



Plenary sitting

B8-0987/2016

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Questions for Oral Answer B8-0711/2016 and B8-0712/2016

pursuant to Rule 128(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU strategic objectives for the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), to be held in Johannesburg (South Africa) from 24 September to 5 October 2016
(2016/2664(RSP))

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on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

B8-0987/2016

European Parliament resolution on the EU strategic objectives for the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), to be held in Johannesburg (South Africa) from 24 September to 5 October 2016 (2016/2664(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the seriousness of the decline in global biodiversity, which represents the sixth mass extinction of species,
 - having regard to the role of forests and tropical forests, which are the world's largest reservoir of terrestrial biodiversity and an essential habitat for wild fauna and flora and for indigenous populations,
 - having regard to the forthcoming 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 17) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), to be held from 24 September to 5 October 2016 in Johannesburg (South Africa),
 - having regard to UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 69/314 on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife, adopted on 30 July 2015,
 - having regard to the questions of xxx to the Council and to the Commission on key objectives for the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Johannesburg (South Africa) from 24 September to 5 October 2016 (O-00088/2016 – B8-0711/2016 and O-00089/2016 – B8-0712/2016),
 - having regard to Rules 128(5) and 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas CITES is the largest global wildlife conservation agreement in existence, with 181 parties, including the EU and its 28 Member States;
- B. whereas the aim of CITES is to ensure that international trade in wild animals and plants is not a threat to the survival of the species in the wild;
- C. whereas, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, more than 23 000 species, representing about 30 % of the 79 837 species assessed by IUCN, are threatened with extinction;
- D. whereas tropical rainforests contain 50 to 80 % of terrestrial animal and plant species; whereas today these environments are particularly under threat, including from the commercialisation of species, in particular the exploitation of tropical timber and subsoils; whereas deforestation and the illegal sale of wood are having a disastrous impact on the preservation of forest flora and fauna;
- E. whereas intensive fishing, commercial hunting and the unrestricted exploitation of

- micro-organisms and sub-seabed resources are harming marine biodiversity;
- F. whereas many species subject to trophy hunting are suffering a serious population decline; whereas over a 10-year period EU Member States declared as hunting trophies imports of almost 117 000 specimens of wildlife species listed in the CITES appendices;
- G. whereas wildlife trafficking has become an organised transnational crime which has major negative impacts on biodiversity and on the livelihood of local populations, as it denies them a legal income, creating insecurity and instability;
- H. whereas wildlife trafficking has become the fourth largest black market, after the drugs, people and arms markets; whereas the internet has come to play a key role in facilitating wildlife trafficking; whereas terrorist groups also use the above types of trafficking to finance their operations; whereas wildlife trafficking offences are not punished severely enough;
- I. whereas corruption plays a central role in wildlife trafficking;
- J. whereas evidence suggests that wild-caught specimens are being laundered through the fraudulent use of CITES permits and claims of captive breeding;
- K. whereas the EU is a major transit and destination market for illegal wildlife trade, especially for the trade in birds, turtles, reptiles and plant species¹ that are listed in CITES appendices;
- L. whereas a growing number of illegally traded exotic species are kept as pets in Europe and internationally; whereas the escape of these animals can lead to an uncontrolled spread affecting the environment and public health and safety;
- M. whereas the EU and its Member States provide substantial financial and logistical support for CITES, and for tackling illegal wildlife trade in many third countries;
- N. whereas the species under CITES are listed in appendices according to their conservation status and levels of international trade, Appendix I containing species threatened with extinction for which commercial trade is prohibited, and Appendix II species in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilisation incompatible with their survival;
- O. whereas CITES Appendix I species are strongly protected, whereas any commercial trade in species listed therein is prohibited, and whereas any permit to sell confiscated specimens or products (for example ivory, tiger products or rhino horn) would undermine the aim of the CITES Convention;
- P. whereas efforts to improve transparency in decision-making are essential;
1. Welcomes the EU's accession to CITES; considers the accession to be a fundamental step in ensuring that the EU can further pursue the wider objectives of its environmental

¹ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/570008/IPOL_STU\(2016\)570008_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/570008/IPOL_STU(2016)570008_EN.pdf)

policies and the regulation of the international trade in endangered species of wild flora and fauna, and promote the sustainable development policies of the UN Agenda 2030;

2. Welcomes in particular the fact that the EU is participating for the first time as a party, and supports the proposals made by the EU and its Member States, in particular the proposed resolutions on corruption and on hunting trophies, the extension of CITES protection to a number of species imported into the EU, notably as pets, and the proposed amendments to Resolution 13.7 (Rev. CoP14) on the control of trade in personal and household effects;
3. Highlights the fact that the accession to CITES by the European Union has rendered the legal status of the European Union in CITES more transparent vis-à-vis third parties to the Convention; believes that it is a logical and necessary step to ensure that the European Union is fully able to pursue its objectives under its environmental policy; recalls that accession enables the Commission, on behalf of the European Union, to express a coherent EU position in CITES matters and play a substantial role in negotiations during the Conferences of Parties;
4. Stresses that the European Union became a party to CITES in 2015 and that it will be voting with 28 votes on issues of EU competence at the CITES CoP; in that regard, supports changes to the CoP's Rules of Procedure which reflect the text of the CITES Convention on voting by regional economic integration organisations and which are consistent with what has been in place in other international agreements for many years, and objects to having the votes by the European Union calculated on the basis of the number of Member States that are properly accredited for the meeting at the time the actual vote occurs;
5. Welcomes the recently adopted EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking, which aims to prevent such trafficking by addressing its principal causes, improving the implementation and enforcement of existing rules, and combating organised wildlife crime more effectively; welcomes the inclusion in the Action Plan of a specific chapter on strengthening the global partnership of source, consumer, and transit countries against wildlife trafficking; and urges the EU and its Member States to adopt and implement the strengthened Action Plan, which will demonstrate a strong European commitment to tackling wildlife trafficking;
6. Supports the initiative by the Commission and the Member States to agree on global guidelines on trophy hunting within CITES in order to better control internationally the sustainable origin of hunting trophies of the species listed in Appendix I or II;
7. Calls on the EU and its Member States to adhere to the precautionary principle with regard to species protection in all their decisions on working documents and listing proposals (as set out in CITES Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16)) – in particular regarding the import of hunting trophies of CITES species – taking account, in particular, of the user-pays principle, the principle of preventive action and the ecosystem approach; calls on the EU and its Member States, furthermore, to promote the removal of exemptions for permits for all hunting trophies from CITES-listed species;
8. Demands that all CITES/CoP 17 decisions be based on science, careful analysis and

equitable consultation with the affected range states, and be reached in cooperation with the local communities; underlines that any wildlife regulation should incentivise the rural population's engagement in nature protection by linking their benefit with the state of biodiversity;

9. Encourages CITES Parties to strengthen cooperation, coordination and synergies between biodiversity-related conventions at all relevant levels;
10. Calls on the Member States to provide for cooperation, coordination and a prompt exchange of information among all relevant agencies involved in implementing the CITES Convention, in particular the customs authorities, the police, border veterinary and plant health inspection services, and other bodies;
11. Encourages the EU and its Member States to promote and support initiatives to increase protection against the impact of international trade on species for which the European Union is a significant transit or destination market;
12. Is concerned that the boundary between legal and illegal trade is very thin as regards the commercialisation of species and their derived products, and that with the cumulative effects of human activity and global warming the great majority of wild fauna and flora species are today threatened with extinction;
13. Urges the EU to adopt legislation to reduce illegal trade by making it illegal to import, export, sell, acquire or buy wild animals or plants which are taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of the law of the country of origin or transit;
14. Commits particularly to strongly encouraging all the Member States: to ban the export of raw ivory, as already do Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and some US States; to increase their vigilance with regard to marketing certificates on their territory; to make the fight against fraud effective, in particular at borders; to launch destruction operations of illegal ivory; and to strengthen the penalties for trafficking in protected species (notably elephants, rhinos, tigers, primates and varieties of tropical wood);
15. Encourages the EU and its Member States, and the wider CITES Parties, further to Articles III, IV and V of the Convention, to promote and support initiatives to improve the welfare of live CITES-listed animals in trade; such initiatives include mechanisms to ensure animals are 'prepared and shipped so as to minimise the risk of injury, damage to health or cruel treatment', that destinations are 'suitably equipped to house and care for them', and that confiscations of live specimens are undertaken with due consideration for their welfare;
16. Is concerned about the impact that 'banking on extinction', or the buying of products in the hope that the species concerned will soon be extinct, might have on the protection of endangered wildlife; invites the CITES Parties and Secretariat to carry out further research on whether emerging financial products and technologies such as bitcoin play an enabling role;
17. Recognises that CITES observers play an important role in providing expertise on species and trade, and in lending their support to capacity-building by the Parties;

Transparency of decision-making

18. Considers that transparency in decision-making in international environmental institutions is key to their effective functioning; welcomes all voluntary and procedural efforts to increase transparency in CITES governance; strongly opposes the use of secret ballots as a general practice within CITES;
19. Welcomes the decision made at COP 16 to include a requirement for members of the Animals and Plants Committees to provide declarations of any conflicts of interest; acknowledges, however, that the requirement is based only on a self-assessment by members; regrets that there have been no declarations of any potential financial conflicts of interest from members of these committees so far;
20. Urges the CITES Secretariat to investigate the potential for an independent review board, or the expansion of the mandate of the Standing Committee to include an independent review panel, in order to create an oversight safeguard for the conflict of interest provisions;
21. Considers transparency imperative to any funding process and a requisite for good governance, and therefore supports the resolution proposed by the EU on the ‘Sponsored Delegates Project’¹;

Reporting

22. Considers traceability essential for legal and sustainable trade, whether commercial or non-commercial, and also central to the EU’s efforts to fight corruption and wildlife trafficking and poaching, which is recognised to be the fourth largest illicit market on the planet; in this regard highlights the need for the implementation by all Parties of the e-permitting system, which should be organised transparently and jointly by all of them; acknowledges, however, the technical challenges faced by some Parties in doing so, and encourages the provision of capacity-building support to enable the implementation of the e-permitting system by all the Parties;
23. Welcomes the decision made at COP 16 on regular reporting by CITES Parties on illegal trade; regards the new annual illegal trade report format, as included in CITES Notification No 2016/007, as a significant step towards developing a better understanding of wildlife trafficking, and encourages all CITES Parties to accurately and regularly report on illegal trade using the prescribed format;
24. Welcomes private-sector initiatives such as those taken by the International Air Transport Association on e-freight for and by the air cargo supply chain; considers the expansion of such traceability initiatives, especially for the transport sector, to be an important tool in intelligence-gathering;
25. Highlights the importance of the permit-issuing process in effective data-collection, and thus the key role played by the Management Authorities; reiterates that permit-issuing authorities must be independent, in accordance with Article VI of CITES;

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/cop17/Res%20sponsored%20delegate%20project.pdf>

Wildlife trafficking and corruption

26. Draws attention to cases of corruption where deliberate fraudulent issuing of permits by actors in the permit-issuing authority has occurred; calls on the CITES Secretariat and the Standing Committee to address these cases as a matter of priority and urgency;
27. Underlines that corruption can be detected at every stage in the wildlife trade chain, affecting countries of origin, transit and destination, and undermining the effectiveness, proper implementation and ultimate success of the CITES Convention; considers, therefore, that strong and effective anti-corruption measures are essential in the fight against wildlife trafficking;
28. Raises serious concerns over the deliberate misuse of source codes for the illegal trade in wild-caught specimens in the form of fraudulently use of captive-bred codes for CITES species; calls on COP 17 to adopt a robust system for recording, monitoring and certifying trade in ranched or captive-bred species, in both countries of origin and the EU, in order to prevent this abuse;
29. Urges the CITES Parties to develop further guidance and to support the development of additional techniques and methodologies to differentiate between species originating from captive production facilities and species from the wild;
30. Condemns the high degree of illegal activity by organised criminal gangs and networks in violation of the Convention, which frequently use corruption to facilitate wildlife trafficking and frustrate efforts to enforce the law;
31. Urges the Parties that are not yet signatories to, or have not yet ratified, the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and the UN Convention against Corruption to do so without delay;
32. Welcomes the international commitment under UNGA Resolution 69/314 (July 2015), inter alia on counter-corruption (Article 10)¹;
33. Supports EU and Member State initiatives that call for more action in the global fight against corruption under CITES; urges the Parties to CITES to support the EU proposal for a resolution against corruption-facilitating activities conducted in violation of the Convention;

Enforcement

34. Calls for the timely and full use of sanctions by CITES against Parties that do not comply with key aspects of the Convention, and in particular for the EU and its Member States to make use of the mechanisms available to encourage Parties to comply with the CITES Convention and other international agreements aimed at protecting wildlife and biodiversity;
35. Underlines the importance of joint international cooperation between all actors in the enforcement chain, in order to strengthen law enforcement capacities at the local,

¹ http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/314

regional, national and international levels; welcomes their contribution, and calls for even more engagement; points to the importance of setting up special prosecutors' offices and specialised police squads to fight wildlife trafficking more effectively; highlights the importance of joint international enforcement operations under the ICCWC¹, congratulates in this respect the successful COBRA III operation²; welcomes the EU support for the ICCWC;

36. Acknowledges the increasing illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products via the internet, and calls on the CITES Parties to liaise with law enforcement and cybercrime units and the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime in order to identify best practices and model domestic measures to tackle illegal online trade;
37. Calls on the Parties to adopt and implement clear and effective policies to discourage the consumption of products derived from vulnerable wildlife species, to raise consumer awareness of the impact of their consumption on wild species and to inform on the dangers of the illegal trafficking networks;
38. Calls on the Parties to support the development of livelihoods for the local communities closest to the wildlife concerned and to involve these communities in the fight against poaching and in the provision of information on the effects of the trade in species of fauna and flora threatened with extinction;
39. Asks for continuing international engagement in order to facilitate long-term capacity building, to improve the exchange of information and intelligence and to coordinate the enforcement efforts of government authorities;
40. Calls on the Parties to ensure effective prosecution of persons who commit offences related to wildlife and to ensure that they are punished in a manner commensurate with the seriousness of their actions;

Funding

41. Points to the need to increase the funding being made available for wildlife conservation and capacity-building programmes;
42. Stresses the need to allocate adequate resources to the CITES Secretariat, especially in view of its increased responsibilities and additional workload; also stresses the need for the timely deposit of financial contributions pledged by the Parties to CITES;
43. Encourages the Parties to consider increasing the core budget of CITES to reflect inflation and to ensure the proper functioning of the CITES Convention;
44. Encourages the extension of public-private partnership financing for capacity-building programmes to other areas of the CITES Convention framework, as well as of direct funding, in order to support the implementation of the Convention;

¹ International Consortium for Combating Wildlife Trafficking, comprising INTERPOL, the CITES Secretariat, the World Customs Organisation, the UN Office of Drugs and Organised Crime and the World Bank.

² Joint International Police and Customs Operation conducted in May 2015.

45. Welcomes the EU funding provided for the CITES Convention through the European Development Fund, and encourages the EU to continue to provide and ensure targeted financial support and, in the long term too, to continue to support specific and targeted financial aid;

Amendments to the CITES Appendices

46. Expresses its strong support for the listing proposals submitted by the EU and its Member States;
47. Urges all Parties to CITES and all participants in COP 17 to respect the criteria laid down in the Convention for the inclusion of species in the appendices, and to adopt a precautionary approach in order to ensure a high and efficient level of protection of endangered species; observes that the credibility of CITES depends on its ability to alter listings in response to negative trends as well as positive ones, and therefore welcomes the possibility of downlisting of species only when it is appropriate, in accordance with established scientific criteria, providing evidence that the CITES listing functions well;

African elephant and ivory trade

48. Notes that with the doubling of illegal killing and the tripling of the quantity of ivory seized over the past decade, the crisis faced by the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) as a result of poaching for the ivory trade remains devastating and is leading to a decline in populations across Africa, and is a threat to the livelihood of millions of people, given that the illegal ivory trade harms economic development, fosters organised crime, promotes corruption, fuels conflicts and threatens regional and national security by providing militia groups with a source of funding; urges the EU and its Member States, therefore, to support proposals that would strengthen the protection of African elephants and reduce the illegal trade in ivory;
49. Welcomes the proposal submitted by Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Kenya, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Uganda and endorsed by the African Elephant Coalition that seeks to list all the elephant populations of Africa in Annex I, which would simplify the implementation of the ban on international trade in ivory and would send a clear message to the world regarding the global determination to prevent the extinction of African elephants;
50. Calls on the EU and all Parties to maintain the current moratorium and hence to oppose the proposals made by Namibia and Zimbabwe on the ivory trade, which seek to remove restrictions on trade associated with the annotations to the Appendix II listing of those parties' elephant populations;
51. Observes that attempts by CITES to reduce poaching and illegal trade by permitting legal ivory sales have failed and that ivory trafficking has increased significantly; calls for further efforts by the parties concerned under the National Ivory Action Plan process; supports measures for the management and destruction of ivory stockpiles;
52. Recalls the call made in Parliament's resolution of 15 January 2014 on wildlife crime on all 28 of its Member States to introduce moratoria on all commercial imports, exports and domestic sales and purchases of tusks and raw and worked ivory products

until wild elephant populations are no longer threatened by poaching; notes that Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Austria, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Denmark have already decided to not grant any export permits for pre-Convention 'raw' ivory; encourages the EU and its Member States, therefore, to ban the export and import of ivory and prohibit all commercial sales and purchases of ivory within the EU;

White rhino

53. Regrets the proposal made by Swaziland to legalise trade in rhino-horn from its white rhino population (*Ceratotherium simum simum*), which would facilitate the laundering of poached rhino-horn into legal trade, undermining existing demand reduction efforts and domestic trade bans in consumer markets, and might fuel poaching of rhino populations in Africa and Asia; urges the EU and all Parties to oppose this proposal, and consequently calls on Swaziland to withdraw its proposal;

African lion

54. Notes that while African lion (*Panthera leo*) populations have experienced a dramatic inferred decline of 43 % in 21 years and have recently been extirpated from 12 African States, international trade in lion products has increased significantly; urges the EU and all Parties to support the proposal by Niger, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Rwanda and Togo to transfer all African lion populations to Appendix I of CITES;

Pangolins

55. Observes that pangolins are the most illegally traded mammal in the world, for both their meat and their scales, which are used in traditional medicine, putting all eight species of pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*, *M. tetradactyla*, *M. tricuspis*, *M. gigantea*, *M. temminckii*, *M. javanica*, *M. pentadactyla*, *M. culionensis*) at risk of extinction; welcomes, therefore, the various proposals for transferring all Asian and African pangolin species to Appendix I of CITES;

Tigers and other Asian big cats

56. Urges the EU and all the Parties to support the adoption of decisions proposed by the CITES Standing Committee which lay down strict conditions for tiger farming and trading in captive tiger specimens and products, as well as the proposal made by India encouraging the Parties to share images of seized tiger specimens and products, which would assist law enforcement agencies with the identification of individual tigers by their unique stripe patterns; calls on the EU to consider providing funding for the implementation of these decisions, and calls for the closure of tiger farms and for an end to be put to the trade in captive tiger parts and products at the CITES COP 17;

Pet traded species

57. Observes that the market for exotic pets is growing internationally and in the EU and that a large number of proposals have been submitted to list reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish and mammals that are threatened by international trade for the pet market; calls on

all the Parties to support these proposals in order to ensure better protection for these endangered species from exploitation for the pet trade;

58. Calls on the EU Member States to establish a positive list of exotic animals that can be kept as pets;

Agarwood and rosewood

59. Acknowledges that illegal logging is one of the most destructive wildlife crimes, as it threatens not just single species but entire habitats, and that the demand for rosewood (*Dalbergia* spp.) for Asian markets has continued to increase; urges the EU and all the Parties to support the proposal by Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala and Kenya for the inclusion of the genus *Dalbergia* in CITES Appendix II, with the exception of the species included in Appendix I, as this will be a critical contribution to the efforts to halt unsustainable rosewood trade;
60. Notes that the current exceptions to CITES requirements could allow resinous powder of agarwood (*Aquilaria* spp. and *Gyrinops* spp.) to be exported as exhausted powder, and other products to be packaged for retail sale before export, thus evading import regulations; calls, therefore, on the EU and all the Parties to support the United States of America's proposal to amend the annotation in order to avoid loopholes for trade in this very valuable aromatic timber;

Other species

61. Urges the EU and all the Parties:
- to support the proposal from Peru to amend the annotation to Appendix II for the vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*), as it will consolidate the marking requirements for the international trade in this species;
 - to support the inclusion of the nautilus (*Nautilidae* spp.) in Appendix II, as proposed by Fiji, India, Palau and the United States of America, given that the international trade in chambered nautilus shells as jewellery and decoration is a major threat to these biologically vulnerable species;
 - to oppose the proposal by Canada to move the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) from Appendix I to Appendix II, as this may exacerbate the significant illegal trade in the species;
62. Recalls that the Banggai cardinalfish (*Pterapogon kauderni*) is on the IUCN list of endangered species and that a huge proportion of the species has been lost, including several entire populations, due to the continuing high demand for the aquarium trade, with main destinations being the European Union and the United States; calls on the European Union and its Member States, therefore, to support the inclusion of the Banggai cardinalfish in Appendix I rather than Appendix II;
63. Notes that the international trade in raw and worked coral has expanded and that market demand for precious corals has increased, threatening the sustainability of precious corals; urges the European Union and all the Parties to support the adoption of the

report on precious corals in international trade submitted by the United States;

64. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Parties to CITES and the CITES Secretariat.