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BRIEFING

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# WWF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ENVI COMMITTEE DRAFT REPORT ON THE EU ACTION PLAN AGAINST WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

On 26 February 2016, the European Commission published its [EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking](#). The Action Plan details a robust set of measures that will allow the EU to fight the illegal trafficking of wildlife products more effectively in the EU and globally. WWF strongly supports the launch of this ambitious Action Plan endorsed in the June 2016 [Environment Council](#) and calls on Member States in to effectively implement it.

Therefore, WWF is pleased to see the European Parliament's draft own-initiative report in response to the EU Action Plan further seeks to strengthen the EU's response to the fight against illegal wildlife trafficking.

## WWF is particularly pleased to see the report includes:

- Calls for the EU to **address wildlife crime with the greatest political urgency** and with a coordinated approach across policy areas and to implement it in a timely manner, with yearly reports on progress;
- Urgent calls to **address prevention and tackle root causes**, notably by tackling corruption, calling for further awareness-raising campaigns and supporting the development of alternative livelihoods for local communities living close to the wildlife concerned;
- A **strong focus on enforcement**, including urging Member States to allocate the necessary financial and human resources to enforcement agencies, and to reinforce cooperation via Europol;
- Calls for **strengthening the criminal penalties applied for wildlife crime**, and for Member States to define wildlife trafficking as a serious crime;
- Acknowledgement of the **EU's role as a destination, transit and source region** for illegal wildlife trafficking.

**WWF encourages MEPs to support the above elements of the draft report and to further strengthen the report, by calling to:**

## **1. ALLOCATE NECESSARY FUNDS AND RESOURCES TO ENFORCEMENT**

WWF welcomes the draft report's inclusion of the need for Member States to allocate the necessary financial and human resources to fight against wildlife trafficking, which was sorely missing from the Council conclusions on the Action Plan adopted on 20 June 2016. **Financial resources could also be identified within the EU budget:** while DG DEVCO, through its EU wildlife conservation strategy for Africa has started identifying how much will be needed and where the resources could come from, similar exercises should be undertaken for other parts of the EU budget, notably to support Europol's work on wildlife trafficking. **Current efforts for training and sensitising national judiciaries and enforcement agencies should be continued and up-scaled.**

Furthermore, **the EU should act as a role model in promoting new methods and technologies to tackle wildlife crime** such as unmanned aerial vehicles, and isotope and DNA testing. EU Member States should be encouraged to share these with the respective source and demand countries.

## **2. RECOGNISE THE CONTRIBUTION AND STEP UP IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING EU WILDLIFE LEGISLATION**

Existing EU legislation such as the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR), the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing Regulation and the Wildlife Trade Regulations play an important role in the EU's fight against wildlife trafficking. **Member States should be encouraged to step up their efforts to ensure effective implementation and enforcement** of this legislation.

Any new proposal to harmonise or streamline legislation should not undermine or re-open existing powerful legislation such as the EUTR, the IUU Regulation, and the Birds and Habitats Directives. Emphasis should rather be put on better implementation of these laws.

## **3. ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND DISSUASIVE CRIMINAL PENALTIES ARE IN PLACE**

The draft report rightly urges Member States to comply with the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) - especially those Member States that have not yet implemented it – and to define wildlife trafficking as a serious crime in accordance with the Convention. Building on this, the draft report should call for Member States to make sure that **wildlife trafficking involving organised criminal groups is punishable by a maximum penalty of four years or more** as a credible deterrent and in accordance with UNTOC.

The Commission, in its upcoming review of Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law, should evaluate how effective and dissuasive Member States' sanctions are for wildlife crime.

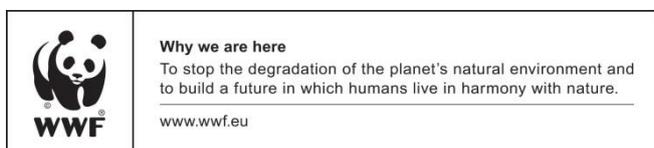
## 4. CALL FOR A DETAILED MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

The draft report already calls on the European Commission to provide the European Parliament and the Council with yearly written implementation plans. MEPs must call for **a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan developed to measure progress**. A scorecard similar to that which was used for progress towards completion of the Natura 2000 Network could be used. These progress reports would help further identify where issues are arising and resources needed.

## 5. FURTHER RECOGNISE THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN

The draft report recognises the role of civil society organisations in raising awareness of the issue. The European Parliament could further **reinforce the role that Civil Society Organisations can play in supporting the Action Plan**, by consulting civil society and making use of its expertise when devising **strategies and interventions to address corruption and supporting** NGOs in their watchdog role. **The EU could build on the expertise and experience of Civil Society Organisations working with rural communities on sustainable livelihoods** and wildlife trafficking prevention. Many interesting and successful programmes exist and could be scaled up. WWF's programme in Namibia on communal conservancies could be taken as an example of successful Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM). Communities have been empowered with rights to manage and benefit from the country's wildlife through communal conservancies. In conservancies, wildlife is now a valued livelihood asset, with the result that poaching is no longer socially acceptable. Populations of lions, cheetahs, black rhinos, zebras and other native species have been restored and human welfare is also improving, thanks to \$5.5 million in annual income and the benefits the conservancies generate for communities.

NGOs can also play an important role in monitoring enforcement and reporting on wildlife crime.



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