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Scaling up EU Impact to Combat Wildlife Trafficking Conference Report

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INTRODUCTION

Wildlife trafficking has become one of the most lucrative criminal activities and constitutes one of the most immediate threats to biodiversity in many parts of the world. Around the globe, wildlife is being bought and sold on an increasingly massive scale as pets, meat, food, medicine, furs, clothing, feathers, skins, trophies, and curios, as well as precious woods and ornamental plants, and derivatives and processed specimens.

In addition to harming species in the wild, wildlife trafficking undermines local livelihoods and the rule of law, and further weakens impoverished rural economies. As highlighted by the 2019 study commissioned by DG International Partnerships **on the interaction between security and wildlife conservation in sub-Saharan Africa**¹, wildlife trafficking weakens the rule of law, exacerbates corruption, triggers conflicts, funds organised crime syndicates, and in some cases contributes to migration flows.

With **the emergence and spread of diseases of zoonotic origin**, such as COVID-19, the world is also becoming acutely aware of the threat that wildlife poaching, trafficking, and trade can pose to local and global health and economic security.

In November 2022, the European Commission issued a revised **EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking**² within the EU and to strengthen the EU's role in the global fight against these illegal activities. It is timely to discuss what has been achieved to date, what can be learned from previous actions, and what the EU can still do further.

Organised by the **European Commission**, the **Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union**, and the **Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)**, this conference presented best practices and lessons learned, and discussed challenges and opportunities to scale up impact to tackle wildlife trafficking, in line with the revised EU Action Plan. The event was structured around three specific sessions: Behavioural science to reduce consumption of wildlife products; Applying crime science to prevent the trafficking of wildlife; and Building capacity for law enforcement and criminal justice officers

This conference brought together experts from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America, from governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, civil society, and academia sharing local, national, and international-level experiences.

¹ Study on the Interaction between Security and wildlife Conservation in Sub-Saharan Africa (2019), European Commission: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/53ed0515-de76-11e9-9c4e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

² Revision of the EU action plan against wildlife trafficking (SWD(2022) 354 final), European Commission: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A581%3AFIN&qid=1667989438184>

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Moderator

Dr. Susan Lieberman, Vice President, International Policy, WCS, opened the conference, set the scene, and noted the persistent threat of wildlife trafficking to both wildlife and local communities worldwide. She highlighted the need for fresh perspectives and solutions, and stressed the importance of exploring innovative approaches while building upon the lessons learned from previous efforts, aiming for a paradigm shift.

Ms. Astrid Schomaker, Director for Green Diplomacy & Multilateralism, DG Environment, European Commission, highlighted that the fight against wildlife trafficking is an important priority for the EU and well-grounded in the EU Green Deal. Illegal trade of species is an important driver of global biodiversity loss. Apart from its destructive socioeconomic impacts, it brings risks for public health and decrease of legal and sustainable income for local communities. She also stressed that the EU has an important place in legal wildlife trade as a key region of destination, transit and origin and is also a hub for illegal trade. This comes with a responsibility and an important role both to regulate legal trade in wildlife as well as to fight against wildlife trafficking. Furthermore, she highlighted the most important elements of the EU action plan. Its success depends on the implementation by the European Commission and CITES authorities in the EU Member States, but also on other relevant actors such as agencies, international organisations, civil society and the private sector – within the EU and beyond. This will require good coordination amongst all

actors and effective cooperation between them. In this context Ms. Schomaker stressed the importance of resources, both human and financial. Finally, she pointed out that a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the results of the action plan is being prepared.

Mr. Santiago Rodríguez Uriel, Environment Counsellor, Permanent Representation of Spain to the EU, highlighted the significance of the green transition and environmental adaptation as key priorities for their Presidency. He noted that wildlife trafficking, and the related crimes of poaching and illegal logging, represent a growing concern not only to governments, but also to the society as a whole. Mr. Rodríguez Uriel underscored the negative impact of these illegal activities on biodiversity and sustainable development in countries of origin, as well as the threat to global health and food security due to the risk of zoonotic diseases. He highlighted the 2016 EU Action Plan as a step toward combatting wildlife trafficking and stressed the significance of its 2022 revision. He emphasised a full support in considering a ‘One Health’ approach in the context of wildlife trade; in the countries of origin, transit and destination. Additionally, he highlighted that Spain was the first Member State to adapt the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking to its national context, by approving the TIFIES plan, and stressed the importance of collaboration between environmental and police authorities. In conclusion, Mr. Rodríguez Uriel expressed gratitude to the co-organisers, the European Commission and the Wildlife Conservation Society, speakers, and attendees for their contributions, hoping that the discussions at the conference would promote better cooperation among institutions.

REVISED EU ACTION PLAN AGAINST WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

Ms. Agata Sobiech, Team leader, CITES and wildlife trafficking, DG Environment, European Commission, presented the 2022 revised EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking. This action plan addresses the EU responsibility as a global hub for trafficking in wildlife. It provides a comprehensive framework bringing together all aspects of the fight against wildlife trafficking, at Member State level, within the EU, and with international partners. From 2022 to 2027 it tackles the four priorities of preventing wildlife trafficking and addressing its root causes; strengthening the legal and policy framework; enforcing regulations and policies to fight wildlife trafficking effectively; and strengthening the global partnership of source, consumer and transit countries with an increased focus on online crime, transparency, cooperation with stakeholders, and actions along the entire enforcement chain. She explained that the evolution of the previous 2016 plan has a comprehensive approach and responds to new challenges and trends. New developments at the EU level include development of a monitoring and evaluation framework, preparatory work for two policy studies and a project on demand reduction for exotic pets in the EU. Finally, Ms. Sobiech pointed out that the European Commission increased coordination with EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) and organises training for judges.

Ms. Diana Pérez-Aranda Serrano, Plan TIFIES, Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge of Spain (MITECO), introduced the TIFIES plan, Spain's action plan to combat wildlife trafficking and international poaching. The Spanish plan was elaborated and signed in 2018 by five different Ministries, those in charge of the Enforcement, Scientific, and Management Authorities for CITES, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Prosecutor General's Office. MITECO assumed a pivotal role as both the driver and coordinator of the TIFIES plan. The Spanish plan closely mirrors the structure of the EU action plan and it has increased the coordination and cooperation among the different administrations having authority over the matter in Spain. At the national level, the collaboration between MITECO and SEPRONA, the Environmental Protection Service within Spain's Civil Guard, proved highly effective. This partnership facilitated increased information exchange, joint investigations, and a notable upswing in police operations against wildlife trafficking. At the international level, she emphasised the importance of building the capacity of environmental guards and of improving their working conditions, acknowledging their frontline role in combating poaching. Ms. Pérez-Aranda Serrano concluded by highlighting ongoing updates of the TIFIES plan, which includes promoting the creation of specialised environmental courts in Spain, to ensure that wildlife trafficking is treated as a serious crime with proportionate and dissuasive penalties.

SESSION 1 – BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

Moderator

Mr. Toby Park, Principal Advisor, Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), kicked-off the panel by giving an overview of behavioural science theory - the ubiquitous 'rational choice' model of behaviour emphasises the importance of knowledge/beliefs, and attitudes/values in shaping our intentions and actions. He noted that this model is incomplete, and leaves unexplained many of the drivers of human behaviour. For example, the role of automatic habit, cognitive bias and heuristics, social influence, and 'nudges' based in environmental cues or the 'choice architecture', are all well-evidenced as important drivers of choice. Yet, he added that they remain relatively unexplored in the conservation demand reduction field, despite being commonly used in other sectors such as public health and pro-environmental behaviour change initiatives. He noted that the conclusion, therefore, is that the approach to behaviour change should be broadened. Moving beyond narrow 'social marketing' or 'behaviour change communications' approaches (important though they can be) towards intervention designs that leverage environmental (contextual) and automatic (non-conscious) drivers of behaviour too. Finally, Mr. Park pointed out that this has big implications for using research and evaluation methods, given conventional qualitative tools such as focus groups can be ill-equipped for observing and exploring these more subtle drivers of behaviour,

which are often less open to introspection on behalf of the target audience.

Mr. Lude Kinzonzi, Postgraduate, International Wildlife Conservation Practice, Oxford University, highlighted that his current research project is a case study from a behavioural intervention conducted in Pointe-Noire, Republic of Congo, in 2019, focusing on reducing bushmeat consumption. This pilot initiative served as the basis for a social marketing campaign model, now adapted and implemented in larger cities like Brazzaville and Kinshasa. This model employs research to devise intervention strategies, emphasizing positive messaging related to Congolese cuisine and culture, all while respecting the local food culture. He noted that these urban-focused interventions aim to decrease bushmeat consumption, thus mitigating wildlife threats and food security risks for rural populations reliant on bushmeat. In regions where enforcing laws is challenging and people resist being dictated to, voluntary behaviour change interventions, informed by behavioural science, hold significant potential for achieving desired outcomes. Understanding behaviour relies on qualitative studies, such as focus groups, quantitative surveys to segment consumers, and qualitative studies to comprehend segment lifestyles. Impact evaluation includes before-and-after surveys and medium-term qualitative interviews to gauge the intervention's effectiveness over time. However, he noted that many challenges persist. Bushmeat consumption is deeply ingrained in local culture, and urban areas grapple with numerous competing priorities. Effective behaviour change must be creative, positive, and engaging. To conclude, Mr. Kinzonzi stressed that behavioural interventions

necessitate continuous, long-term funding, unlike many short-term projects, to establish lasting social norms and maximize impact.

Ms. Lishu Li, China Director for Counter Wildlife Trafficking & Temperate Asia Regional Coordinator for Counter Wildlife Trafficking, WCS, highlighted that the primary focus of her project is the application of behavioural science to reduce the consumption of three flagship species in China: tigers, Asian elephants, and freshwater turtles, for medicinal and pet purposes. She noted the WCS collaboration with Sun Yat-Sen University and the technical support from BIT's Behaviour Insight Unit, which comprises members from diverse academic disciplines and NGO practitioners, including sociology, psychology, economics, and ecology. This collaboration, under the EU-funded 'Partners Against Wildlife Crime' initiative, aims to apply behavioural science for demand reduction in China. Ms. Li pointed out that the rigor of the Behaviour Insight approach involves both quantitative research based on large samples and the subtleties of qualitative research. She gave an example of framing effective and neutral interview questions to avoid bias and adapting methods to the local context, illustrating the nuanced details that the team had to grasp and apply through nationalised practices. She acknowledged that behavioural science isn't a cure-all solution for wildlife trafficking but it serves as a potent tool for providing enriched information and insights to design interventions targeting different actor groups. Ms. Li concluded by advising that stakeholders should draw upon behavioural insights based on feasibility and the potential impact on their goals when

deciding on actions to contribute to solving the problem identified.

Ms. Sarah Ferguson, Nature Crimes Convergence Lead, TRAFFIC, highlighted that behavioural science is a core part of TRAFFIC's Strategy to 2030, in line with increasing global recognition of its importance in achieving Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) ambition. She explained that TRAFFIC employs diverse 'Social and Behaviour Change' (SBC) strategies building on expert experience and best quality evidence around how to effectively engage wildlife trade stakeholders, from communities to end-consumers, in ensuring safe, sustainable and legal trade. Insight gathered has informed the identification of 10 Behaviour Change 'Benchmarks' in 'Guidance for CITES Parties to Develop and Implement Demand Reduction Strategies to Combat Illegal Trade in CITES-listed Species', offering an implementation framework for governments delivering biodiversity conservation programmes. She pointed out that combating wildlife trafficking more broadly requires the integration of behavioural science in a 'Twin-Track' approach. Track one (prevention) involves activities aimed at ensuring the laws are appropriate, perceived to be an adequate deterrent and effectively enforced, and Track Two (persuasion) focuses on tools, tactics and approaches to influence target audience attitudes and actions. Finally, Ms. Ferguson highlighted that strengthening implementation of SBC initiatives in Europe using such benchmarks and methods, and ensuring veracity of insight from impact measurement, could feed into resource centres such as the 'EU Competence Centre on Behavioural Insights' to catalyse and inform effective action by others.

Ms. Yovana Murillo, Program Manager for Counter Wildlife Trafficking in Andes - Amazon - Orinoco, WCS, emphasised that countries in the Andes-Amazon also face various challenges linked to biodiversity loss, due in part to wildlife trafficking. Illegal trade in various wildlife species and their parts and products for both local and international markets is a pressing concern. She stressed that WCS has been actively engaged in combating this issue, collaborating with authorities, partners from civil society, and other relevant stakeholders in the Andes-Amazon countries. These efforts are channelled through the 'Alliance for Wildlife and Forests' initiative funded by the European Union, encompassing Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, and Amazon border regions in Brazil. Within this framework, WCS has adopted behavioural science approaches to decrease demand for illegal wildlife products. She noted that they have successfully initiated two pilot initiatives in Brazil and Ecuador, targeting the illegal consumption of turtle meat and the keeping of wild pets, respectively. Acknowledging that these pioneering endeavours represent the first steps in applying behavioural science to combat wildlife trafficking in the Amazon region, she noted the ongoing learning process. This learning journey involves comprehending the methodology, identifying relevant issues and stakeholders, specifying target behaviours, and establishing metrics for evaluating intervention outcomes. she concluded that preparation is key and as is understanding that this scientific approach follows a methodical path, necessitating time to yield concrete results that positively influence behavioural changes crucial for wildlife conservation.

SESSION 2 – APPLYING CRIME SCIENCE TO PREVENT THE TRAFFICKING OF WILDLIFE

Moderator

Dr. Scott Robertson, Executive Director, Counter Wildlife Trafficking, WCS, introduced the second panel on crime science and presented the speakers.

Dr. Julie Viollaz, Wildlife Crime Research Officer, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, highlighted that the evidence for effective wildlife crime prevention is still in its early stages, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach that includes analysing the wildlife crime problem, designing interventions, and rigorously testing and adjusting them. She highlighted the importance of funding that not only covers these phases but also allows time to observe the impact of interventions. Furthermore, she noted that crime prevention in the context of wildlife crime is a dynamic process that involves understanding the problem, testing solutions, and being open to the possibility of failure, as learning from failures is crucial in finding the right solutions. She stressed the importance of sharing both failures and successes to collectively advance wildlife crime prevention efforts. Dr. Viollaz also highlighted the insights from crime science, which indicate that indiscriminate enforcement and excessive incarceration may have negative consequences and hinder efforts to reduce wildlife crime. Instead, she emphasized the significance of community involvement in crime prevention, as communities can play a vital role in self-

policing and supporting law enforcement in targeting high-level offenders.

Dr. Alexia Jonckheere, Lead and Senior Researcher, National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology of Belgium (NICC), introduced the work of the NICC and its research in support of criminal policy within the Department of Justice in Belgium. She highlighted that their research has been driven by the lack of scientific studies on this topic in the French-speaking part of Belgium. She pointed out that their research concentrates on understanding environmental crime within Belgium, including wildlife trafficking, and its social and criminal implications, as well as the functioning of the administrative justice system. She shared specific case studies, including one involving illegal hunting and illegal trade in wild meat, where there were intricate connections and complicity between public and private actors in a small, interconnected hunting community, making it challenging for scientific or political governance to influence the actions of those involved. She also discussed a poaching case highlighting differential treatment based on the reputation of the offender or their connections. Dr. Jonckheere emphasised the complexity of legislation, the need for education and awareness about wildlife conservation, and the necessity for coordinated efforts among various public services to combat wildlife trafficking effectively. She concluded by stressing the importance of reliable data recording to gain a better understanding of the environmental damage and the responses to such incidents in Belgium.

Dr. Daan van Uhm, Associate Professor of Criminology, Willem Pompe Institute for Criminal Law and Criminology, Utrecht University, highlighted several critical aspects of tackling transnational wildlife crime. First, he noted that the involvement of transnational crime groups is driven by the scarcity of endangered species, high profits in the international market, weak legislation, and low criminal penalties. He emphasized that wildlife crime is no longer just a conservation issue and stressed the importance of mapping and understanding it through crime science to prevent and respond effectively. Second, he pointed out that crime groups adapt to socio-economic, political, and ecological changes by diversifying into wildlife crimes alongside other serious offenses. He underscored the necessity for cross-national and cross-agency collaborations to improve intelligence and combat transnational wildlife crime, encouraging officials to align their resources. Third, he emphasized the need to harmonize national environmental laws with respect to local community needs to protect vulnerable communities and states in the Global South from exploitation by more powerful states and privileged classes in the Global North. Lastly, Dr. van Uhm highlighted the absence of a comprehensive international treaty for addressing transnational wildlife crime and called for the adoption of ecocentric approaches in enforcement cultures, policy-making, and legislation. He stressed the importance of valuing the environment for its intrinsic worth and considering non-human entities as potential rights holders, warranting a duty of care from humanity.

SESSION 3 – BUILDING CAPACITY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE OFFICERS

Moderator

Ms. Hanny Cueva-Beteta, Head of the Global Programme on Crimes that Affect the Environment, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, moderated this session on capacity building and highlighted the paramount importance of enhancing the skills and knowledge of law enforcement and criminal justice personnel to effectively combat wildlife crime. She described how her Programme trained over 4,000 of these actors across 40 countries last year. UNODC utilises partnerships such as the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) to ensure coordination and avoid duplication of efforts.

Mr. Jonathan Hunter, Program Coordinator, Wildlife Crime Leadership Initiative, WCS, noted that when working with government law enforcement agencies to design capacity building, we should not only focus on short trainings for front line officers on tactical skills as front-line officers may face systemic and institutional challenges beyond their responsibility to deal with. He added that long-term training on leadership skills, particularly an understanding of crime science and strategies to prevent wildlife crime, as well as soft skills related to leadership and management, help capacity building to be more impactful and sustainable. The Wildlife Crime Leadership Initiative is an example of this long-term approach. While technology has value for law enforcement, it is vulnerable to adaption by offenders, who can often quickly

circumvent the technology. Instead, training in adaptive management and scientific approaches to crime prevention, better-position law enforcement leaders to anticipate offender displacement and remain on a proactive footing. However, he noted that capacity building work can benefit from advances in e-Learning which allow officers to process more training material in their own time. To conclude, Mr. Hunter stressed that these and other advances, such as the potential for Artificial intelligence (AI) coaches, should be delivered as part of a cohesive training package, that most likely includes face-to-face interactions as well.

Mr. Ben Janse Van Rensburg, Chief, Enforcement Unit, CITES Secretariat, highlighted that to achieve the best possible results capacity building to combat wildlife crime must be evidence based. Comprehensive and systematic evidence-based assessments should form the basis for identifying needs to address. This will ensure that donor investment, development partner activities, and limited resources, are deployed in a targeted manner to where they are most needed and will have lasting impact. He added that ICCWC, a collaborative effort between five inter-governmental organizations (the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank and the World Customs Organization (WCO)), promotes evidence-based interventions and developed two prominent tools, the *ICCWC Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit* and the *ICCWC Indicator Framework for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime*. Furthermore, he noted that capacity-building must be undertaken along

the entire enforcement chain and across entire criminal justice systems. ICCWC partners under the auspices of the Consortium can work and engage effectively with all authorities across the criminal justice system. Mr. Janse Van Rensburg concluded that it presents the opportunity for a novel approach to the multi-faceted challenges posed by wildlife crime.

Ms. Mary Rice, Executive Director, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) – UK, emphasised that the cornerstone of any effective capacity building initiative is a comprehensive needs assessment, which ensures that workshops and roundtables are delivered at the appropriate level and with clearly defined objectives for participants. She pointed out the necessity of a personalized approach that leverages the participants' lived experiences to create interactive and relevant activities. Furthermore, she noted that analysing previous training and capacity building efforts is crucial in designing initiatives that are both relevant and targeted, and this analysis should be integrated into the needs assessment process. She also stressed the importance of understanding the challenges and constraints faced by participants, as well as having a grasp of the political landscape, protocols, and bureaucracy, especially when a collaborative approach is essential for successful enforcement, prosecution, and conviction. Lastly, Ms. Rice highlighted the significance of remedial work and mentoring as fundamental principles of any learning or skills sharing endeavour. She mentioned the need to crystallize the learning over time to facilitate practical implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of training and capacity building, identifying areas where repeat engagement or mentoring may be required.

Mr. Carlos Toledano Zapater, Major, Environmental Protection Service (SEPRONA) of the Spanish Guardia Civil, highlighted that SEPRONA implements a comprehensive strategy for wildlife conservation and environmental law enforcement. This includes continuous and specialised training for the agents, who must pass a competitive course to join SEPRONA. Additionally, training opportunities cover important areas such as forest fire investigation, species and wood identification, combatting wildlife trafficking, and open-source intelligence (OSINT) skills. He noted that collaboration with other agencies, both within and outside the police forces, is essential for increased effectiveness. This involves identifying the training needs of these collaborators and providing them with relevant training. A notable example is cooperation between the Customs and Border Police of the Civil Guard, as well as with forest rangers, local police, and other relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, he emphasised that cooperation with the judicial system is crucial, with SEPRONA working closely with the Special Environmental Prosecutor's Office and collaborating with prosecutors and judges in training programs. The aim is to shift the perspective on environmental crimes, treating them as economic offenses, to have a greater impact on criminal organisations. Internationally, SEPRONA participates in police cooperation operations, in the framework of EUROPOL, INTERPOL, and cooperation networks such as the Jaguar Network. To conclude, Mr. Toledano Zapater noted that SEPRONA also successfully collaborates with civil society organisations, recognising the importance of involving the general public in environmental protection.

NEXT STEPS

Dr. Scott Robertson, Executive Director, Counter Wildlife Trafficking, WCS, thanked the panellists, speakers and moderators for such rich discussions. He noted that the depth of the discussions leaves no doubt that there is much more ground to cover and that engaging in transparent, candid conversations about counter wildlife trafficking efforts and how we improve them remains fundamentally important. On Behaviour Change, he noted that it was great to hear about some of the new collaborations and how the conservation sector is applying some best practices from Government Behavioural Insight or Nudge Units. On Crime Science, he mentioned the importance of further bridging the academic-practitioner gap. Delving into Capacity Building, he noted that it is indeed a concept that elicits diverse opinions, and that we observe evolving approaches that challenge the more traditional approaches. Above all, his key takeaway is the burgeoning collaboration among implementers dedicated to countering wildlife trafficking. At a global juncture where the survival of our natural world hangs in the balance, wildlife trafficking exacerbates major crises such as biodiversity loss, health security, and climate change through the reduction of ecological integrity. Dr. Robertson concluded that despite some progress, now is not the time to ease our efforts but rather to amplify them. WCS welcomes the renewed EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking and the upcoming EU global funding programmes, and looks forward to continuing to strengthen our partnerships with the EU and other stakeholders.

Ms. Chantal Marijnissen, Head of Unit, Environment, Sustainable Natural Resources, DG International Partnerships (INTPA), European Commission, noted that today's presentations showed that the issue of wildlife trafficking needs action at various levels, from local to transcontinental. She highlighted NaturAfrica, an initiative to support biodiversity conservation in more than 30 large transboundary and national landscapes. Interventions in these landscapes will contribute to improve surveillance capacities, anti-poaching activities but also provide alternative livelihoods and support multi-stakeholder mechanisms to reduce conflicts in the use of natural resources. She mentioned that in October DG INTPA will present a new action to the EU Member States for approval, aiming to strengthen national capacities of partner countries to fight against wildlife crime and foster cooperation at both regional and transcontinental levels. This action will complement other regional and national actions such as El PAcCTO 2.0 and will operate in a number of focus countries that play an important role in wildlife crime as source, transit or destination. This action will aim to improve national legislation and the capacities of law enforcement agencies and the justice system, including for example in conducting investigations related to wildlife crime, improving coordination between agencies or monitoring the prosecution of cases. Furthermore, she acknowledged the challenges posed by online wildlife trade and corruption in addressing wildlife crime. Ms. Marijnissen concluded by emphasising the importance of joining forces in the fight against wildlife crime.

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