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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: 19th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
(Panama-City, 14-25 November 2022)
- Information from the Presidency and the Commission

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Presidency and the Commission on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 20 December 2022.

**19th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
(Panama-City, 14-25 November 2022)**

- Information from the Presidency and the Commission -

The 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP19) took place from 14 to 25 November 2022 in Panama-City, Panama. Panama agreed to host the event after the withdrawal of Costa Rica that had initially offered to host the meeting.

The conference attracted over 2500 participants representing over 160 Parties to the Convention as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental observer organisations and media. The EU participated as a party in its own right alongside the 27 Member States.

The conference was well organised, with Panamanian authorities making every effort as a host country to ensure a smooth running of the event. This was particularly important given a very ambitious agenda, with many working documents and 52 proposals to bring nearly 600 animal and plant species under the scope of the Convention or to change the level of protection of species already listed.

CoP19 brought positive outcomes for the EU and globally and provided an important stepping stone towards the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity taking place in Montreal on 7-19 December 2022.

CoP19 adopted 46 out of 52 proposals to list species in CITES appendices, regulating international trade in more than 500 additional species. All EU proposals were adopted. Other EU priorities were also achieved, notably with regard to trade in live elephants, addressing the zoonotic diseases in the context of international wildlife trade and the role of CITES in the conservation of forests.

The general spirit at the CoP was constructive. Many of the proposals were adopted by consensus although, as usual in CITES, voting solved the most difficult discussions. Nevertheless, most parties were open to dialogue and finding compromise.

The EU and its Member States acted on the basis of a Council decision adopted on 14 November 2022. The objectives of the EU and its Member States were met:

- The use of CITES as an instrument to regulate unsustainable international trade in marine species was strengthened by including nearly 100 additional species of sharks and rays, and three species of sea cucumbers in the lists of species protected by CITES.
- With regard to CITES and forests, more than 150 tree species were included under CITES control, based on five proposals presented jointly by their range states and the EU. Moreover, CoP19 agreed decisions aiming at recognising and better understanding the role of CITES in the conservation of forests.
- Better protection of species currently imported into the EU for exotic pet trade was achieved by extending CITES protection to a range of reptiles and amphibians, including a number of turtle species, to ensure sustainability of trade and strengthen the fight against illegal trade in these species.
- After many discussions with other parties and stakeholders, the Brazilian proposal to change the listing parameters of *Paubrasilia echinata* (Pernambuco wood), of which bows for stringed instruments are made, was adopted with amendments suggested by the EU – meeting the conservation objectives pursued by Brazil but avoiding unnecessary administrative burden by excluding from permitting obligations the musical instruments and their accessories traded outside of Brazil.
- The proposal to introduce zero export quotas for commercial trade in hippopotamus under the current Annex II listing, that would effectively establish a trade ban for hippos (by setting the zero export quota for all countries, irrespective of the status of their hippo populations), was rejected. Despite the EU's efforts to propose alternatives that would be more effective in terms of conservation of the species, no decisions were adopted.

- The proposal by a large coalition of Central and South American countries, supported by many other Parties, to list 150 species of glass frogs in Appendix II of the Convention was assessed by EU experts as not meeting the CITES criteria for listing. However, after extensive coordination, and considering that the EU was almost the only opposing voice, the EU finally decided not to request a vote which resulted in the adoption of the proposal by consensus.
- With regard to conservation of elephants, the EU proposal to organise a dialogue meeting amongst the African range States was adopted and will hopefully contribute to defining a common approach to this issue that can be acceptable across the African continent, which is currently rather divided in their approach. A moratorium on trade in live elephants until the next CoP was adopted with EU support. Proposals to re-authorise international trade in ivory were rejected.
- Many decisions and resolutions or amendments thereto were adopted to strengthen action against trafficking, enforcing the existing rules and fostering global partnerships to this end.
- CoP19 adopted decisions and a resolution aiming at strengthening and consolidating the framework for capacity building for relevant authorities, while avoiding at this stage to establish new structures without a proper discussion on their added value and feasibility.
- Discussions on issues related to sustainable use, livelihoods, indigenous peoples and local communities will continue in an inter-sessional process to ensure they are adequately addressed under CITES and in its implementation.
- The discussions on the rules of procedure and in particular rule 25.6 (order of examining and voting on listing proposals referring to the same species/taxon) remained difficult and CoP19 decided to establish an inter-sessional process to leave more time for dialogue on this matter.
- After lengthy discussions, CoP19 adopted the decisions related to the language strategy. Translation and interpretation in three additional languages (Arabic, Chinese and Russian) will be possible with regard to key documents, websites and CoP meetings based on the availability of external funding. This will allow better understanding of the Convention and its more effective implementation while not putting additional burden on the core budget.

CoP19 confirmed again that the EU approach to submit listing proposals together with key range States leads to the most successful outcomes. Many countries have indicated the need for capacity building and support for the implementation of the EU listing proposals, especially with regard to timber and marine species. In order to ensure that the EU proposals are correctly implemented and that future EU proposals are supported, it is crucial that the EU and the Member States provide relevant financial and technical support to the CITES Secretariat and the range States.

Speaking and voting with one united voice ensured strong negotiation power for the EU and its Member States. The EU and its Member States exercised the right to vote in accordance with the declaration of competence submitted prior to the CoP.

The Presidency team (Czech Republic) led coordination on the spot and the Commission led negotiations on listing proposals and many other agenda items. Both were able to count on the support of other Member States' experts and on the good cooperation shown by all within the EU. The EU actively reached out to key partners during the CoP. A general meeting with stakeholders was held with a large attendance from representatives of diverse organisations, in addition to bilateral meetings that the Presidency, the Commission and the Member States held with many stakeholders. The Presidency and the Commission together hosted an EU reception for representatives of all delegations to the CoP.

The EU and the Member States will now need to implement the decisions and commitments taken at the CoP, including through amendments to the Annexes to Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 and to Commission Regulation (EC) No 865/2006. This will also contribute to implementation of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking, COM(2022) 581 final.