

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



Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Bangkok (Thailand), 3-14 March 2013

EUROPEAN UNION PROPOSAL REGARDING *URSUS MARITIMUS* (POLAR BEAR)

1. This document has been submitted under Rule 23.5 of the Rules of Procedure by Ireland, on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States, in relation to listing proposal CoP16 Prop. 3 on *Ursus maritimus* (polar bear).<sup>\*</sup>
2. The EU and its Member States share the concerns of many Parties about the survival of the polar bear and support the overall objective of securing enhanced protection for the species.
3. The EU and its Member States consider that the diminution of sea ice, caused by global warming, is the main threat affecting the survival of polar bears. Therefore, all CITES contracting parties should be encouraged to engage constructively in addressing climate change through international negotiations under the UNFCCC and through action taken at national level.
4. The EU and its Member States also consider that there are a number of questions regarding the sustainability of the hunt in some subpopulations. In this respect, the EU and its Member States are of the view that any trade in polar bears should be sustainable.
5. There is a clear need to ensure that actions taken by CITES are in the best long term interest of the polar bear.
6. The EU and its Member States note that unanimity does not exist among the range States regarding the transfer of the polar bear from Appendix II to Appendix I. It is desirable that range States should, where possible, agree on common approaches under CITES.
7. The EU and its Member States consider that the best way to protect the species is through engagement with the range States and action within CITES based on science.
8. On that basis, the EU and its Member States therefore propose to amend proposal 3 (*Ursus maritimus*) by maintaining the species on Appendix II with an annotation and related Decisions as detailed overleaf.

AMENDMENT TO PROPOSAL 3 (*Ursus maritimus*)

To maintain *U. maritimus* on Appendix II with the following annotation:

For the exclusive purpose of allowing trade from range States only in those circumstances where the respective range State has published export quotas in line with Res. Conf. 14.7, set at the level of each individual sub-population.

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<sup>\*</sup> 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.

And to introduce the following related Decisions:

## DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

### ***Directed to the CITES Secretariat***

16.xx Liaise with the IUCN/SSC PB Specialist Group to encourage them to urgently undertake a review of the status of all subpopulations of polar bears and invite them to make this publicly available so that it can be assessed by the Animals Committee at its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting (*which is due to be held in 2014*).

### ***Directed to the polar bear range States***

16.xx Provide to the Animals Committee, as soon as possible and in any case in time to be considered at its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, and to the CITES Secretariat, any available updated information regarding:

1. the status and trends of their polar bear sub-populations;
2. the levels of trade in polar bears and their parts and derivatives and how trade is managed and monitored, and any relevant factors influencing trade. Such information should include data on the total trade for personal purposes, including hunting trophies and other Personal and Household Effects, for commercial trade, and for scientific and educational use;
3. the sustainability and management of their polar bear harvest levels and notably how the input of the IUCN/SSC PB Specialist Group and other sources of information, including traditional ecological knowledge, and observed and projected impacts from climate change, are taken into consideration in the determination of those levels,

16.xx Provide the CITES Secretariat before the 65<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee with updated information regarding the level and control of the illegal trade and harvest of polar bears, including domestic legislation addressing wildlife crime and its application in practice, and on the verification of CITES export permits.

16.xx Determine if a tagging system would be an effective instrument towards improving traceability of trade in polar bear hides/skins and control of illegal trade.

### ***Directed to the Animals Committee***

16.xx Instructs the Animals Committee to enter polar bears into the Review of Significant Trade as an urgent case under paragraph c) of Res. Conf. 12.8 (Rev CoP13) and to expedite the review process, using the information available from Decision 16.xx and postal procedures if necessary, such that polar bears are categorised under paragraph i) – l) of the same Resolution and recommendations, if any, under paragraphs m) – p) are formulated and transmitted to range States before CoP17.

16.xx Review at its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting the latest scientific information available on the current status and future prospects of the polar bear and its habitat, including outputs from the IUCN/SSC PB Specialist Group (if available), the CITES trade database and any other information that the Committee deems relevant.

16.xx Determine if other appropriate action under CITES could contribute to the long-term survival of polar bears.

16.xx Report to the Standing Committee at its 66<sup>th</sup> meeting (*which is due to be held in 2015*), at the latest, on the results of the Animals Committee's actions with recommendations to the Standing Committee for other actions that may be appropriate.

### ***Directed to all Parties***

16.xx Note that, ultimately, polar bears are primarily threatened by climate change and the associated loss of Arctic sea ice. Parties are encouraged to take action at all levels, including at national and international level, to mitigate against the impacts of climate change.