

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

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

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP ON  
CUSTOMS CONTROL OF TRADE IN CITES-LISTED SPECIES:  
TRENDS, TECHNOLOGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
IMPROVED TRADE AND REGULATORY CONTROL  
(23-25 MAY 2018, UNIVERSITY OF GIBRALTAR)

This document has been submitted by Switzerland as Chair of the Standing Committee's intersessional working group on electronic systems and information technologies in relation to agenda item 39.\*

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**Summary and Recommendations of the Workshop on  
CUSTOMS CONTROL OF TRADE IN CITES LISTED SPECIES  
TRENDS, TECHNOLOGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED TRADE AND REGULATORY  
CONTROL  
(23 -25 May 2018, University of Gibraltar)**

Customs coordinates and executes the control of all imports and exports on behalf of the trade regulating agencies in the country. It plays a crucial role in enforcing the application of CITES rules and regulations during the import and export process, and in identifying and combating illegal trade in wildlife while supporting legitimate traders.

Today Customs controls worldwide are based on risk management. This involves a systematic analysis of risks related to international trade. A risk assessment is made using objective selectivity criteria to identify potentially non-compliant trade which then lead to focused, targeted inspections. Risk management has become a core instrument for efficient control of cross border trade. There is a tool provided by the WCO on the organizational framework of Risk Management and operational Risk management (WCO Risk Management Compendium).

Customs risk management uses modern information technologies, data analysis and automated risk identification. This requires availability of electronic information from customs and trade documents such as the Customs declaration and the CITES permits and certificates.

To strengthen the control of trade in CITES listed species CITES Management Authorities and Customs or Border Authorities should closely work together to ensure that CITES controls are fully taken into account by Customs when Customs controls the import, export and transit operations.

This means CITES Management Authorities need a good understanding of latest policies, instruments and procedures used by Customs or Border administrations for the control of international trade. It equally requires that Customs or Border Administrations understand the specific concerns and priorities of the Management Authority to integrate CITES risks into their risk management process during import and export.

The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) provides a set of instruments and policies for the implementation of efficient border controls. This agreement is mandatory both for Customs or Border Administrations and CITES Management Authorities. It provides a framework to facilitate the collaboration between the national Customs or Border administration and the CITES Management Authorities.

Realizing that international illegal trade has reached alarming levels the workshop noted a general lack of guidance and training materials available to CITES Management Authorities to develop this kind of collaboration with Customs and Border Administrations. Consequently, many Customs administrations are not in a position to enforce CITES related controls to the extent that their control instruments would allow.

In order to better take advantage of the power of modern Customs controls it is suggested that:

- (a) CITES Conference of Parties should revisit existing resolutions on permits issuance and processing including Resolution 12.3 (Rev. CoP 17) in view of creating an enabling environment for cooperation between CITES Management Authorities and Customs or Border administrations for the implementation of modern and efficient control procedures for trade in CITES listed species.
- (b) CITES Management Authorities are encouraged to engage in a systematic collaboration with their Customs or Border administration to identify CITES-related risks, ensure their integration into the Customs Risk management system and to review together with Customs on a regular basis the efficiency of the risk criteria.
- (c) The CITES Convention in collaboration with the WCO and other relevant international organizations should develop recommendations, guidelines and training materials to support the implementation of modern and improved CITES border control procedures.
- (d) Automation of CITES business processes and electronic information exchange between relevant stakeholders is an important component of automated Risk Management and should be recognized as a fundamental instrument to combat illegal trade in wildlife.
- (e) Parties that wish to implement electronic permitting could consider the UNCTAD aCITES system. The system provides for the adoption of CITES best practice in permit application, assessment, issuance and control. The aCITES system can provide Management Authorities with a platform for creating and submitting CITES annual trade reports, as well as electronic information exchange with Customs, national Single Window and for electronic permit Information Exchange with other Management Authorities.
- (f) Customs and CITES Management Authorities should use the WTO TFA as a framework to guide the implementation of efficient controls.
- (g) High level policy support as well as long term support and resource allocation is required to achieve an efficient collaboration between Customs and CITES.