



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety

MINISTÈRE  
DE LA TRANSITION  
ÉCOLOGIQUE  
ET SOLIDAIRE



LE GOUVERNEMENT  
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG  
Ministère du Développement durable  
et des Infrastructures



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Mr Karmenu Vella  
Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussels  
Belgium

16 July 2018

### **Elephant ivory trade in the EU**

Dear Mr Vella,

It has been almost two years since the Conference of Parties to CITES called for the closure of all domestic ivory markets that are contributing to the poaching of elephants or illegal trade in elephant specimens. Some EU Member States have already taken further measures to restrict their domestic ivory markets and we welcome the actions taken by the US and China and those in train in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The world is now looking to the EU, recognised as one of the key players in elephant ivory trade, to act.

We welcome the public consultation on ivory trade in the EU, which attracted a high level of interest from across the globe. An overwhelming majority of respondents felt that the current EU regulations are not sufficient to ensure that the EU domestic elephant ivory market does not contribute to illegal international trade in elephant ivory. A great majority also say that banning all ivory trade to, from and within the EU should be the main priority for the EU and its Member States.

As a world leader in the fight against wildlife trafficking the EU already provides support to CITES Parties and international organisations with capacity building to tackle illegal wildlife trade in ivory and poaching. Maintaining the international momentum on closure of domestic ivory markets is crucial to bringing an end to poaching that is putting one of the world's most iconic species at risk. The EU needs to act with urgency to play its part in this global effort. The upcoming London Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in October 2018 would provide an ideal forum for the EU to announce and jointly commit to further restrictions.

We therefore urge the European Commission to draft proposals for further restrictions on ivory trade within and from the EU and submit these to the Member States before August 2018 for their consideration. This would allow Member States to consider these proposals over the summer period and submit their written comments before the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CITES Expert Group in September where a decisive way forward could be agreed.

With every good wish,



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