Basic information

2016/2076(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
EU action plan against wildlife trafficking **Subject** 3.70.01 Protection of natural resources: fauna, flora, nature, wildlife, countryside; biodiversity 6.20.02 Export/import control, trade defence, trade barriers 6.20.05 Multilateral and plurilateral economic and trade agreements and relations	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	BEARDER Catherine (ALDE)	13/04/2016
	Shadow rapporteur PETIR Marijana (PPE) MELIOR Susanne (S&D) DEMESMAEKER Mark (ECR) OMARJEE Younous (GUE/NGL) TAYLOR Keith (Verts/ALE) AFFRONTE Marco (EFDD) D'ORNANO Mireille (ENF)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development	HAYES Brian (PPE)	23/06/2016
INTA International Trade	MCCLARKIN Emma (ECR)	23/05/2016
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PECH Fisheries	SERRÃO SANTOS Ricardo (S&D)	28/06/2016
JURI Legal Affairs	CHRYSOGONOS Kostas (GUE/NGL)	24/05/2016

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	Environment	VELLA Karmenu

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
26/02/2016	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2016)0087	Summary
12/05/2016	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
13/10/2016	Vote in committee		
18/10/2016	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0303/2016	Summary
23/11/2016	Debate in Parliament		
24/11/2016	Decision by Parliament	T8-0454/2016	Summary
24/11/2016	Results of vote in Parliament		
24/11/2016	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2016/2076(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/8/06099

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE582.074	06/07/2016	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE589.210	09/09/2016	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE584.184	12/09/2016	
Committee opinion	JURI	PE584.147	28/09/2016	

Committee opinion	INTA	PE584.212	04/10/2016	
Committee opinion	PECH	PE585.608	11/10/2016	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0303/2016	18/10/2016	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0454/2016	24/11/2016	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission document (COM)	COM(2016)0087	26/02/2016	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2017)148	22/03/2017	

EU action plan against wildlife trafficking

2016/2076(INI) - 26/02/2016 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to propose EU action plan against trafficking in wildlife.

BACKGROUND: wildlife trafficking – particularly in elephants and rhinos, corals, pangolins, tigers and great apes - has become **one of the world's most profitable organised crimes**. As an example, the illicit ivory trade has more than doubled since 2007, and is over three times greater than it was in 1998. Between 2007 and 2013, rhino poaching increased by 7000% in South Africa, endangering the very survival of this species. Sources estimate the profits from such trafficking at **between EUR 8 and EUR 20 billion annually.**

The EU has an important role to play in tackling this traffic, as **Europe is currently a destination market** and a hub for trafficking in transit to other regions. It is also a region from which certain species are sourced for illegal trade.

Numerous measures to combat wildlife trafficking have been adopted under the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES),** a key international treaty regulating the international trade in wildlife, to which the EU became a party in 2015. **The EU has already shown leadershi**p in tackling the illegal trade in natural resources by adopting ambitious policies on timber and fishery products.

The European Parliament called for an Action Plan in a resolution adopted in January 2014. The establishment of an EU Action Plan has also been supported by many EU Member States, international organisations, NGOs, and concerned businesses at a stakeholder consultation on the EU approach against wildlife trafficking, launched by the Commission in February 2014.

CONTENT: the EU Action Plan demonstrates that the EU is ready to live up to international expectations and commitments, and that it is **raising the level of its ambition as regards action against the illegal trade in wildlife.** It is a major contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goals set under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development agreed by heads of state at a UN summit in September 2015.

The EU Action Plan **comprises a series of measures to be taken by EU institutions and/or Member States.** It provides the impetus and framework for making better use of existing EU resources. The measures are essentially designed to improve cooperation between all the players concerned, make more effective use of existing tools and policies, and strengthen synergies between them, so that wildlife trafficking can be better tackled across the EU and globally.

The measures, which are designed to address a complex problem **holistically** by involving all relevant organisations, are based on three priorities:

1) Preventing wildlife trafficking and addressing its root causes:

- **reduce the demand for and the supply of illegal wildlife products**, both within the EU and globally, by supporting specific campaigns and further limiting ivory trade within and from the EU ;
- ensure that **rural communities** in source countries are more engaged in wildlife conservation, and that they benefit more from it;
- engage more actively with **relevant business sectors**, ranging from those active in wildlife trade or using wildlife products to those that provide services to the trade;
- take multilateral and bilateral measures to **tackle corruption**, a crucial enabling factor for wildlife trafficking throughout the enforcement chain.

2) Implementing and enforcing existing rules and combating organised wildlife crime more effectively:

- review shortcomings in implementation for all Member States, and develop strategies for tackling them, to ensure that **existing rules are enforced more consistently** across the EU;
- strengthen the **strategic aspect of checks and enforcement** by setting enforcement priorities jointly and having Europol and Eurojust provide dedicated support for cross-border cases;
-

boost the capacity of all links in the enforcement chain and the judiciary to take effective action against wildlife trafficking in the EU. By improving inter-agency data flow and by sharing best practice at EU level;

- ensure **targeted awareness-raising** amongst specialists on organised crime, cybercrime and money laundering;
- ensure that Member States' laws on organised crime cover wildlife trafficking and that appropriate **penalties** can be imposed for trafficking ;
- improve **international cooperation on enforcement** through participation in international law enforcement operations, technical assistance and targeted financial support.

3) Strengthening the global partnership of source, consumer and transit countries against wildlife trafficking:

- take measures to **step up funding** to support developing countries in their efforts to combat wildlife trafficking;
- use more efficiently the **diplomatic tools** of the EU and its Member States and other tools, notably EU trade policy, in relations with key source, transit and consumer countries and relevant regional organisations;
- develop **better tools** to tackle the links between wildlife trafficking and security that exist in some regions;
- use the existing **multilateral processes**, in international agreements and fora, to keep the issue on the global agenda.

Monitoring and evaluation: the Action Plan covers the five years from 2016 to 2020. The Commission services and the EEAS will establish a scoreboard to monitor implementation. The Commission will report to the Council and the European Parliament by **July 2018** on implementation of the action plan, Progress made and the success of the action plan in curbing wildlife trafficking will be **evaluated in 2020**. On that basis, the Commission will consider what further action is needed.

The Action Plan will supersede Commission Recommendation No 2007/425/EC identifying a set of actions for the enforcement of Regulation (EC) No 338/97 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein.

EU action plan against wildlife trafficking

2016/2076(INI) - 18/10/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted an own-initiative report by Catherine BEARDER (ADLE, UK) in response to the Commission communication aiming to propose an EU action plan against wildlife trafficking.

Members recalled that wildlife trafficking is an organised international crime which is estimated to be worth approximately **EUR 20 billion annually**, becoming one of the biggest and most profitable forms of organised cross-border crime.

Wildlife trafficking has **major negative impacts on biodiversity**, existing ecosystems, the natural heritage of the countries of origin, natural resources and the conservation of species. It is a serious and growing threat to global security.

Welcoming the Commission action plan against wildlife trafficking, Members called on the European Commission, the Member States, the European External Action Service and the EU agencies Europol and Eurojust to **recognise that wildlife crime is a serious and growing threat** and to address it with the greatest political urgency.

The report highlighted the need: (i) for **comprehensive and coordinated approaches** across policy areas including trade, development, foreign affairs, transport and tourism, and justice and home affairs; (ii) to provide **adequate financial resources** in the EU budget and the national budgets in order to ensure effective implementation of this plan; (iii) to set up an ongoing detailed monitoring and evaluation mechanism to measure progress.

The Commission is called upon to establish a **dedicated Wildlife Trafficking Coordinator's office**, mirroring the model used to fight human trafficking.

Preventing wildlife trafficking and addressing its root causes: Members called for a targeted and coordinated series of **awareness-raising campaigns** by the EU, third countries, stakeholders and civil society with the aim of reducing demand related to the illegal trade in wildlife products. They called on the EU to **address corruption** and the shortcomings of international governance measures across the wildlife trafficking chain.

The report insisted on the need to **provide assistance, guidance and training** to authorities in source, transit and destination countries concerning investigation, enforcement and judicial procedures at local, regional and national level.

The governments of the supply countries are urged to: (i) improve the rule of law and create effective deterrents by strengthening **criminal investigation, prosecution and sentencing**; (ii) enact stronger laws treating illicit wildlife trafficking as a '**serious crime**'; (iii) commit to a **zero-tolerance** policy on corruption.

Making implementation and enforcement more effective: Member States are called upon to put in place wildlife trafficking action plans detailing enforcement policies and penalties, and to publish and **exchange the information** on seizures and arrests relating to wildlife crimes, in order to ensure consistency and harmonised approaches between Member States.

Members proposed that the penalties for wildlife trafficking, especially in areas with vulnerable marine ecosystems or falling within the Natura 2000 network, should be sufficiently severe as to deter potential offenders. They also stressed that in order to avoid the 'migration' of wildlife criminal networks, the harmonisation of policies and legal frameworks with respect to wildlife crime is particularly important.

Members are urged to set appropriate levels of sanctions for wildlife crime offences and for the Commission to take steps towards establishing and implementing common minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions relating to wildlife trafficking.

Strengthening the global partnership: the report called on the Commission and the Member States to **step up dialogue and cooperation with source, transit and destination countries** in the wildlife trafficking supply chain and to provide them with technical and economic assistance and diplomatic

support. It called for a trust fund or similar facility to be set up with the objective of safeguarding protected areas and combating wildlife trafficking and poaching.

The Commission is called upon to include **mandatory and enforceable sustainable development chapters in all EU trade agreements and negotiations**, with specific reference to halting illegal trade in wildlife in all economic sectors.

EU as a destination market, source and transit point: Members called on the EU to review the existing legislative framework with a view to supplementing it with a prohibition on the making available and placing on the market, transport, acquisition and possession of wildlife that has been illegally harvested or traded in third countries. They suggested:

- the adoption of a **precautionary approach** for the import of hunting trophies from species protected under the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations;
- the **full and immediate ban** at European level of trade, export or re-export within the EU and to destinations outside the EU of ivory.

The report also called on the EU to strengthen the existing control instruments, including the use of **traceability mechanisms**. The transport sector should play a pivotal role, for example by implementing an early warning detection system. The role of **public-private partnerships** is highlighted in this regard.

Lastly, the report called for Member States to introduce in-country compliance monitoring with regular checks on traders and permit holders such as pet shops, breeders, research centres and nurseries, and including monitoring of trades such as fashion, art, medicine and catering, that may use illegal plant and animal parts.

EU action plan against wildlife trafficking

2016/2076(INI) - 24/11/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Parliament adopted by 567 votes to 5, with 39 abstentions, a resolution in response to the Commission communication aiming to propose an EU action plan against wildlife trafficking.

International crime in need of a coordinated approach: Members recalled that wildlife trafficking is an organised international crime which is estimated to be worth approximately **EUR 20 billion annually**, becoming one of the biggest and most profitable forms of organised cross-border crime. There are links between wildlife crime and other forms of organised crime, including money laundering and the financing of militias and terrorist groups.

Welcoming the Commission action plan against wildlife trafficking, Parliament called on the European Commission, the Member States, the European External Action Service and the EU agencies Europol and Eurojust to **recognise that wildlife crime is a serious and growing threat** and to address it with the greatest political urgency.

The resolution highlighted the need:

- for comprehensive and **coordinated approaches** across policy areas including trade, development, foreign affairs, transport and tourism, and justice and home affairs;
- to provide **adequate financial resources** in the EU budget and the national budgets in order to ensure effective implementation of this plan;
- to set up an ongoing detailed **monitoring and evaluation mechanism** to measure progress.

The Commission is called upon to establish a dedicated **Wildlife Trafficking Coordinator's office**, mirroring the model used to fight human trafficking.

Preventing wildlife trafficking and addressing its root causes: Members called for a targeted and coordinated series of **awareness-raising campaigns** by the EU, third countries, stakeholders and civil society with the aim of reducing demand related to the illegal trade in wildlife products. They called on the EU to **address corruption** and the shortcomings of international governance measures across the wildlife trafficking chain.

The governments of the supply countries are urged to:

- improve the rule of law and create effective deterrents by strengthening criminal investigation, prosecution and sentencing;
- enact stronger laws treating illicit wildlife trafficking as a ‘serious crime’;
- commit to a zero-tolerance policy on corruption.

Making implementation and enforcement more effective: Member States are called upon to put in place **wildlife trafficking action plans** and to publish and **exchange the information** on seizures and arrests relating to wildlife crimes.

Parliament called on the Member States to:

- **set appropriate levels of sanctions for wildlife crime offences** and for the Commission to take steps towards establishing and implementing common minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions relating to wildlife trafficking;
- engage with the operators of social media platforms, search engines and e-commerce platforms on the problem of the **illegal internet trade in wildlife**. The Commission and the Member States are called upon to strengthen control measures and to develop policies to address potential illegal activity on the internet.

Strengthening the global partnership: Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to **step up dialogue and cooperation with source, transit and destination countries** in the wildlife trafficking supply chain and to provide them with technical and economic assistance and diplomatic support. It called for a trust fund or similar facility to be set up with the objective of safeguarding protected areas and combating wildlife trafficking and poaching.

The Commission is called upon to include **mandatory and enforceable sustainable development chapters in all EU trade agreements and negotiations**, with specific reference to halting illegal trade in wildlife in all economic sectors.

EU as a destination market, source and transit point: Parliament underlined that trophy hunting has contributed to large-scale declines in endangered species. It suggested:

- the adoption of a **precautionary approach** for the import of hunting trophies from species protected under the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations;
- the **full and immediate ban** at European level of trade, export or re-export within the EU and to destinations outside the EU of ivory.

The resolution also called on the EU to strengthen the existing control instruments, including the use of **traceability mechanisms**. The transport sector should play a pivotal role, for example by implementing an early warning detection system. The role of **public-private partnerships** is highlighted in this regard.

Lastly, Parliament called for Member States to introduce in-country compliance monitoring with regular checks on traders and permit holders such as pet shops, breeders, research centres and nurseries, and including monitoring of trades such as fashion, art, medicine and catering, that may use illegal plant and animal parts.