



European  
Commission

# Ivory trade in the EU

## Strict rules to protect elephants in the wild

Despite an international ivory ban, elephant poaching and ivory trafficking remain at high levels. Wild elephant populations in their natural habitats continue to be threatened by illegal killing and their ivory is often sold illegally on the international market.

The EU already has [strict rules](#) on ivory trade and is committed to taking further action against elephant poaching and ivory trafficking globally. To ensure that ivory trade in the EU does not contribute to these threats, in December 2021, the EU further tightened the rules for certain transactions.

The new measures aim to ban most forms of the EU trade in ivory. Now, only few ivory objects can be traded within the EU.

### What ivory objects can I trade in the EU (including within my country)?

In the EU, the trade in elephant ivory is prohibited in general. There are exemptions for antique artefacts and musical instruments containing ivory. Specific conditions apply, depending on the nature of the object and on when the ivory contained in them was acquired.



#### Antiques

**Artefacts** made of or containing ivory, such as jewellery or sculptures, are often referred to as “antiques”. You can only trade them if

- ✓ there is proof that the ivory item was acquired **before 3 March 1947 and**
- ✓ it has been **clearly altered from its natural state** to create the object

#### Musical instruments

In the EU, you can only trade a **musical instrument** containing pieces of ivory, such as piano keys or violin bows, if

- ✓ The ivory was acquired **before 1975**, irrespective of the instrument's date of manufacture - this is referred to as a “pre-1975 musical instrument” and
- ✓ the musical instrument is, or has been until recently, **used by a performing artist**.





**Raw ivory** includes objects such as tusks or pieces of tusks. It is subject to tighter restrictions than antiques and musical instruments. This is because trade in raw ivory carries a higher risk of feeding the international demand for ivory and of incentivising elephant poaching.

You can only sell raw ivory to

**repair antiques** (pre-1947), provided a public authority for cultural heritage supports the transaction or

**repair pre-1975 musical instruments**

Commercial trade in elephant trophies consisting of raw ivory is prohibited within the EU; they can only be imported for personal use.

### How do I sell an artefact or musical instrument containing ivory that I acquired legally?

- 1. Verification:** Verify if you have all the evidence needed to prove that your piece of ivory meets the criteria listed above to be authorised for trade.
- 2. Application:** Provide your [national CITES authority](#) with the information required and request a certificate.
- 3. Result of the application:** Proceed with trade **only** when a valid certificate is issued.

**N.B.** Certificates issued before the date of entry into force of the amended Commission Regulation will cease to be valid 12 months after this date - and potential sellers will have to apply for a new certificate in accordance with the above.

#### More information:

[EU guidance on ivory trade](#)

[Press release and Questions and Answers on new rules](#)

[EU Wildlife Trade Regulations](#)

[CITES website](#)



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