workshops

Belgica

Belgian CITES authorities participated in all CITES meetings at international level since december 2017:

- 69th meeting of the Standing Committee, Geneva, Switzerland, 27 November-01 December 2017
- Belgium is part of the following intersessional working groups established at SC69, whose work is done via electronic means: Purpose codes, Wildlife cybercrime, Annotations, MIKE and ETIS Subgroup.
- 10th European Regional CITES Plants Meeting , Palermo, Italy, 28 February – 1 and 2 March 2018
- IFAW-INTERPOL Cyber-enabled Wildlife Crime Workshop, the INTERPOL General Secretariat in Lyon, 5-6 June 2018
- 30th meeting of the Animals Committee Geneva, 16-21 July 2018
- 24nd meeting of the Plants Committee Geneva, 20, 21 and 23-26 July 2018
- 29th INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group Meeting, London, United Kingdom, 8-12 October 2018
- In the framework of EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking: participation of representatives of Belgium in several electronic working groups on ivory, reptiles, birds and timber during 2017 and 2018. Also, several meetings have been organised between CITES MA and Customs to enhance the cooperation, coordination, communication and improve data flows between the different competent authorities as foreseen in the EU Action Plan.

Belgian CITES authorities participated in all CITES meetings at EU level since december 2017 :

- 82nd to 83rd CITES Management Committee meetings (Brussels, May 2018 to September 2018)
- 11th to 12th Expert Group meetings (Brussels, May 2018 to september 2018)
- 82th to 84th SRG meetings (Brussels, february 2018 to September 2018)
- 36th and 37th CITES Enforcement meetings (Brussels, 26-27 April 2018 – The Hague, 22-23 October 2018)

Other meetings :

- 10th meeting of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee, Kasane, Botswana from the 1-3 March 2018
- International workshop on CITES legal acquisition findings , Brussels, from 13 to 15 June 2018
- Meeting with DHL on 16/1/2018 to look at our cooperation and see where this can be enhanced. Follow-up will be done end 2018.
- On 8th June 2018 a meeting was held by Belgium and France (inspection and judicial representatives) to look at illegal trade in border cities. The establishment of a JIT (Joint Investigation Team) was envisaged.

Training Activities

Belgian CITES Management Authority has given several sessions of CITES training for CITES controlling authorities and stakeholders in the course of end 2017 and 2018

For Belgian customs: Two days training on identification TCM products and utilisation of the online CITES database (Commercial Products in Trade containing Endangered Species) . This training was initiated by CITES Management authority and organized by Traffic and WWF with intervention of GAD Belgian custom and a consultant in TCM, Liege airport, 7 and 8 december 2017

For Flemish rescue Centers: Presentation on general CITES rules by the CITES Management Authority CITES , 9 december 2017

For Belgian Ambassadors: Presentation on general CITES rules by the CITES Management Authority CITES at the Belgian diplomatic days on Wildlife Trafficking , Egmont's palace Brussels, Senat, 22nd december 2017

For French speaking African Customs: one day of CITES theoretical and practical sessions given to groups of French speaking African students of the international training course organised by Federal Public Service Finance, Brussels, 30 march 2018

For the judiciary sector (magistrates - judges): presentation on practical handling of offenses against CITES, Brussels 5th march 2018

For local and federal judicial police officers: 4 training days given to 81 police officers of theoretical and practical approach for the application of the regulations CITES, Brussels, 14, 15, 22 and 24 May 2018

For customs: CITES awareness during BACON operations where the Belgian Federal Administration, DG Environment, participated during 2017 and 2018 at several joint Federal controlling operations (so-called "BACON" actions) taking place approximately twice a month at different airports in the country (Brussels National). It is an initiative conducted by the Belgian Customs in cooperation with the Belgian Federal Sanitary Agency, the Belgian Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products and different departments of the Federal Public Service Public Health, Security of the Food Chain and Environment. The aim of this initiative is to detect illegal products brought back in the EU by passengers coming from third countries.

For the CITES Inspection Service:

- Half day of training on identification TCM products and utilisation of the online CPTES database (Commercial Products in Trade containing Endangered Species) given by CITES Management authority, Brussels, 22nd January 2018
- Half day of theoretical and practical session on ivory items given by an Ivory CITES expert Brussels, 10th April 2018 with collaboration of CITES Management authority

For birds associations: 2 Information sessions on CITES legislation regarding trade and breeding of birds, Melle, 30 march 2018 and Ranst (June 2018)

For Schools: CITES awareness to the high school students, Roeselare, February 2018 and College students Melle, February 2018

Participation of the CITES MA to various CITES target actions/Exhibitions

- In 2017 a two-year study was commissioned by DG Environment (Federal Public Service Health) in a view of sampling and analyzing illegal meat seized at Brussels airport (Zaventem) in the luggage of passengers flying from the Sub-saharian Region. General objective is to assess the wild species concerned (on basis of DNA analysis) and whether CITES species are concerned. This study is organized with the help of customs and the Federal Agency for the Food Chain Safety. Results should be available by the end of 2018.
- Wildlife Trafficking Exhibition at European Parliament, Brussels, July 2018 to raise awareness on this issue and directed towards the members, staff and network of the Parliament.

Czech Republic

A wholenational public campaign "Stolen Wildlife" against wildlife trafficking has been launched in april 2018 in the Czech Republic under the patronage of the Minister of Environment. For details please see - <http://www.stolenwildlife.org/>

The following CITES workshops for the state authorities and the public were organized in the Czech Republic:

- A 2-day workshop "Wildlife crime in the Czech Republic" for the Enforcement Authorities, prosecutors, Police and judges, etc. was organised by the Czech Environmental Inspectorate in January 2018. Participants from the Slovak Republic took part as well at the workshop.

- A 2-day workshop "The CITES evergreens" in June 2018 was organized by the Czech Scientific Authority (Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic) and opened to the public. The workshop was focused on the issues of keeping and breeding of Asian big cats.

European Union

The Scientific Review Group of the European Union with the CITES Scientific Authorities of the 28 Member States meets regularly (usually four times a year) in order to discuss scientific aspects of the CITES and EU Wildlife Trade Regulations implementation, including the importation into the EU of several animal species.

Georgia

The Fauna and Flora International has supported the regional meeting for Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia). The meeting will be held on 28th September, 2018. The representatives of CITES MAs and enforcement authorities will discuss issues related to the Illegal Wildlife Trade and CITES implementation in the region.

Hungary

Regular meetings, workshops, trainings, and presentations are held by the MA of Hungary for authorities responsible for enforcement of CITES (police, customs, regional CITES authorities) both nationally and internationally.

The MA supervises the work of nature conservation authorities which serves as the regional CITES authorities, and are integrated in the Regional Government Offices. The CITES MA organized an official meeting for the representatives of the regional CITES authorities between 11 and 12 June 2018. The regional authorities reported on their activities in 2017, provided feedback about significant cases, and received information, and guidance on handling, the most recent issues.

On 27 of June 2018 a workshop was organised by the National Bureau of Investigation for the authorities, agencies, and NGO-s participating in the establishment of the NEST. At the workshop the participants provided information about their connections to the NEST, role in enforcement, and feedback on the planned structure of the task force.

A Wildlife Trafficking Investigators Program was organised by the embassy of the US at the FBI's International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest between 10 and 21 September 2018. The 2 weeks training was given by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This specialized course presented the planning methods and techniques for conducting successful wildlife investigations, such as various types of investigating techniques and crime scene processing, interviews, undercover operations, and case report writing. The participating countries (Croatia, Slovenian and Georgia) could nominate 10 persons each to attend this course, which consisted of ministry personnel, police officials, customs officials, inspectors and technicians that support such criminal investigations, and prosecutors; and by that the training was available for the entire part of enforcement / judiciary chain. The Hungarian CITES MA gave a presentation about the trends of illegal wildlife trade in Hungary and Central-Eastern Europe, as well as briefly introduced the plans with the NEST.

Norway

The Norwegian Environment Agency participated in the X European Regional CITES Plants Meeting in Palermo, Italy in March 2018.

Norway, represented by the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Agriculture (VKM), participated in the 30. Animals and 24. Plants Committee meeting.

Portugal

Portugal has participated in CITES meetings whether at international or EU level since November 2017, including EU CITES Management Committee Meetings, EU Scientific Review Group Meetings, EU Enforcement Group Meetings, the 24th meeting of the Plants Committee and the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee.

Portugal MA coordinated:

- training of police officers engaged at custom and territory level on investigation techniques for fighting wildlife crime
- elaboration of a draft memorandum of understanding between Portuguese CITES MA and the National Prosecutors office
- training of police officers engaged at custom and territory level on CITES matter and related issues

An expert from Portugal is s member of Plant Committe, representing Europe.

Russian Federation

The scientific body of CITES in the Russian Federation in cooperation with the Administrative Body of CITES in the Russian Federation regularly conduct joint explanatory work with customs and law enforcement officers on the procedure of passing CITES species through customs posts of the Russian Federation, explanatory work on determining animal species, checking tags. In addition, active explanatory work is carried out with citizens on the procedure for obtaining a CITES permit and the rules for transporting live specimens (pets) or, for example, hunting trophies.

Also, the scientific bodies of CITES in the Russian Federation and a number of other organizations have developed and conducted training programs for specialists carrying out the maintenance of living specimens, including employees of nurseries, zoos, and ordinary citizens.

Turkey

Projects:

Nature of the Collection of Natural Flower Bulbs, Production and Export Regulations Relating to the business and operations is maintained by of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, General Directorate of Plant Production, Department of Seed Policy. The purpose of this Regulation is regulated the methods and principles for the collection, production, harvesting, storage and export of seed, onion, tuber, rhizome, korm or other components of nature for the protection of natural flowering bulb species. *Within the scope of this regulation, technical committee and advisory committee meetings are held twice a year in spring and autumn.* Technical committee and advisory committee meeting was held on 16.02.2018. Members of the technical committee,

provincial directorates and companies that receive qualification are present at the meeting. The autumn technical committee and advisory committee meeting will be held in November.

Training programs on CITES implementations for Customs inspectors were organized by the Management Authorities. (The Training Programs were held on 29 January, 21 March, 25 May and 29 August 2018.)

CITES Database Program has been working to issue CITES Permits since January 1, 2016. CITES Main Management Authority (GDNCNP) gives CITES implementers *the training programs on CITES Database Program*.

United Kingdom

Meetings, Workshops and Other Activities:

The UK attended and supported numerous meetings and workshops since the last report.

-The UK chaired the Standing Committee Intersessional Working Group on Rhinoceroses - The UK hosted the CITES international technical workshop on eels (*Anguilla* spp.) on 18-20th March at RBG Kew (the UK Scientific Authority for Flora)

- UKBF (UK Border Force) (CITES Team) supported a World Customs Organisation (WCO) mission to build capacity in Tanzania in September

- UKBF supported a transport task force IWT event in Singapore hosted by the British High Commission

- UKBF co-hosted IWT transport event at Heathrow Airport with the airport operator. This brought together airlines, ground handling and security staff to form a community to tackle IWT at Heathrow

- UKBF attended the Interpol ECEC (Environmental Crime Enforcement Committee) meeting in South Africa in May and chaired the Wildlife Crime Working Group

- UKBF attended as observers at the International air transport association live animals board meeting in Haarlem Netherlands in May.

6. Problems faced by the regional representatives

There are no special problems faced by the Regional Representatives.