Resolution on the EU strategic objectives for the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora CITES

2004/2572(RSP) - 16/09/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 542 votes to 15 with 15 abstentions a resolution on the EU strategic objectives for the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled by the PES, EPP-ED, Greens/ALE, GUE/NGL, UEN, ALDE and IND/DEM groups. CITES is the largest global wildlife conservation agreement in existence, preventing the over-exploitation due to international trade of wild fauna and flora species, with 166 parties, including the 25 Member States. Parliament calls 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. It also calls on them to ensure that any decisions aimed at enhanced coordination between CITES and other biodiversity-related conventions do not undermine the nature of CITES as a global conservation agreement or the strict conservation measures of CITES.

Parliament supports the issues covered by the Commission proposal for a mandate for the 13th Meeting of the CoP, including the recommendations on bushmeat as well as conservation of and trade in great apes; the listing of the Humphead Wrasse (Napoleon Fish) in CITES Appendix II; and the listing of the Mediterranean Date Mussel in CITES Appendix II.

In addition, Parliament urges the Commission and the Member States to support the following:

- the transfer of the African Lion from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I;
- the transfer of the Irrawaddy Dolphin from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I;
- the listing proposals for endemic reptile species from Madagascar and Kenya.

The Member States and the Commission are urged to reject certain matters. These include the following:

- the proposal regarding the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on a moratorium on commercial whaling as inappropriate for a CITES decision;
- the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between CITES and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO);
- the amendment to the export quota of the Black Rhinoceros and the Leopard for Namibia and South Africa that would allow trade in live animals and hunting trophies;
- the amendment to the listings of Namibian and South African Elephant populations in CITES Appendix II to allow commercial trade in ivory, leather and hair goods;
- the transfer of three populations of the Minke Whale from CITES Appendix I to Appendix II;
- the transfer of the Swaziland population of the White Rhinoceros from CITES Appendix I to Appendix II in order to allow trade in live animals and hunting trophies.

Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up international cooperation in the implementation of CITES by **providing additional incentives and financial support,** particularly for training and technical assistance in species identification and enforcement measures. It recalls that the European Union is one of the largest markets for the illegal wildlife trade and that compliance varies between Member States, and calls on the Commission and Member States to step up coordination of their efforts to enforce EU wildlife trade legislation. It urges those parties to CITES which have not done so to ratify the Gaborone Amendment, which would allow the European Community to become a contracting party to CITES.

Lastly, Parliament 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 using secret voting in the decision-making process of the Convention.