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## New Eurogroup report on wild bird imports calls for permanent ban on animal protection, health and conservation grounds

Eurogroup for Animal welfare is today communicating the conclusions of a new report to Member States veterinary representatives with the aim of making the temporary ban permanent. The imports suspended for Avian Flu may restart from 1<sup>st</sup> of August but the animal protection group warns for the continued health and welfare risks related to this trade. The EU's Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health will be discussing the ban on 15-16 June.

The EU is the largest importer of wild-caught birds for the pet trade with more than half-million birds listed by CITES<sup>1</sup> imported every year.

40-60% of wild birds caught for the pet trade are estimated to die before they leave their country of origin due to capture methods, stress and inadequate treatment at traders' premises. Furthermore, for every bird that survived the journey, it is estimated that three die in transit.

With the great numbers of birds comes a huge danger of importing serious animal diseases such as Avian Influenza and Avian Chlamydiosis. An analysis<sup>2</sup> has demonstrated that the EU quarantine measures itself are inadequate to protect the EU against importing disease. Moreover the quarantine systems in the country of origin are not reliable and hardly ever checked.

*"Re-opening the trade is a serious error of judgment and would leave the EU in a vulnerable position where animal health is concerned", states Sonja Van Tichelen, Director of Eurogroup. "Moreover this trade is not only dangerous for humans and animals, it is cruel, unnecessary and ethically questionable. Whereas the EU protects its own native birds through the Wild Birds Directive it allows at the same time the depletion of third country species".*

Many countries such as Australia, Israel and the US have these bans in place and this has led to a better control of illegal imports. A preliminary analysis of import data in the EU shows that the temporary ban is being respected, with no seizures of illegally imported live birds in those countries for which data is available<sup>3</sup>. The Eurogroup initiative is part of a much larger international campaign<sup>4</sup> in which animal protection and bird protection groups from all over the world join forces to protect parrots and other exotic birds from the devastating effects of trade.

### Ends

For further information and a pdf copy of the report *"It's time to stop winging it"*, contact Véronique Schmit, Tel.: +32 (0)2 740 08 20; Mobile: +32 (0)477 539394 - [www.eurogroupanimalwelfare.org](http://www.eurogroupanimalwelfare.org) - Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, 6 rue des Patriotes, B-1000 Brussels.

<sup>1</sup> CITES is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

<sup>2</sup> Brief on loopholes in EU quarantine rules available at : [http://www.eurogroupanimalwelfare.org/pdf/brief\\_quarantine\\_apr05.pdf](http://www.eurogroupanimalwelfare.org/pdf/brief_quarantine_apr05.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Germany, Belgium, Hungary and Slovenia

<sup>4</sup> see the European Union Wild Birds Declaration signed by more than 200 NGO's at: <http://worldparrottrust.org/trade/wildbirddec/wbdec.pdf>