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) (Johannesburg, South Africa, 24 September - 5 October 2016)

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The European Parliament adopted a 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.

Members welcomed the EU's accession to CITES. The 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.

Parliament 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: (i) corruption and on hunting trophies, (ii) the extension of CITES protection to a number of species imported into the EU, notably as pets, and (iii) the proposed amendments to Resolution 13.7 (Rev. CoP 14) on the control of trade in personal and household effects.

The EU and its Member States are called upon to adhere to the **precautionary principle** with regard to species protection in all their decisions on working documents and listing proposals taking account, in particular, of the **user-pays principle**, the principle of preventive action and the ecosystem approach.

The EU is urged 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.

Parliament encouraged the Member States to:

- ban the **export of raw ivory**, as already do Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and some US States;
- increase their vigilance with regard to **marketing certificates** on their territory;
- make the fight against fraud effective, in particular at borders;
- launch **destruction** operations of illegal ivory;
- strengthen the **penalties** for trafficking in protected species (notably elephants, rhinos, tigers, primates and varieties of tropical wood);

Parliament encouraged 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.

Transparency and reporting: Members welcomed all voluntary and procedural efforts to increase transparency in CITES governance; strongly opposes the use of secret ballots as a general practice within CITES.

Considering that **traceability** is essential for legal and sustainable trade, whether commercial or non-commercial, Members highlighted the need for the implementation by all Parties of the e-permitting system, which should be organised transparently and jointly by all of them. They welcomed the decision made at COP 16 on **regular reporting** by CITES Parties on illegal trade.

Wildlife trafficking and corruption: Parliament called for strong and effective anti-corruption measures in the fight against wildlife trafficking. It called for:

- the adoption of 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;
- the development of 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.

Enforcement and funding: highlighting the importance of joint international cooperation between all actors in the enforcement chain, Parliament called 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;
- adopt and implement clear and effective policies to **discourage the consumption** of products derived from vulnerable wildlife species;
- support the development of livelihoods for the **local communities** closest to the wildlife concerned and to involve these communities in the fight against poaching.

Parliament stressed the need to **increase the funding** being made available for wildlife conservation and capacity-building programmes. It encouraged the Parties to consider increasing the core budget of CITES to reflect inflation and to ensure the proper functioning of the CITES Convention.

Lastly, regarding **amendments to the CITES Appendices**, Parliament expressed its strong support for the listing proposals submitted by the EU and its Member States.