

Questionnaire on the rapid movement of wildlife diagnostic samples and efficient movement of musical instruments

Prepared by the CITES Secretariat in line with Decision 20.136

Under Article VII, paragraph 6 of the Convention as implemented by Resolution Conf. 11.15 (Rev. CoP18), wildlife samples that are exchanged between registered scientific institutions may be exempted from the provisions of the Convention under certain circumstances.

See [Resolution Conf. 11.15 \(Rev. CoP18\) on Non-commercial loan, donation or exchange of museum, herbarium, diagnostic and forensic research specimens](#). The CITES Register of Scientific Institutions is available here: https://cites.org/eng/common/reg/e_si.html.

[Resolution Conf. 12.3 \(Rev. CoP20\) on Permits and certificates](#) provides in Section XIII the conditions for using simplified procedures to facilitate trade that will have a negligible – or no – impact on the conservation of the species concerned.

For more information on these provisions, please see the [Guidance on the use of the scientific exchange exemption and the simplified procedures to issue permits and certificates](#).

[Resolution Conf. 16.8 \(Rev. CoP17\) on Frequent cross-border non-commercial movements of musical instruments](#) recommends the use of musical instrument certificates for non-commercial cross-border movement of musical instruments derived from CITES species, other than Appendix-I specimens acquired after the species was included in the Appendices under certain conditions.

Template for responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2026/071 on Information on the rapid movement of wildlife diagnostic samples and efficient movement of musical instruments
[Decision 20.136]

Parties are invited to complete Section A below relevant to their experience and available information. Affected stakeholders are invited to complete Section B. There is no obligation to complete all sections or respond to all questions.

Deadline: 31 May 2026

Responder information:

Name: Heather Noonan, on behalf of multiple stakeholders listed below

Email: hnoonan@americanorchestras.org

Country: United States

Type of entity:

- ☐ Government – CITES Management Authority
- ☐ Government – CITES Scientific Authority
- ☐ Government – Other
- ☐ Intergovernmental Organization
- ☒ Non-Governmental Organization
- ☐ Research/Scientific Institution
- ☒ Private sector
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Name of entity:

American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada
American Federation of Violin and Bow Makers
Association of British Orchestras
Australian Music Association
C.F. Martin & Co.
Chambre Syndicale de la Facture Instrumentale (CSFI)
European Soundmakers
International Federation of Musicians
International Pernambuco Conservation Initiative Deutschland e.V. (I.P.C.I)
International Alliance of Violin and Bow Makers for Endangered Species
International Pernambuco Conservation Initiative-USA
International Society of Musicians
International Society of Violin and Bow Makers
IPCI France Europe
League of American Orchestras
Music Industries Association (MIA)
The MU
National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM)
Orchestras Canada
Pearle - Live Performance Europe
Taylor Guitars

Section A: To be completed by Parties

1. Implementation arrangements, including legislative provisions for exemptions and simplified procedures for the rapid movement of wildlife samples for diagnostic purposes

Scientific exchange exemption (Article VII, para. 6 and Resolution Conf. 11.15 (Rev. CoP18))

1.1. Does your national legislation (including laws, regulations and administrative procedures) exempt from Articles III, IV and V the exchange of wildlife samples between scientific institutions in accordance with Article VII, paragraph 6, and Resolution Conf. 11.15 (Rev. CoP18)?

- ☐ Yes, please provide the legislative reference(s): _____
- ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
- ☐ Other, please provide details: _____

- 1.2 If your country has put in place arrangements to exempt the exchange of wildlife samples between scientific institutions in accordance with Article VII, paragraph 6 and Resolution Conf. 11.15 (Rev. CoP18), please describe briefly how the arrangements work in practice (including relevant website links if available): _____
- 1.3 Has your country proposed the inclusion of a diagnostic testing laboratory recognized as an official reference laboratory or collaborating centre by the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) in the CITES Register in accordance with Resolution Conf. 11.15 (Rev. CoP18)?
- ☐ Yes, please provide the reference(s): _____
 - ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
 - ☐ Other, please provide details: _____
- 1.4 Has your country communicated updates to the Register of scientific institutions at the end of December 2024 in response to Notification No.2024/105 of 20 September 2024 as called for by paragraph 3 f) of Resolution Conf. 11.15 (Rev. CoP18)?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
 - ☐ Other, please provide details: _____

If your country has not reviewed and updated its entries in the register of scientific institutions, please consider doing so and communicate any changes to the Secretariat for publication in the CITES Register.

Simplified procedures [Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP20)]

- 1.5 Does your national legislation provide the basis for using simplified procedures, as described in Section XIII of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP20) for the issuance of export permits for wildlife samples for diagnostic and/or conservation purposes?
- ☐ Yes, please provide the legislative reference(s): _____
 - ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
 - ☐ Other, please provide details: _____
- 1.6 If the national legislation provides such a basis, does your country use simplified procedures for the issuance of export permits for wildlife samples for diagnostic and/or conservation purposes?
- ☐ Yes, please provide details on the cases in which these procedures are applied and the requirements: _____
 - ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
- 1.7 Does your country have other arrangements in place to facilitate the rapid movement of wildlife samples for diagnostic or conservation purposes?
- ☐ Yes, please provide details and references (including relevant website links if available): _____
 - ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
 - ☐ Other, please provide details: _____

2. Implementation challenges with regard to exemptions and simplified procedures for the rapid movement of wildlife samples

- 2.1 Has your country identified any implementation challenges with respect to the implementation of the provisions in Article VII, paragraph 6, and Resolution Conf. 11.15 (Rev. CoP18) or the use of simplified procedure for the rapid movement of such wildlife samples?
- ☐ Yes, please describe such challenges and provide reference to specific cases or situations that have occurred in the past: _____
 - ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____

☐ Other, please provide details: _____

2.2 If your country has identified or experienced such implementation challenges, do you have any suggestions for how these challenges could be addressed by CITES Parties?

☐ Yes, please describe your suggestions: _____

☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____

☐ Other, please provide details: _____

2.3 The Secretariat has been directed to develop 'one-page' or simplified guidance materials on the rapid movement of wildlife samples for diagnostic and/or conservation purposes; would you have any specific questions/issues, you would like to see addressed in such guidance material?

☐ Yes, please provide your specific questions/issues: _____

☐ No

2.4 Any additional comments or clarifications with regard to the rapid movement of wildlife samples you would like to make:

3. Implementation arrangements, including legislative provisions for the efficient non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display or competition

3.1 Does your national legislation provide for the use of musical instruments certificates in accordance with the Convention and Resolution Conf. 16.8 (Rev. CoP17)?

☐ Yes, please provide the legislative reference(s): _____

☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____

☐ Other, please provide details: _____

3.2 Does your country have other arrangements in place to facilitate the efficient non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display or competition?

☐ Yes, please provide details: _____

☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____

3.3 If your country has put in place arrangements to use musical instruments certificates or other arrangements to facilitate the efficient non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display or competition, please describe briefly how the arrangements work in practice (including relevant website links if available): _____

3.4 A musical instrument certificate that is issued in line with Resolution Conf. 16.8 (Rev. CoP17) can be valid for a maximum period of three years – similar to a travelling exhibition certificate issued in line with Section VII of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP20). What is the maximum period of validity of a musical instrument certificate in your legislation?

☐ 3 years: _____

☐ Other, please provide details, if possible: _____

3.5 Do you consider this validity adequate?

☐ Yes, because: _____

☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____

☐ If no, please indicate what an adequate validity would be in your view:

4. Implementation challenges with regard to the efficient movement of musical non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display or competition

- 4.1 Has your country identified any implementation challenges with respect to the use of musical instruments certificates in accordance with the Convention and Resolution Conf. 16.8 (Rev. CoP17)?
- ☐ Yes, please describe such challenges and provide reference to specific cases or situations that have occurred in the past: _____
 - ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
 - ☐ Other, please provide details: _____
- 4.2 If your country has identified or experienced challenges with the use of musical instruments certificates in accordance with the Convention and Resolution Conf. 16.8 (Rev. CoP17), do you have any suggestions for how to address these challenges?
- ☐ Yes, please describe your suggestions: _____
 - ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
 - ☐ Other, please provide details: _____
- 4.3 The Secretariat has been directed to develop 'one-page' or simplified guidance materials on the efficient non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display or competition; would you have any specific questions/issues, you would like to see addressed in such guidance material?
- ☐ Yes, please provide your specific questions/issues: _____
 - ☐ No
- 4.4 Any additional comments or clarifications with regard to the efficient non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display or competition:
- _____

Section B: To be completed by affected stakeholders

- 5.1 Please indicate how you are affected as a stakeholder by the potential rapid movement of wildlife samples or efficient movement of musical instruments:

The music stakeholder organizations collectively submitting these comments represent musicians, ensembles, instrument makers, and others for whom the efficient, international non-commercial movement of musical instruments is essential. The international use of musical instruments by musicians and professional and student ensembles is essential to advancing diplomacy, sparking artistic innovation, and supporting vital international cultural activity.

Musicians perform with valuable and culturally significant musical instruments legally crafted decades and even centuries ago. A number of these instruments contain small amounts of ivory, shell, reptile skin, tree species, or other materials regulated under CITES.

For species for which CITES permits are required for non-commercial movement, individual musicians and ensembles have attempted to navigate cross-border movements using the CITES Musical Instrument Certificate (MIC) and the CITES Travelling Exhibition Certificate (TEC). Following the adoption of Resolution Conf. 16.8 (Rev. CoP17) on Frequent cross-border non-commercial movements of musical instruments, musical instrument stakeholders have informed CITES Parties of implementation challenges through interventions and side events at Conferences of the Parties, Standing Committee Meetings, and in participation in the Working Group on Rapid Movement of Wildlife Diagnostic Samples and Musical Instruments.

- 5.2 Have you or your organization identified or experienced any challenges when trying to access or utilize the existing arrangements for rapid movement of wildlife samples or efficient movement of musical instruments?
- ☒ Yes, please describe such challenges and provide reference to specific cases or situations that have occurred in the past:

The music stakeholder community has identified numerous challenges with the existing systems. Music stakeholders attempting to use CITES procedures report that the time, financial expense, and uncertainty involved in obtaining and putting to use CITES permits for non-commercial movements

has often left no option but to forgo travel with their best musical instruments or use instruments that compromise the quality of performances.

The personal effects exemption does not provide full solutions for traveling musicians. The extensive challenges in applying the personal effects exemption and in using the MIC were detailed in CoP19 Inf. 18 (Rev. 1), Consideration of Additional Efficiencies in the Movement of Musical Instruments for Non-Commercial Purposes. In this information document, the United States authorities noted that inefficiencies in the MIC as well as the personal effects exemption have led to clearance delays, seizures, and cancelled performances. The personal effects exemption is only available for Appendix II- or Appendix III- listed species, is unevenly accepted across CITES Parties, and is not available for large ensembles shipping instruments by cargo.

The MIC is not an exemption from the permit process but a consolidated permit, and the costs associated with obtaining the documentation needed to support a permit application, required fees, and extra travel expense for reaching a CITES-designated port are a barrier for musicians. One of the greatest impediments to effective use of the permits is the lack of harmonization across Parties implementing these measures through port procedures.

Musicians using the CITES permits for non-commercial movement apply to their CITES Management Authority for issuance of a permit, which must then be credentialed by CITES enforcement officials at each designated port through which an instrument travels. Musical instruments accompanied by a CITES Musical Instrument Certificate may be hand-carried or in checked luggage, and musical instruments transported via cargo for larger ensembles is accompanied by the Travelling Exhibition Certificate. The process of issuing and credentialing these permits is extremely variable from country to country. Limited ports are available for credentialing permits and enforcement officers are available at limited hours, which can prevent musicians from traveling efficiently and affordably.

An increasing number of CITES parties, including the European Union, require a traveling exhibition certificate (TEC) issued by the first entry country even if there is a TEC issued by the country of departure, and no longer recognize traveling exhibition certificates issued beyond their borders, due to new domestic regulations. This means that ensembles, management authorities, and enforcement officials alike must forgo the efficiency of a single permit for a group of instruments and instead seek multiple documents for travel. If a permit issued by the departure country is not acknowledged by the entry country, that permit will not be fully credentialled in accordance with CITES requirements.

Musicians holding individual permits must void them before their instruments are included on a group permit; given the narrow timeframe between engagements, this is impractical.

- ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
- ☐ Other, please provide any details: _____

5.3 If you or your organization have identified or experienced such challenges, do you have any suggestions for how to address these challenges by the CITES Parties?

- ☒ Yes, please describe your suggestions:

The music stakeholder community offers the following suggestions for how CITES Parties can address these challenges:

- (1) The most effective way to minimize the burden of the permit process is to appropriately exempt noncommercial movement of musical instruments from permit requirements during the listing and annotations process, and to provide simplified procedures for those activities that do not constitute a threat to the conservation of protected species. For example, we note that the Annotation #10 revised at CoP20 helpfully exempts from permit requirements “finished musical instruments, finished musical instrument accessories and finished musical

instrument parts for non-commercial trade only for the purpose of paid and unpaid performance, personal use, display, loan, competition, teaching, appraisal, or repair, provided that this does not change the ownership and that such transport is not for sale, transfer or disposal of the specimen outside of the owner's usual State of residence."

- (2) Full recognition of the personal effects exemption would represent real relief for international guest soloists, small groups, and large ensemble musicians, greatly reduce the cost and time burdens related to navigating permit applications and enforcement procedures, and allow CITES authorities to dedicate limited resources to compliance and enforcement efforts that directly impact conservation goals. Nearly all orchestra musicians with CITES materials place their instruments in cargo shipments to avoid multiple, unwieldy permits in favor of a single permit and inspection procedure. If more musicians can carry instruments in cabin or as checked baggage without permits, they may practice and rehearse at their own discretion (shortly before departure and soon after landing), as well as have the ability to branch away from a tour for other solo and smaller ensemble work.
- (3) We suggest that the information gathered through this questionnaire be analyzed to inform potential revisions to Resolution Conf. 16.8 (Rev. CoP17) on Frequent Cross-Border Non-Commercial Movements of Musical Instruments, Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on Permits and Certificates, Resolution Conf. 13.7 (Rev. CoP17) on Control of Trade in Personal and Household Effects, and any other relevant resolutions for possible amendments to advance for consideration at CoP21. The barriers described above may be overcome with simple revisions to the relevant CITES resolutions, and the music stakeholder community welcomes the opportunity to contribute to that process.
- (4) We encourage consideration of allowing streamlined permit credentialing for musical instruments transported by cargo under an ATA carnet – an internationally recognized customs re-export document.
- (5) We strongly support the efforts among CITES parties to institute an electronic permit system. Electronic permitting would help to streamline and make more efficient the process of acquiring, using, and invalidating musical instrument certificates. An electronic system would help speed the permit issuance and invalidation processes, while reducing the burden on enforcement authorities. Electronic systems also hold potential for relieving the burden posed by the requirement to physically credential permits at each border crossing, and would enhance transparency and allow real-time data exchange between management and enforcement authorities. Harmonizing the use of these systems across CITES parties will be essential for achieving efficiencies.
- (6) Musical instruments serve as the daily professional tools of musicians, many of whom tour frequently. CITES can take action to relieve the disproportionate administrative burden for this essential international travel. For individual musicians who retain ownership of their instruments over time, the permit burden would be lessened by extending the Musical Instrument Certificate validity period from three years to ten years in duration, streamlining the permit renewal process.

- ☐ No, please provide an explanation, if possible: _____
- ☐ Other, please provide details: _____

- 5.4 The Secretariat has been directed to develop 'one-page' or simplified guidance materials on the rapid movement of wildlife samples for diagnostic and/or conservation purposes, and the efficient non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display or competition; would you have any specific questions/issues, you would like to see addressed in such guidance material?

☒ Yes, please provide your specific questions/issues:

The music stakeholder community supports the development of simplified guidance materials and encourages the Parties to identify a rapid timeline for implementing these resources. The proposed one-page simplified guidance would be a helpful resource to musicians and ensembles navigating these procedures. We request that such guidance address the following:

- (1) A clear explanation of how to identify which species typically used in musical instruments require CITES permits versus those which are covered by the personal effects exemption or other permit exemptions;
- (2) Up-to-date guidance on which CITES Parties honor the personal effects exemption.
- (3) A clear indication of activity that constitutes a non-commercial movement of a musical instrument.
- (4) Country-specific information on determining designated ports and hours available for permit credentialing, compiled in a register of Parties' existing arrangements with links to country-specific information;
- (5) Procedures to follow in the absence of an available border official, failure to obtain a credential, or loss, theft, or destruction of a certificate.
- (6) Clarification on the distinction between the use of Musical Instrument Certificates and Traveling Exhibition Certificates, particularly in light of new domestic regulations adopted by certain Parties, including the European Union, that require multiple TECs issued by both the country of departure and the first entry country;
- (7) Guidance on permit renewal procedures and the voiding of individual permits when instruments are included on a group permit.

☐ No

- 5.5 Any additional comments with regard to rapid movement of wildlife samples for diagnostic and/or conservation purposes, or the efficient non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display or competition:

In partnership with CITES parties and the conservation community, music stakeholders have undertaken efforts to support compliance with current permit requirements while simultaneously pursuing policy improvements that will alleviate unnecessary burdens. The music stakeholder community stands ready to partner in the next steps identified under Decision 20.136 to 20.139 and encourages the Parties to identify a rapid timeline for publishing the proposed resources and guidance materials on the CITES website.

While heightened visibility of existing permit procedures is appreciated, we note that there will also be potential implications for the non-commercial movement of musical instruments as future action is undertaken by the Working Group on Purpose Codes, and specifically during consideration of purpose codes "P" and "Q." Additionally, Decision 20.128 directs the Standing Committee, in consultation with the Secretariat, to "consider ways in which electronic CITES permitting systems can simplify procedures for the non-commercial movement of musical instruments."

As mentioned above, the preparation of online resources and guidance is likely to reveal pain points and opportunities for simplification and harmonization that could be addressed by amendments to relevant resolutions. We therefore recommend that the Secretariat and Standing Committee undertake a wholistic approach to potential improvements to the support efficient non-commercial movement of musical instruments for purposes of performance, display, or competition.