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EUROPEAN UNION'S BEST PRACTICES IN FIGHTING WILDLIFE CRIME LINKED TO THE INTERNET

Report for law enforcement practitioners

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This report – "EU Best Practices in Fighting Wildlife Crime Linked to the Internet" – was drawn up by the INTERPOL Environmental Security Programme (ENS) as a product of the EU Wildlife Cybercrime Project to compile existing best practices from European Union (EU) enforcement authorities and other relevant agencies regarding the methods and tools used to investigate wildlife crime linked to the Internet.

The purpose of this report is to raise awareness among EU Member States about the methods used to fight wildlife crime linked to the Internet and, accordingly, assist them in scaling up their efforts to address this crime trend. Where appropriate, Member States are encouraged to make full use of the Report in their investigations of cases of wildlife crime linked to the Internet in accordance with EU Directives. At the same time, the report also contributes towards Decision 18.84 paragraph a) adopted by the 18th Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP18) regarding best practices and model domestic measures for addressing wildlife crime linked to the Internet.

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TRAFFIC
WWF
IFAW

DISCLAIMER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transnational organized criminal groups exploit wildlife across the globe, threatening protected species, affecting vulnerable communities, undermining national economies, jeopardizing food security and, most notably, increasing the risk of spreading infectious diseases. Since 2010, INTERPOL, through its Environmental Security Programme (ENS), is supporting Member Countries in the fight against environmental crime – included wildlife crime and its facilitation via Internet.

Within this context, the report "European Union's Best Practices in Fighting Wildlife Crime Linked to the Internet" is the result of INTERPOL's partnership with the European Union (EU) Wildlife Cybercrime Project, supported by the EU Internal Security Fund — Police.

The report "European Union's Best Practices in Fighting Wildlife Crime Linked to the Internet" offers a collection of best practices currently in place in the EU to investigate wildlife crime linked to the Internet while giving an overview of the crime trend in Europe. To do so, the document follows a challenge-best practice approach, presenting issues and solutions highlighted by the representatives of law enforcement authorities from the seven EU Member States who kindly agreed to participate to this exercise. The suggested best practices are divided in four main sections: Legal framework, Case building, Investigation tools and techniques, and Cooperation. In the few cases in which best practices were not identified or were incomplete, INTERPOL made suggestions based on the expertise of Organization's officials as well as on ideas compiled during the preparation of the "Wildlife Crime Linked to the Internet – Practical Guidelines for Law Enforcement Practitioners" document, and material from the Consortium partners' publications. Within this context, the report "European Union's Best Practices in Fighting Wildlife Crime Linked to the Internet" and the "Wildlife Crime Linked to the Internet – Practical Guidelines for Law Enforcement Practitioners" are complementary documents for a deep understanding of this crime trend.

The recommendations made in the sections on Case building and Investigation tools and techniques, are mainly directed towards investigators, forensic specialist, cyber inspectors and other enforcement professionals fighting wildlife crime linked to the Internet on a regular basis. However, these best practices need to be backed up by strategic systemic actions. The sections on Legal framework and Cooperation attempt to formulate best practices that may be adopted on a higher level to adequately support the work of law enforcement authorities and agencies when addressing this crime.

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NOTE:

This document is restricted to law enforcement only.

The full version of the guidelines is available via INTERPOL and CITES through their respective restricted access libraries as well as on the CITES Virtual College (restricted access) and on ENVIRONET.