

Resolution on the EU strategic objectives for the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), (in Doha, Qatar, from 13 to 25 March 2010)

2009/2811(RSP) - 10/02/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety on the EU strategic objectives for the 15th 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 Doha (Qatar) from 13 to 25 March 2010. Parliament begins by calling on the Commission and Member States to use the **precautionary principle** as the leading principle for all their decisions on working documents and listing proposals, also taking into account the user-pays principle, the ecosystem approach and traditional conservation principles. It strongly **opposes the use of secret ballots** and is disappointed that the CITES Standing Committee has not come forward with proposals to exclude the possibility of secret voting in CITES' decision-making process.

Bluefin tuna: noting that the current spawning stock biomass of northern bluefin tuna is less than 15% of what it was before fishing began, therefore confirming that the species meets this criterion for a CITES Appendix I listing, Parliament urges the Commission and Member States to support the listing of northern bluefin tuna (in CITES Appendix I subject to the following three conditions:

- a guarantee that Commission Regulation (EC) No 865/2006 laying down detailed rules concerning the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 on the protection of species will be amended so as to introduce a general derogation for domestic trade, allowing traditional coastal fishing to continue;
- provision of EU financial support for the seafarers and vessel owners affected by the decision;
- introduction of tighter controls and tougher penalties to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Parliament calls on the Commission to provide financial compensation for the fishing sector which may be affected by the potential inclusion of northern bluefin tuna in CITES Appendix I, in order to protect the sector's economic sustainability.

Sharks: Parliament strongly welcomes the proposal tabled by Sweden on behalf of Member States for the listing of the two shark species (porbeagle and spiny) in CITES Appendix II. It urges the Commission and Member States to support this proposal, as well as the listing of certain other species in Appendix II as proposed by the United States (USA).

Polar bear: Parliament supports the transfer of the polar bear from CITES Appendix II to CITES Appendix I, in line with the proposal of the United States of America.

Elephants and ivory: Members are not in favour of proposals from Tanzania and Zambia for the downlisting of the African elephant) from CITES Appendix I to CITES Appendix II with a view to trade. They also urge the Commission and Member States to reject all downlisting proposals for African elephants at least until such time as a true assessment can be made of the impact of the November 2008 "one-off" sales from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, as there is mounting evidence of increasing illegal and organised trade across Africa. Parliament supports instead proposals to include an annotation for African elephants preventing any future proposals to trade ivory or to downlist elephant populations from CITES Appendix I to CITES Appendix II until 20 years after the date of the one-off sale of ivory that took place in November 2008. CITES Parties who benefited from the one-off sale of government-owned ivory stocks are asked to provide financial support to the African Elephant Fund to enhance enforcement and anti-poaching initiatives.

Parliament goes on to make a series of observations on tigers and Asian big cats, and calls on the Commission and member States to support or reject certain proposals on a variety of species of fauna and flora.

The Commission and Member States are further urged to do the following:

- to step up international cooperation in the implementation of CITES;
- to support the inclusion of additional strengthening language, proposed by Germany, (E-commerce in specimens of CITES-listed species) and to support the revised proposal;
- to support proposals to participate in the development of post-2010 biodiversity targets, the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), including in relation to climate change;
- to support the proposal for further collaboration with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- to support further action to eliminate illicit trade in Tibetan antelope;
- to support the Secretariat proposal with a view to the compliance of range states of the saiga antelope (to ensure proper implementation of the Saiga Action Plan and compliance with the relevant decisions. It further proposes that the CITES Parties encourage industries that consume saiga horn to contribute to in situ conservation activities aimed at restoring wild populations;
- to support further action to combat illegal trade in great apes;
- to support efforts within CITES to tackle illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing of humphead wrasse.

Lastly, Parliament draws attention to the fact that the European Union is one of the largest markets for the illegal wildlife trade and that compliance varies between Member States. It calls on the Commission and Member States to step up coordination of their efforts to enforce EU wildlife trade legislation.