



Protection of Wildlife Against Commercial Trade in Central and Eastern Europe

IFAW NGO Workshop, Budapest, Hungary
9-11 July 2004

The *Normafa* Statement of all participating NGOs

The EU imports a vast number of species protected under the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) and has a special obligation to ensure that this international trade does not endanger species and that illegal trade is controlled. Many other species traded in vast numbers in the EU are not yet even protected in any adequate manner, despite major conservation and welfare problems.

Enlargement has increased the importance of the EU's role both in (global) policy-making and as consumers of large quantities of wildlife. It is expected that the volume of both legal and illegal wildlife trade will rise within the EU, in particular in Central Eastern European (CEE) countries. With the expansion of the EU's external borders the active cooperation of governmental authorities as well as non-governmental organizations on both sides to control wildlife trade is required.

Invited by IFAW the undersigned NGOs attended a regional workshop for NGOs in CEE countries to assess the challenges and problems from wildlife trade along the new Eastern EU border and to look at opportunities at the 13th CITES Conference of the Parties. This meeting was held in Budapest from 8 July to 11 July 2004. The focus of the workshop was on regional and cross-border concerns, as well as issues for the upcoming CITES Conference of the Parties in October 2004.

The workshop has reached the following conclusions:

- While the western part of Europe has lost much of its once rich natural biodiversity the CEE region still is home to a unique natural richness, which is threatened now.
- The awareness of this natural asset varies widely amongst the governments and the public. Only a few governments such as Hungary, the host country for the meeting, have shown leadership in conservation and welfare policies.
- Local, national and regional NGOs play an important role in combating wildlife trade, undertaking conservation projects, rescuing animals in emergencies and supplying necessary

shelter for confiscated individuals. In addition, NGOs contribute substantially in lobbying and assisting authorities to develop positive policies and public education

- It was recognized that wildlife crime is committed at an individual level as well as by international criminal organisations and syndicates. Therefore international cooperation amongst NGOs was identified as a high priority to improve the efficiency of conservation and welfare efforts and to combat wildlife crime in the region. All participants value the opportunity to develop closer cooperation.
- Some of the new EU member countries have stricter domestic wildlife conservation and animal welfare measures than current EU regulations, which are at risk of being undermined or even disappearing unless the higher standards of those countries are adopted EU-wide.

Therefore the participants of the workshop call on the EU and other European countries' governments and the EU Commission to adopt for all specimens of species listed in CITES (*Appendix I, II or III*) or in the EU Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97 (*Annex A, B, C or D*) the following measures:

- Strict documentation and certification requirements, whereby at any time the legal origin for all specimen of species listed in CITES or the EU Regulation can be proven anywhere in their territory.
- Strict requirements for all specimens from registered captive breeding operations, including DNA certificates and microchip implementation for all live specimens (where applicable to the species).
- An import ban for all hunting trophies for all CITES-Appendix I and EU Annex A species is urgently needed to support the conservation needs of these endangered species, as *inter alia* ecological and reproductive impacts may be detrimental.
- To develop and implement an EU enforcement policy that recognizes the importance of wildlife crime and illegal imports and internal trade on a level with the international trafficking of weapons and drugs.
- This includes supporting and advising the relevant authorities, including customs, police, courts etc, to prioritise inspections, controls and action accordingly and, if necessary, to support changing legislation for more effective implementation.
- The NGOs working in the field of wildlife enforcement wish to encourage enforcement agencies to accept their assistance and develop networks for most beneficial cooperation.
- Governments and the EU Commission should give adequate support to the Wildlife Crime Working Group of Interpol to *inter alia* develop the *Ecomessage* database.
- A system should be developed through which the trade covers the costs of all necessary enforcement and conservation. This could perhaps be achieved by a combined system where offenders are obliged to pay for the costs they generate (including for example for the life-long care of confiscated specimens) and trade fees.

Special attention was given to the problem of the devastating trade in song birds, among other bird species, for the food trade in the EU, particularly in Italy, where these animals are hunted illegally or imported illegally into EU member states and other countries of the CEE region. It was clearly recognised and identified that enforcement measures need to be supported and encouraged in the range states and in the consumption countries. Serious sanctions against the countries that do not effectively address the problem should be imposed based on the EU Birds Directive.

Because of the high level and inherent cruelty of the trade in so-called Exotic Pets, resulting in high mortality and possible detrimental impacts on wild populations, whether already recognised as threatened species or not, the participants demand for the EU and individual countries in the region

- an import-, export and re-export ban for all wild caught bird species and
- an import-, export and re-export ban for all wild caught reptile species.

As many wildlife conservation and welfare problems arise from lack of cooperation between relevant institutions, the EU Commission and individual governments of countries in the CEE region

- should make cooperation obligatory between their national authorities, particularly Wildlife Management Authorities, Veterinary Services, Enforcement Agencies, Customs Authorities, Police and Judicial bodies.
- must assist these institutions by supplying relevant coordination and sufficient resources, training and delegation.
- may have to change legislation accordingly, particularly by establishing and imposing heavy penalties in the case of wildlife crime offences, so that poachers and illegal traders are clearly discouraged from their wildlife crime activities.

The governing bodies shall be encouraged to recognise the experience and capacity of the NGO sector in the region, and to involve NGOs with proven expertise in the decision-making and implementation process. The NGOs offer their capacity to assist the official wildlife conservation and welfare efforts. At the same time those NGOs should be adequately supported, particularly where they engage in tasks that are government obligations for the conservation and welfare of wildlife and protection of nature.

Further, all participants in the workshop demand from their governments and the EU Commission the initiation of a new and unbiased process to assess the benefits of a reverse listing system by which species listed are only those which can – under certain well regulated, monitored and controlled conditions - be traded without the risk of harming any wildlife populations (be it the population of the species traded or any other species in the ecosystem).

Finally, governments should adopt and support the recommendations of the Species Survival Network (SSN) for decisions at the up-coming 13th CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP13) as laid out in detail within their Analysis of Species and Working Documents.