

Your Voice In Europe: ROADMAP feedback for Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking

User's data:

Domain: Public authority

Name: Nina Ignatova

Email: Nina.Ignatova@customs.bg

Country: Bulgaria

Organisation: National Customs Agency

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Feedback:

Republic of Bulgaria welcomes the actions taken for the adoption of new Action plan against wildlife trafficking as well as the greater involvement of the European Commission, which has prompted the recent signing of joint initiatives to take decisive and urgent actions in order to suspend the trafficking of endangered species and the supply and demand of the same. The illicit trafficking could be more effectively controlled if there are unified methods, procedures and targets at a national level in the Member States, one of the methods is establishing a Common Strategy for action at EU level.

Given the fact that trafficking of endangered species of wild fauna and flora is an increasing threat to the European Union in economical, environmental, social terms and in terms of protecting the local animal and plant species, Republic of Bulgaria also supports the initiative by the Commission to draw up a coordinated strategy and in particular – the second option given in the roadmap on the initiative of establishing new EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking. Option 2 appears to provide the most comprehensive response to the urgency of the wildlife crime problem.

Important for the Action plan against wildlife trafficking is how it will measure the progress in reducing illegal trade in endangered species.

As regards preventing wildlife trafficking, for example through actions to reduce the demand for illegal wildlife products (point 1 under Option 2) European Commission and Member States should jointly work on making EU citizens aware of the fact that fighting against wildlife crime is an issue that concerns the conservation of biodiversity worldwide and must be responsibility of every citizen. One of the possible ways is to elaborate a demand reduction campaigns on raising awareness of wildlife trafficking' problem in market and source countries. EU could make a joint campaign with another organization, e.g. UNEP for payment of minimum benefits to the local village population within few very problematic areas. For example, in Ochivaro, Namibia, as a part of an experiment, villagers were given 10 \$ per month which led to reduction in poaching.

One of the issues that need more actions to be taken in the area of illicit trafficking of endangered species is distribution of information concerning the problem and creating a serious commitment in consumers' consciousness. It is necessary to raise awareness of the civil society regarding the extremely serious damages which trafficking has inflicted on the

environment and their impact on future generations.

It is foreseen as well as intensifying the good cooperation between competent authorities and nongovernmental organizations in this area. They could play a key role in raising-awareness campaigns in support of policies in reducing demand, acting as liaison between institutions and society.

In strengthening of enforcement and fighting organized crime more effectively (point 2 under Option 2) Awareness and support training for all the enforcement bodies involved is crucial together with active and close collaboration between the authorities. This is a major problem that requires concrete actions not only at national but also at international level. This presumes that EU Member States keep illegal traffic on biodiversity for their main priority at national level.

As regards building a global partnership against wildlife trafficking (point 3 under Option 2) European Commission may initiate a closer dialogue with African and Asian range states, in order to help those countries strengthen their policies and legal framework, increase law enforcement capacity, develop effective judicial systems and reinforce mechanisms to tackle corruption.

In the Action plan there should be involved measures for diplomatic influence and bilateral contacts (e.g. range countries). Attention should be paid to the consumer countries – e.g. based on religion, medicine, etc.

EU investigative inspectors in critical areas rich in biodiversity is a possible step for the critically endangered species in range countries such as elephants, rhinos.

Close regional cooperation involving neighboring countries is also considered essential. That may include meetings, mutual checks on the spot, trainings.