

EN  
E-001220/2019  
Answer given by Mr Vella  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(27.5.2019)

The Commission is pursuing several different strands of work against wildlife cybercrime, in line with the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking.<sup>1</sup> This includes ca. EUR 830 000 of funding for a collaborative project aimed at disrupting and deterring trafficking of wildlife in and via the EU through the internet and postal/fast parcel services.<sup>2</sup>

In 2018, the Commission adopted an Action Plan on Environmental Compliance and Governance<sup>3</sup>. One of the actions is the preparation of a guidance document on combating environmental crime, with a focus on waste and wildlife crime. Other actions aim at reinforcing the capacities of national environmental inspectors, police, prosecutors and judges. This includes work on training, national complaint-handling mechanisms, and use of geospatial intelligence for environmental compliance assurance.

Also relevant is the evaluation of Directive 2008/99/EC<sup>4</sup> during 2019. This Directive requires that Member States criminalise certain environmental offenses; the Commission is currently evaluating whether it has had the intended effect and whether any revision would be needed. The roadmap<sup>5</sup> for the evaluation was published in March 2019 and the public consultation will open in the summer.

Lastly, G7 interior ministers at their recent meeting on 4/5 April 2019 in Biarritz, France, committed to increase their fight against environmental crime, e.g. by establishing a dedicated network of law enforcement authorities and by improving insight into *inter alia* the Darknet or virtual currencies used for illegal trade of endangered animals and plants. It is to be expected that the effectiveness of customs controls will be further improved as of 2021, when the obligation to submit electronic customs declarations will be extended to cases of low value consignments that are currently exempted.

---

<sup>1</sup> COM(2016) 87 – see in particular Action 21.

<sup>2</sup> The project website will go online at <https://www.wwf.be/fr/notre-approche/vie-sauvage/> during the course of May 2019.

<sup>3</sup> COM(2018)10 final

<sup>4</sup> Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law, OJ L 328, 6.12.2008, p. 28–37

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-4981980\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-4981980_en)