

Open Letter Of Orchestras

We, orchestras and music ensembles, call upon representatives of the European Union and those of its Member States to reject the proposal on the classification of Pernambuco wood in CITES Appendix I at CoP19 in Panama.

For us, such a classification would result in, on the one hand, impossible administrative and financial burdens - and, in some cases, even prevent international travel altogether - , and thus jeopardise the organisation of international tours and master classes which are fundamental to our cultural activities across the world.

On the other hand, it would constitute a direct attack on an essential tool used by string musicians in our orchestras: the bow, part of a world cultural heritage for 3 centuries. A CITES listing in Appendix I would hamper the possibility of free circulation, acquisition, sale and restoration of bows.

Pernambuco is and remains the only wood allowing the manufacture of high-quality bows, essential for learning and practicing the art of music.

We recognise that the regulated and sustainable use of Pernambuco wood (under CITES Appendix II) safeguards conservation opportunities for this species.

Bowmakers from all over the world have come together since the year 2000 within the IPCI (International Pernambuco Conservatory Initiative), with the support of string players, and have made it possible to replant more than 340,000 Pernambuco trees in Brazil to date. The commitment of professionals has made it possible to carry out numerous socio-cultural programs in Brazil and botanical studies on this emblematic species of Brazilian wood.

In the long term, any ban on the reasoned exploitation of Pernambuco would completely eradicate the global craft bow making trade as well as extinguish the sound quality of stringed instruments, as we have known it since Beethoven, Brahms and Schubert. It would even have the effect of further threatening this species; as bow makers are among those who invest the most in the preservation of Pernambuco, such a ban would amount to putting an end to the replanting initiatives for the renewal of the species that they have been developing for more than 20 years.

Hundreds of thousands of musicians, art lovers and spectators would therefore find themselves directly and indirectly adversely impacted by this decision, without the situation of Pernambuco - Brazil's national tree - being in any way improved.

We ask that the European Union and its Member States take a stand against the listing of Pernambuco in CITES Appendix I and that solutions be found to best preserve this precious endemic species while protecting the future of stringed instrument music.