

# The European Union Wild Bird Declaration

## An NGO Call to Halt Wild Bird Imports into the European Union

### Meeting European Commission

7 March 2005

The European Union is the world's largest importer of wild birds, with almost 3 million CITES listed birds imported from 2000 to 2003 (WCMC Trade Database) and a much higher number of non CITES listed wild birds for which there is no trade date available.

Commission Decision 2000/666/EC of 16 October 2000 was established to harmonize the health controls among the EU Member Countries. It includes the animal health and the veterinary certification requirements for the import of birds, other than poultry, and the conditions for quarantine.

The Directive represents an improvement on the previous health controls that were in place in the individual EU countries. However, the regulations fail to address several important considerations: the very large number of imported wild birds that can be included in a single consignment; that several reportable avian diseases can be asymptomatic; the risks of introducing exotic virus and bacterial strains; and the free movement of imported birds once within the EC. In addition, the reported lack of enforcement and implementation of the quarantine directive in several EU countries result in insufficient and inconclusive testing and an inability to effectively detect reportable diseases like Chlamydiosis, Mycobacteriosis, and especially Salmonellosis, which go untreated and show up in large numbers of birds just cleared from quarantines. The current health regulations regarding imported wild birds are unable to effectively reduce to a minimum the risks of introducing into the Community diseases that could seriously affect the animal and human populations.

### Quarantine requirements and shortcomings

Current Quarantine Requirement	Shortcomings
Member States shall authorise the import of birds from countries listed in Annex D to this Decision only if: 1. they originate from holdings which are registered by the competent authority of the exporting country; 2. they are accompanied by an animal health certificate as laid down in Annex A	The requirements of the health certificate, as laid down in Annex A, are that the birds have been kept in holdings of the exporting country for at least 21 days; that the holding is not under animal health restrictions; that no outbreaks of avian influenza or Newcastle disease have been reported in the facility or in the surrounding area. The requirements that must be met on the day of loading of the birds to be exported are that they show no clinical sign or suspicion of infectious disease and that they are fit to travel. No testings are required for reportable diseases, some of which, like Salmonella and Chlamydiosis, are often present asymptotically the traded birds.
Within the regulations, "birds " are defined as	Pet birds accompanying their owner, birds for

<p>animals of avian species not covered by Article 2 number 1 of Council Directive 90/539/EEC (1 ) excluding birds referred to in Article 1 third paragraph (relating to pet birds accompanying their owner)and Article 19 of Directive 92/65/EEC (relating to birds for zoos,circuses,amusement parks and experimental laboratories). This decision shall not apply to birds taken directly from the wild for conservation programmes approved by the competent authority in the Member State of destination.</p>	<p>zoos, circuses, amusement parks and experimental laboratories, and, birds for approved conservation programmes are exempted from the quarantine requirements.</p>
<p>The birds shall be transported directly from the border inspection post to an approved quarantine facility or centre in cages or crates,without prejudice to Council Directive 91/628/EEC (2 ).</p>	<p>There are no requirements for biosecurity measures from the time of arrival in the importing country to the introduction at the quarantine facility.</p>
<p>After the birds have been placed in quarantine,the sampling and testing of the birds and/or the sentinel chickens, as set out in Annex C,shall be carried out.</p>	<p>The only reportable diseases for which testing is required are avian influenza and Newcastle disease. Testing is not mandatory for other reportable infectious diseases such as, Chlamydiosis, Mycobacteriosis, Salmonellosis, which often affect birds asymptotically.</p>
<p>Without use of sentinel chickens: imported birds have to be examined virologically (serological testing is.not appropriate). Cloacal swabs (or faeces) must be taken from all birds if the consignment is less than 60 or from 60 birds from larger consignments during the first 7 to 15 days of the quarantine period.</p>	<p>The use of sentinel chickens is optional and therefore they are not present in all quarantine facilities. The preferred testing method is on fecal samples as it is less time consuming and it does not require the handling of birds. However, particularly in the case of large consignements, it is extremely difficult to ensure that the samples originate fom 60 different birds. The number of birds required to be tested (60) cannot be considered an adequate sampling of consignments totaling thousands of birds, as in the case of song-bird imports that are often imported in very large quantities.</p>
<p>Within the ergulations, "Quarantine facility" means "premises which are separated from poultry holdings and other bird holdings by a reasonable distance, when taking into account the epidemiology of Newcastle disease and avian influenza as regards airborne spread, and in which quarantine of imported birds is carried out on an ‘all-in,all-out ’basis."</p>	<p>It is not required for quarantine facilities to be located at a safe distance from human habitations. For example, one facility in Naples,Italy, is located in town, in a courtyard surrounded by apartment buildings.</p>

<p>A positive finding for avian influenza or Newcastle disease or the confirmation of these diseases in the quarantined birds or the sentinel chickens shall not be reported as an outbreak within the context of Council Directive 82/894/EEC (3) on the notification of animal diseases within the Community, but should nevertheless be reported to the Commission.</p>	<p>A time frame for reporting of positive findings of avian influenza, Newcastle disease or other reportable diseases to the Commission has not been established. This prevents the implementation of an efficient alert system for all of the EU member states.</p>
--	--

Decision requirements	Implementation and enforcement
<p>The birds must be quarantined for at least 30 days in an approved quarantine facility or centre.</p>	<p>Transshipment between EU countries result in birds entering the EU without being subjected to quarantine neither in the importing country nor in the country of destination. These shipments are often sought for this purpose. Furthermore, large consignments totaling several thousand birds, are often not carefully controlled resulting in many of the birds entering the trade without being subjected to quarantine.</p>
<p>At least at the beginning and at the end of quarantine of each consignment the official veterinarian shall inspect the quarantine provisions including an examination of the mortality records and a clinical inspection of the birds in each unit of the quarantine centre or in the quarantine facility. The official veterinarian or an authorised veterinarian must carry out inspection more frequently if the disease situation requires it. After the birds have been placed in quarantine, the sampling and testing of the birds and/or the sentinel chickens, as set out in Annex C, shall be carried out.</p>	<p>In several instances official veterinarian do not ever inspect the quarantine facilities. In such cases the importers are required to deliver to the official veterinarians the fecal samples to be tested with no form of control on the source of the samples nor on the number of birds from which they originate; there are no visual inspections that could allow the detection of clinical symptoms in the birds kept in the quarantine facilities.</p>
<p>If during quarantine as provided for in Article 3 it is suspected or confirmed that psittaciformes are infected with Chlamydia psittaci all birds of the consignment must be treated by a method approved by the competent authority and the quarantine must be prolonged for at least two months following the last recorded case.</p>	<p>Chlamydia psittaci is commonly found in birds released from quarantine showing no clinical symptoms. Chlamydiosis is a zoonosis that can cause serious implications on human health, particularly in elderly people, in children and in immunodepressed individuals.</p>
<p>Psittaciformes must be identified individually at</p>	<p>The identification of Psittaciformes (parrots) by</p>

<p>arrival in quarantine in accordance with Chapter 2B of Annex B.</p>	<p>means of a leg-ring or microchip, in accordance with Chapter 2B of Annex B, is not carried out by several EU facilities.</p>
<p>Required management provisions relating to quarantine facility centres, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "All-in, all-out" policy</li> <li>- Unauthorized access</li> <li>- Protective clothing</li> <li>- Preventing contacts which may cause contamination between units</li> <li>- Appropriate equipment for cleaning and disinfection</li> <li>- Handling and treatment of litter and waste material</li> <li>- Official examination of carcasses of dead birds</li> <li>- Informing state veterinarians of diseases and death of birds during the quarantine period</li> <li>- The keeping of records on the number of birds entering and leaving for each consignment, of the individual identification number of Psittaciformes, daily observation of illnesses and deaths, persons entering the quarantine centre</li> <li>- Disinfection or destruction of transport containers.</li> </ul>	<p>Several facilities do not reportedly implement one or more of the required management provisions.</p>

For further information:

Eurogroup for Animal Welfare

Sonja Van Tichelen

6 Rue des Patriottes

1000 Bruxelles

Belgium

Tel. 0032.2.740.08.20

Eml [info@eurogroupanimalwelfare.org](mailto:info@eurogroupanimalwelfare.org)

World Parrot Trust

James Gilardi

The World Parrot Trust

725 Peach Place

Davis, CA 95616

[gilardi@worldparrottrust.org](mailto:gilardi@worldparrottrust.org)

<http://www.worldparrottrust.org>

Ph/Fx (530) 756-6340