



Electronic equivalent of physical signatures and seals (eCITES)

How to deal with the electronic equiv. of physical signatures? (cont.)

Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP17) requires a **functional equivalence of physical and electronic signatures**:

2 e) if a permit or certificate form, whether issued in an electronic or paper format, includes a place for the signature of the applicant, the absence of the handwritten signature or in case of electronic forms any electronic equivalent should render the permit or certificate invalid;

Three signatures on a CITES permit:

- Applicant (signature)
- Management Authority (seal, signature and security stamp)
- Customs officer (signature) , Customs office (seal)

How to deal with the electronic equivalent of physical signatures and seals?

* Country in which the specimens were taken from the wild, bred in captivity or artificially propagated (only in case of re-export)		
** Only for specimens of Appendix-I species bred in captivity or artificially propagated for commercial purposes		
*** For pre-Convention specimens		
13. This permit/certificate is issued by:		
_____	_____	_____
Place	Date	Security stamp, signature and official seal
14. First endorsement:	15. Bill of Lading/Airwaybill number:	

13. To be completed by the official who issues the permit. The name of the official must be written in full. The security stamp must be affixed in this block and must be cancelled by the signature of the issuing official and a stamp or seal. The seal, signature and security-stamp number should be clearly legible.

UN/CEFCAT Recommendation 14

Defining the equivalent of a physical signature is an issue for many international trade documents that are used on electronic exchanges

AT **SPARKASSE**
Oberösterreich

ZAHLUNGSANWEISUNG

EmpfängerIn Name/Firma: MARIA MÜLLER

IBAN EmpfängerIn: AT7120111113123456789

BIC (SWIFT-Code) der Empfängerbank: GIBAAATWWXXX

Ein BIC ist immer verpflichtend, wenn die EmpfängerIn IBAN ungleich AT beginnt.

EUR Betrag: 116

Verwendungszweck: RECHNUNG 76591/2

IBAN KontoinhaberIn/AuftraggeberIn: AT341234567890123456

KontoinhaberIn/AuftraggeberIn Name/Firma: MAXIMILIAN MAYR

Unterschrift Zeichnungsberechtigter

UN/CEFCAT Recommendation 14

Defining the equivalent of a physical signatures is an issue for many international trade documents that are used on electronic exchanges

UN/CEFACT Recommendation 14 on Authentication of trade documents

Distinguishes between a digital and an electronic signature:

- Electronic signature*: and process that provides a functional equivalent to a physical signature (think your eBanking application)
- Digital signature*: a specific implementation of an electronic signature using cryptographic methods (think Bitcoin)

Most electronic trade documents use electronic signatures

Example for electronic Signatures: your eBanking application

- You connect with your password to your eBanking application → the bank knows its you
 - You transfer funds and log out
 - The bank keeps a record of the transactions of this session
 - If you later challenge one of the transactions your bank can proof that the transfer was done by you
- The whole process constitutes an electronic signature which is the equivalent of the physical signature

Electronic signatures in CITES permits

Documents:

- ❑ Note on electronic signatures in CITES permits and certificates [SC70 Doc. 39 Annex 1](#)
- ❑ Decision CoP18 [18.125 e\)](#)

Decision CoP18 18.125 e)

- ❑ 18.125 e) i parties should apply UN/CEFACT Recommendation 14 for CITES permits
- ❑ 18.125 e) ii to vi specify certain requirements that an eCITES system must meet (authentication of users, record of audit trails,,...)
- ❑ 18.125 e) iv

*recognize that in **electronic CITES systems that meet the above requirements i) – iv), the electronic equivalent** of a physical signature and seal **may be provided through the authenticated identification of any of the following individuals:** the permit applicant; the official who issued or authorized the permit or certificate; the official who altered the permit or certificate; the issuing authority; and the inspecting official who endorsed the permit or certificate*

A permit issued by a system that meets 18.125 e) requirements is considered to contain an electronic signature.

It is sufficient that the permit contains the information (name, office, location, date) of the signature

Parties start to apply CoP18 18.125 e) also to their paper permits!

Electronic signatures on a paper permit

Switzerland notification to Parties
2019/045 on the Swiss e-Permitting
system:

2 e) in order to integrate the entire
permitting process in an electronic
workflow, Switzerland's permits will
be issued with a **facsimile signature**.



Convention on International Trade in
Endangered Species of Wild Fauna
and Flora

ORIGINAL



1. Certificate no.
19CH000078R

Permit/Certificate

EXPORT

RE-EXPORT

OTHER

2. Valid until

08.02.2020

3. Importer (Name and address) Musterfirma Hauptstrasse 10 80331 München		4. Exporter (Name and address) BLV/diverse Zoo's Schwarzenburgstrasse 155 3003 Bern	
3a. Country of import Germany		4a. Country of export-re-export Switzerland	
5. Special conditions		5a. Purpose T	5. Name, address, national seal and country of issuing Management Authority Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO CITES MA of Switzerland and Liechtenstein Schwarzenburgstrasse 155 3003 Bern/Switzerland
7. Scientific name Alligator mississippiensis	8. Common name American Alligator	10. Appendix II	10a. Source W
9. Description watchstraps		11. Quantity 19	11a. Unit pcs
A			
12. Country of origin United States	Permit number 17US57144C/9	Date 28.09.2017	
12a. Country of last re-export Singapore	Permit number 18SG006416CR	Date 27.06.2018	
7. Scientific name *****	8. Common name *****	10. Appendix *****	10a. Source *****
9. Description *****		11. Quantity *****	11a. Unit *****
B			
12. Country of origin *****	Permit number *****	Date *****	
12a. Country of last re-export *****	Permit number *****	Date *****	
7. Scientific name *****	8. Common name *****	10. Appendix *****	10a. Source *****
9. Description *****		11. Quantity *****	11a. Unit *****
C			
12. Country of origin *****	Permit number *****	Date *****	
12a. Country of last re-export *****	Permit number *****	Date *****	
14. Export endorsement To be stamped by Swiss customs upon export		13. This permit/certificate is issued: Date of issue 09.08.2019 Seal and signature 	
Quantity actually exported			
A			
B			
C			

Conclusion I: Electronic signatures in CITES permits

For electronic CITES permits as per decision CoP18.125

1. Your eCITES system meets requirements of decision CoP18 18.125
 2. Your electronic permit contains the name of the persons that requested, approved or transacted (Customs) the permit, including dates, location, office as required
 3. You send this electronic permit to another MA using a secured protocol which prevents any tempering of the transmission (for example Internet in combination Transport Layer Security (TLS))
- ➔ Your electronic CITES permit contains the electronic equivalent of the physical signatures and seals

For paper CITES permits as per current practice Singapore, Switzerland

1. Your eCITES system meets requirements of decision CoP18 18.125
 2. Your paper permit contains the name of the persons that requested, approved or transacted (Customs) the permit, including dates, location, office as required
 3. Your eCITES system provides an online means to validate (check) the data in the paper permit
- ➔ Your paper permit contains the electronic equivalent of the physical signatures and seals

Thank you!

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