

Report on the EC hearing of CITES stakeholders NGOs – November 2009

15th Conference of the Parties of CITES will take place in March 2010. Therefore, European Commission CITES team has started to prepare the EU common position on amendments proposals to the Appendices and draft resolutions of CITES. 18th November 2009 the European Commission organized public hearing for European NGOs stakeholders. On the meeting there were representatives from over 30 NGO's – including organizations of hunters, exotic pet keepers, animal welfare and nature conservation organizations. In this last group of stakeholders, there was also a representative of CEEweb for Biodiversity CITES Working Group.

During the meeting a lot of different problems were raised by the participants, but the majority focused on the amendments to the CITES Appendices. Many times the opinions differ significantly. Some of the main topics were:

- 1) Polar bear *Ursus maritimus* - proposal for uplisting from Appendix II to Appendix I. This proposal was supported very much by the nature conservation and animal welfare organizations such as Humane Society International (HSI), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Species Survival Network (SSN) and Care for the Wild. Polar bears are seriously threatened with extinction due to habitat loss (reduction of the sea ice), as a result of climate change. Transfer to Appendix I is necessary to ensure that primarily commercial trade does not compound the threats posed to the species by loss of habitat. On the other hand Federation of Association for Hunting and Conservation of EU (FACE) strongly opposed to this proposal, because according to the representatives of this organization, trade is not a major threat to this species and the uplisting will not have an influence on the level of harvesting.
- 2) African elephants *Loxodonta africana* - proposals of downlisting of populations of Tanzania and Zambia from Appendix I to Appendix II and proposal of Republic of Congo et. al for defining precisely the spirit of decision of 9 years ivory trade moratorium established during the CITES CoP 14th in 2007. Proposals of downlisting were criticized by the IFAW, SSN and Care for the Wild. These two proposals undermine the spirit and effectiveness of moratorium approved in 2007. The African elephant continues to be threatened by poaching and illegal trade. In last few years significant volume of ivory was seized - only in 2009 over 11 tones. It should be kept in mind, that according to the custom estimations, they uncover only 10% of illegal products in trade! The organizations mentioned above strongly supported the proposal of Republic of Congo et. al. Nine years ivory trade moratorium should be extended to twenty years and it should apply to all range States of the species. Exactly opposite position was presented by IWMC – World Conservation Trust (IWMC), who claimed, that the moratorium agreed during the previous CoP covers only countries which elephant populations are already on Appendix II of CITES. Therefore proposals of Tanzania and Zambia are perfectly in line with the agreements from CoP 14th.
- 3) Bobcat – *Lynx rufus* – proposal of removing from Appendix II. Proposal was opposed by the CEEweb for Biodiversity, Respect for Animals and HSI. This is the 4th time when USA is submitting the proposal of delisting of this species. Each time it is rejected by the CITES Parties. Exemption of the bobcat from

the CITES Appendices will cause a serious enforcement problems, because of the similarity in appearance of its skin to the skins of other cats from the genus of *Lynx* (including the most threatened with extinction cat species on the World – Iberian lynx, or Eurasian lynx, which most of the European populations are endangered). There is concern, that facilitation in trade of bobcat specimens will cause increase in poaching on other lynx species, which will be sold as bobcats. The proposal was supported by FACE. According to this organization all killings of Eurasian lynx are due to the livestock protection and are not related to the trade.

- 4) Bluefin tuna – *Thunnus thynnus* – inclusion to Appendix I. The proposal was supported by Oceana, SSN and WWF – Appendix I listing is the only way to give the chance for this species to recover. In last years the populations of East Atlantic and Mediterranean significantly shrunk. The main cause of the decline is over-exploitation for international trade. Positions against of this proposals presented IWMC and Europeche. They pointed that CITES should not deal with commercially exploited marine species and that listing of the tuna will cause serious enforcement problems due to the fact, that the specimens of these species are caught on the national and international waters.

Furthermore proposals were discussed for inclusion to the CITES Appendices of nine shark species (scalloped hammerhead shark, great hammerhead shark, smooth hammerhead shark, sandbar shark, dusky shark, whitetip shark, porbeagle and spiny dogfish), tree frogs belonging to the genus of *Agalychnis*, Kaiser spotted newt, red corals and some others.

CEEweb for Biodiversity and IFAW expressed their support to the CITES Secretariat for they will of inclusion of the internet wildlife trade into the spectrum of its interests. However both organizations asked for improvement of the resolution and decision dedicated to this issue.

The final positions of EU will be finally established in January-February 2010. Positions will not be made public, as these are going to be a “negotiating positions”.

CITES CoP15th

CITES Conference of Parties 15th will take place from 13 – 25 of March 2010 in Doha, Qatar. A lot of different proposals are waiting for consideration during this Conference. There are propositions regarding key species like proposal of uplisting of polar bear from the App. II to the App. I or downlisting of the Tanzanian and Zambian populations of African elephants from the App. I to App. II and introducing to the international market over 110 tones of ivory from their governments-owned stocks, in spite of the nine year ivory trade moratorium established during CITES CoP14th. During the CoP 15th, delegates are going to discuss proposals of inclusion to the CITES Appendices new marine species - bluefin tuna and nine species of sharks. Furthermore discussions will focus on the proposal of deletion of bobcat from the App. II or inclusion to the App. I Kaiser’s spotted newt or ornate dabb lizard. This is the third CITES CoP, where representatives of CEEweb CITES WG are going to participate. CEEweb will lobby mainly for strengthen the ivory trade moratorium established during the last CoP, opposition for American proposal for deletion of the

bobcat from the CITES Appendices and to ensure proper regulation with regard of the internet wildlife trade.