

II-nd CEEweb seminar on implementation of CITES and WTR in CEE region

Between 20-24 August, CEEweb organized the II-nd seminar on the implementation of CITES and EU WTR in Central and Eastern Europe. This time, the main goal of the meeting was to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of CITES and EU WTR, regarding specific and recurring African issues.

The last CITES CoP's were dominated by debates on controversial decisions regarding African species, and specially regarding the African elephant. Our working-group members identified the need, for a common level of understanding on specific CITES related African problems among Central and Eastern European decision-makers. This is - according to the WG's views - imperatively necessary to enable informed, scientifically sound decisions on future conferences of the CITES parties.

The seminar was organized by the Polish CITES Scientific Authority in cooperation with CEEweb for Biodiversity CITES Working Group and Polish CITES Management Authority and with the support of the European Commission and International Fund for Animal Welfare, and hosted by the Kenya Wildlife Service (the CITES implementing agency of Kenya). Participants attending the seminar represented CITES authorities from nine Central and Eastern European countries, seven CEEweb CITES WG member organizations, representatives of other NGO's as well as scientists, enforcement officers and decisionmakers from Kenya.

During the 5 days of the seminar, organized in the Taita Conservancy of the Tsavo region (Kenya), participants tackled a whole range of problems regarding elephant and wildlife conservation in Africa. The key issues discussed included: elephant conservation and management in Kenya, wildlife enforcement in Kenya and Eastern Africa, the global crisis on rhino poaching, the future of ivory trade and the forthcoming CITES Decision Making Mechanism, community based conservation actions, etc. For a full list of the problems and some general statements of the participants, you can visit the summary of the II-nd Seminar on implementation of CITES and EU WTR in Central and Eastern Europe.

All of the participants expressed their sincerely satisfaction from this seminar. We can state without a doubt, that it was a successful meeting, and hopefully it will have a beneficial effect on the decisions of CEE countries (and the EU in general) on future CITES CoP's. The next seminar will be organized probably in the fall of 2013 or in the first half of the 2014.