



To the EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries,
European Commission,
Rue de la Loi, 200,
1049, Brussels

28th November 2017

Ref: The Elephant Protection Initiative

Dear Commissioner,

On behalf of the Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI) Member States, I write to register our deep concern that the poaching of elephants and the illegal trade in ivory continues to threaten African elephant populations. As well as threatening the long-term survival of an important and iconic species, this activity undermines the integrity of ecosystems, weakens national security and governance and damages sustainable economic development in many places.

As you know, one of the four commitments of the EPI, established at the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in 2014, is to close domestic ivory markets. The continued existence of legal ivory markets around the world creates opportunities to launder illegal ivory, including in the EU, and undermines international attempts to end the scourge of poaching by reducing the demand for ivory.

We very much appreciate the personal attention you have given to addressing the issue of wildlife trafficking and for spearheading the publication of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking in 2016. We also appreciate the EU's global commitments to wildlife conservation and delivery of the sustainable development goals. We therefore ask you to take strong action to ensure the long-term survival of African elephants by introducing a complete ban on all ivory imports and exports to/from the EU and by closing down the EU's domestic ivory market. Furthermore, decisive action by the EU on this issue would send a strong signal to other countries with ivory markets and make a significant difference to global efforts to save this species.

The world's largest ivory markets, including the United States, China, (including Hong Kong), and most recently, the United Kingdom already have or are in the process of closing their domestic ivory markets, all recognising that legal domestic markets contribute to the illegal trade. We therefore urge the EU to follow suit and support this global effort to tackle ivory trafficking and the elephant poaching crisis.

Yours sincerely,

 **Kumara Wakjira**
Director General

Kumara Wakjira
Chair of the EPI Implementation Board
Director General of Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority