

H.E. Ms Marie-Christine Marghem, Minister of  
Energie, Environment and Development, Belgium

H.E. Ms Ivelina Vesselinova Vassileva, Minister of  
Environment and Waters in the Caretaker  
Government, Bulgaria

H.E. Mr Richard Brabec, Minister of the  
Environment, Czech Republic

H.E. Ms Kirsten Brosbøl, Minister for the  
Environment, Denmark

H.E. Mr Mati Raidma, Minister of the  
Environment, Estonia

H.E. Mr Panagiotis Georgiou Lafazanis, Minister  
of Reconstruction of Production, Environment and  
Energy, Mr Yiannis Tsironis, Alternate Minister  
for the Environment, Greece

H.E. Ms Isabel Garcia Tejerina, Minister of  
Agriculture, Food and Environment, Spain

H.E. Mr Mihael Zmajlovic, Minister for  
Environment and Nature Protection, Croatia

H.E. Mr Alan Kelly, Minister for the Environment,  
Community and Local Government, Ireland

H.E. Mr Gian Luca Galletti, Minister for the  
Environment, Land and Sea, Italy

H.E. Mr Nicos Kouyialis, Minister of Agriculture,  
Natural Resources and Environment, Cyprus

H.E. Mr Kaspars Gerhards, Minister of  
Environmental Protection and Regional  
Development, Latvia

H.E. Mr Sándor Fazekas, Minister of Rural  
Development, Hungary

H.E. Mr Leo Brincat, Minister for Sustainable  
Development, the Environment and Climate  
Change, Malta

H.E. Mr Maciej Grabowski, Minister of  
Environment, Poland

H.E. Ms Grațiela Leocadia Gavrilescu, Minister of  
Environment, Water and Forestry, Romania

H.E. Ms Irena Majcen, Minister for the  
Environment and Spatial planning, Slovenia

H.E. Mr Peter Žiga, Minister of Environment,  
Slovakia

H.E. Ms Sanni Grahn-Laasonen, Minister of the  
Environment, Finland

H.E. Mr Kęstutis Trečiokas, Minister of  
Environment, Lithuania

H.E. Ms Carole Dieschbourg, Minister for the  
Environment, Luxembourg

H.E. Mr Jorge Mareira da Silva, Minister for  
Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy,  
Portugal

March 2015

Dear colleagues,

Poaching and the illegal trade in ivory have reached levels worldwide that threaten the survival of elephants and significantly negatively impact on economic development, good governance, security and people's livelihoods in many African regions.

The volume of legal exports of pre-Convention ivory, in particular to China, have increased sharply during recent years, but this trade is not subject to any restrictions under CITES. We are deeply concerned that the trade of whole ivory tusks and 'raw' ivory that has not been worked into a product, may contribute to increase poaching on the African continent. The increasing trade from Europe to Asia contradicts efforts to reduce demand for ivory, that can fuel the illegal trade, as well as providing a route through which poached ivory can be laundered into the legal market.

Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, France, the Netherlands and Austria are convinced that these impacts represent factors relating to the conservation of the African elephant which militate against issuance of export permits as stipulated in Article 5 No. 2 d) of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97. In coherence with this view, export permits for pre-Convention 'raw' ivory (whole tusks and unworked items) are not granted in our countries.

We, the ministers responsible for CITES implementation of Germany, the UK, Sweden, France, the Netherlands and Austria, invite you to consider applying the same administrative practice at national level.

We believe that common practice across EU Member States with regard to ivory re-exports is urgently needed.

A copy of this letter will be send to Commissioner Vella.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Barbara Hendricks  
Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety  
Germany



Ms Ségolène Royal  
Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy  
France



Ms Sharon Dijksma  
Minister for Agriculture  
The Netherlands -



Mr Andrä Rupprechter  
Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management  
Austria



Ms Åsa Romson  
Minister for Climate and the Environment  
Sweden



Rt. Hon. Elizabeth Truss  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
United Kingdom