

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

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES TAKEN TO
COMBAT ILLEGAL TRADE IN TIGERS (*PANTHERA TIGRIS*) – CZECH REPUBLIC

This document has been submitted by the Czech Republic in relation to agenda item 51.¹

¹ *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.*

Report on the implementation of measures taken to combat illegal trade in tigers (*Panthera tigris*)

Czech Republic

September 2018

(Compiled by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic)

Reflecting the below described uncovered illegal trade in tigers the Czech Republic is pleased to submit the additional information document on the implementation of measures taken to prevent and combat illegal trade in tigers, tiger parts and derivatives for further consideration with reference to the agenda point 51 (Asian big cats) of the 70th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (Sochi, 1 – 5 October 2018).

Introduction

175 customs officials, 48 policemen and 6 inspectors from the Czech Environmental Inspectorate and employees of the State Veterinary Administration participated in the raids ("Operation Trophy") that took place on 16 July in Prague, in Central and South Bohemian Regions, seizing a body of a killed tiger, 4 skins, tiger claws and further tiger products (bouillon cubes and tiger wine) and equipment used in the production of traditional Asian medicines made from tiger parts. Consequently 3 persons were taken to custody – a private breeder of tigers, a taxidermist and a Vietnamese trader living in the Czech Republic. Actual findings of long term investigation show that there is a link between the private facilities breeding tigers in captivity in the Czech Republic and illegal trade in tigers and tiger products to be exported further to southeast Asia. These findings have been confirmed by the increasing number of recorded seizures of tiger specimens incl. whole skeletons, teeth, claws and other tiger products in last years and also by quite low average survival age of tigers kept by private breeders (5 years) in the Czech Republic. Currently, there are 177 tigers bred in the Czech Republic, but only 45 of them are bred in zoological gardens, the majority of tigers are kept by private breeders, circuses etc. A detailed updated information about the illegal trade in tigers in the Czech Republic, incl. *modus operandi* is subject to a separate report compiled by the Czech Environmental Inspectorate (CITES Enforcement Authority of the Czech Republic) and submitted together with this document.

Measures adopted to curb illegal trade in tigers and tiger products

- As a precautionary measure the Czech Republic has suspended issuing CITES permits for (re-)export of live captive bred tigers from the Czech Republic (the given declaration of the Minister of the Environment came into force on 29th July 2018 - International Tiger Day) to third countries (outside of the EU) for commercial purposes. Only export of tigers from the Czech Republic for breeding in zoos in third countries can now be permitted.

- Furthermore, the conditions for issuing EU certificates allowing trade in captive bred tigers within the EU have been strengthened in the Czech Republic. The issuing regional Management Authorities have been recommended by the Ministry of the Environment to issue such certificates only as transaction specific documents and only for purposes of breeding, research and education in zoos.
- Checks of all existing facilities in the Czech Republic breeding tigers in captivity have been conducted by the Czech Environmental Inspectorate, samples (hair, excrements) from tigers for archivation and for possible future identification through DNA analysis have been taken.
- The Project TigrisID financed by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic to develop reliable DNA diagnostic tools for processed medicinals was launched in 2017 and will continue till the end of 2020.
- Methodic guidance for proper control of tiger carcasses and their disposal has been released for competent veterinarian authorities in order to avoid misuse of carcasses for further illegal trade in tiger parts and other products.

Legislative measures

Amendments of veterinarian legislation - Act No. 246/1992 Coll., on the protection of animals against abuse, strengthening the conditions of keeping and breeding tigers (and also other big cats species) by private breeders have been proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic for adoption.

Raising of public awareness and demand reduction

A wholenational public information campaign "Stolen Wildlife" against wildlife trafficking incl. the issue of illegal trade in tigers, tiger parts and products 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/>.

Apart from that, an information Czech-Vietnamese leaflet about illegal wildlife trade and a short video clip about CITES in the Czech Republic dubbed into Vietnamese have been produced and will be made available to Vietnamese community living in the Czech Republic to address demand reduction for illegal CITES specimens incl. tigers, tiger parts and derivatives.

International cooperation

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 of representatives of CITES Management and Enforcement Authorities was held to

Viet Nam (Hanoi) in April 2018 to discuss illegal tiger trade issue, possibilities of cooperation in campaigns for raising of public awareness and in TigrisID project.