



The Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

The Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, more commonly known as CITES, aims at regulating the international trade of specimens of endangered **animals and plants**, in particular by monitoring their exportation, re-exportation, importation, transit, transshipment or possession for any ends in the 130 countries that are a party to CITES.

The European Union applied the Washington Convention by means of Regulation (EEC) No 338/97 and following amendments, aiming at improving the identification of the species to be protected, by drawing up the lists contained in the Annexes to the abovementioned Regulation.

In Italy the enforcement of the complex EU legislation in application of the Convention falls within the competence of various administrations: the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry for Productive Activities, the Customs Agency and the Ministry for Agricultural and Forestry Policies. The latter, together with the CITES Service of the Corpo Forestale dello Stato (the Italian Forest Rangers), is responsible for issuing CITES permits and, more in general, for monitoring the traded species by means of task forces working on the national territory in close co-operation with the authorized Customs offices listed in Decision No. 5987 dated 6/5/02 that are in charge of those checks that under national legislation fall within the competence of the Customs Authority (Law No. 150/92 and further amendments).

To learn the formalities to be performed for the trade and personal use of plants, live or dead animals and parts thereof and not to incur in severe sanctions provided for by legislation in force, please contact the competent authorities (the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry for Productive Activities, the Ministry for Agricultural and Forestry Policies and the Customs Agency). For further information, please refer to the CITES Manual, which contains information about the legal framework, definitions of the most frequently used Customs and CITES terminology, the list of authorized Customs Offices, a clear and comprehensive explanation of the formalities to be performed and the forms to be filled in for the various procedures.