Beat: Politics

All illegal trade in wildlife should be eliminated by 2025

Say Environment MEPs

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USPA NEWS - The Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee of the European Parliament adopted on Thursday its position with 58 votes to 1 and 6 abstentions on the EU strategic objectives at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to be held in Panama 14-25 November 2022. A small delegation from Parliament is scheduled to attend.

MEPs underline the need for a more precautionary approach to the protection of wildlife given the continued threat posed by the wildlife trade to individual animals and species, as well as to human and animal health and the environment. MEPs also express their concern that the market for exotic pets and the range of affected species are growing both in the EU and internationally and underline that the goal should be to eliminate all illegal trade in CITES-listed wildlife species, not only to reduce it, so that by 2025 there would only be legal and sustainable trade in wild fauna and flora.

MEPs furthermore call on all parties to step up their enforcement of the Convention, as there are currently inadequate enforcement of bans and restrictions on the trade in protected species due to a lack of capacity and resources. To effectively combat the involvement of organised criminal groups, MEPs also say that transnational wildlife crime should be recognised as serious organised crime under the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought into focus the risk of zoonotic diseases transmission from animals to humans associated with global wildlife trade. MEPs express their deep concern and emphasise the important role that CITES should play in preventing future pandemics as the international wildlife trade regulator.

EU's role in the global fight

MEPs call for the EU to review and expand the existing legislation regulating the wildlife trade to reduce illegal trade by making it illegal to import, export, sell, acquire or buy wild animals or plants that are taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of the law of the country of origin or transit. They also want dissuasive sanctions, in cases of non-compliance and urgent action to ban the import of hunting trophies derived from CITES-listed species and to establish a science-based EU-wide positive list of animals allowed as pets without harm to populations in the wild and to European biodiversity.

MEPs welcome the revision and continuation of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking but stresses the need for adequate funding and clear and implementable targets and actions as well as a clear monitoring and evaluation mechanism. They also underline the need to tackle both online and offline trade in the revised Action Plan.

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