

Ecologic Institute
Science and Policy
for a Sustainable World



Wildlife crime

Presentation of the study to the ENVI Committee

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Aim of the Study

Provide an overview of

- the state of wildlife crime in Europe
- the potential role of the EU

with regards to

- the effective implementation of recent policies
- areas for improvement
- the potential added value of an EU Action Plan on Wildlife Crime (adoption of EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking by COM on 26 February 2016)

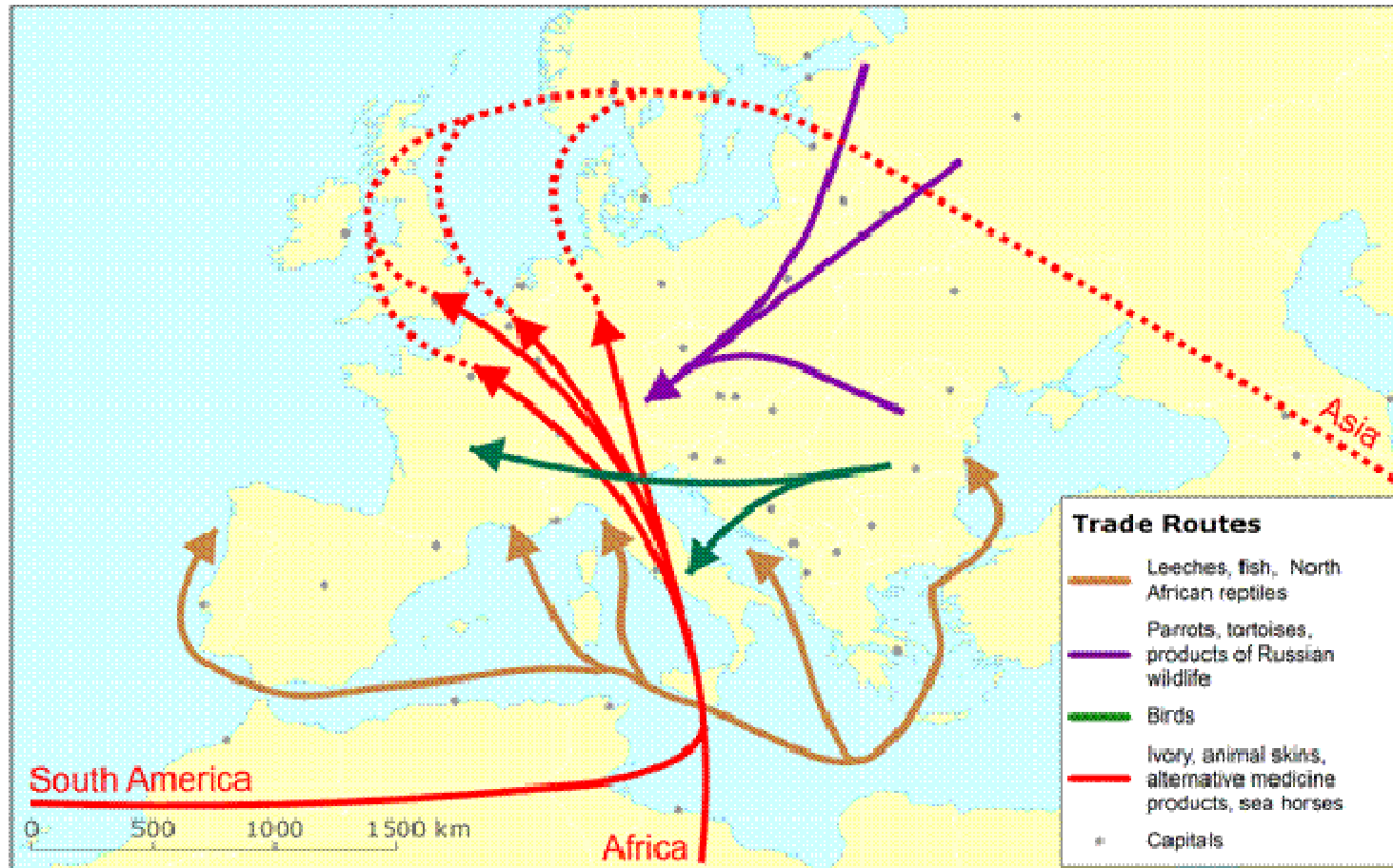
Method

- **Review of academic and official literature**
- **Internet-based survey among 25 MS (with few responses)**
- **Synthesis of data from EU-TWIX database**
- **In-depth country analysis (including expert interviews)**
 - DE, NL, PL, ES, UK
- **Recommendations**
 - Also based on other findings, e.g. EFFACE project

Conclusions

- The EU is both a **destination** (reptiles, caviar, fish, parrots, alternative medicinal products) and a **transit** (Mammals) region for wildlife products
- Four important **trade routes**:
 - Large mammals from Africa/South America to Asia via EU trade hubs
 - Coastal smuggling for the pet trade in the EU
 - Endangered birds from South Eastern Europe to Southern Europe
 - Russian wildlife and Asian exports via Eastern European land routes
- **Seizures**: Concentrated in countries with large overall trading volumes (DE, NL, ES, FR, UK), overall trend roughly constant
- Growing importance of mailing centres and of the internet

Major trade routes of illegal wildlife trade in Europe



Conclusions

- The regulatory framework of the EU appears overall sufficient
- Major concern: Insufficient and uneven levels of enforcement across EU
 - varying and often low level of sanctions
 - lack of resources, technical skills, awareness and expertise among police forces, prosecutors and judicial authorities
 - low priority given to wildlife crime by enforcement institutions
- Information from MS on sanctions varies significantly
- Little information on level and quality of cooperation between agencies

Conclusions

- Relevance of organised crime and money laundering to illegal wildlife trade varies between MS, but little empirical evidence available
- Potential added value of EU Action Plan on wildlife crime is widely recognised (priority setting!)

Recommendations

➤ Priority setting

- Pre-condition for sufficient resources
- on political (not just rhinos and elephants) and practical level
- Use of targeted controls

➤ Demand reduction

- Identify strategies for EU consumers (pet trade)
- Support activities in key consumer countries

➤ Specialisation

- Provide for specialist staff (training) and specialised units at all levels

Recommendations

➤ Cooperation

- Stronger involvement of Eurojust and Europol
- Funding of key actors (e.g. enforcement networks)

➤ Data recording and access to data

- Important inter alia for targeting controls
- Encourage or oblige MS to improve data collection and exchange

➤ Sanctions

- Level of sanctions must reflect seriousness of wildlife crime
- Toolbox approach: diverse instruments (penal, administrative etc.)
- Harmonisation of sanctions only within Environmental Crime Directive (if at all)

Recommendations

➤ EU Action Plan

- Not only enforcement, also prevention and global partnership: +
- Communication to Council stresses political priority: +
- No harmonisation of sanctions (only) for wildlife crime: +
- Timelines and monitoring: +
- Measures: Much convergence in general, some divergence in detail
- Effectiveness of the EU Action Plan depends on adequate (long-term) commitment and resources dedicated to it!

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Thank you for your attention!

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