



Commission adopts first EU list of invasive alien species, an important step towards halting biodiversity loss

Brussels, 13 July 2016

Today the European Commission took an important step towards halting biodiversity loss, adopting a list of invasive alien species that require action across the EU. The list contains 37 species that cause damage on a scale that justifies dedicated measures across the Union.

There are currently over 12 000 plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms in the EU that are alien to their natural environment. Some 15 % of these species are invasive, and their numbers are rapidly growing. By crowding out indigenous species, these invasive alien species are one of the biggest causes of biodiversity loss and have major economic consequences.

Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs said: *"Some species of plants and animals can damage property, crops and livelihoods so they need to be kept out if possible and under control if not. This needs to be done at EU level as invasive species don't stop at borders. We are acting on a problem that cannot be ignored as it costs us over € 12 billion every year. This first list, generated with the help of Member States, will be kept under review and work is already ongoing currently to update the list to consider other strong cases."*

Species on the list will now be subject to the restrictions and measures set out in the EU [Regulation on invasive alien species](#). These include restrictions on keeping, importing, selling, breeding and growing. Member States will also be required to take measures for early detection and rapid eradication of these species, and to manage species that are already widely spread in the territory of some Member States. The Regulation also includes special provisions to deal with the specific needs of pet owners, traders, breeders and other stakeholders.

Today's list will be updated regularly to include further species likely to have significant impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems.

The restrictions will start applying 20 days after publication of the list in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Background

The EU Regulation on invasive alien species entered into force on 1 January 2015. At its core is a list of invasive alien species of Union concern (i.e. the list adopted today), which has been drawn up on the basis of strict criteria and scientifically robust risk assessments, and approved by a Committee of Member State representatives.

In total 37 of the species proposed complied with all criteria. Examples include the American bullfrog *Lithobates catesbeianus*, the slider turtle *Trachemys scripta*, *Eastern Baccharis* (*Baccharis halimifolia*, a plant) and the grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis* (all native to North America), as well as the yellow legged hornet *Vespa velutina* from South East Asia, the water hyacinth *Eichornia crassipes* and the coypu *Myocastor coypus* from South America. They also include more discrete yet equally problematic species like the African curly weed *Lagarosiphon major* or the Indian house crow *Corvus splendens*.

Invasive alien species of Union concern will be subject to a number of **restrictions and measures**. The IAS Regulation requires three distinct types of measures to be taken: prevention, early detection and rapid eradication of new invasive species, and management of already established invasive alien species.

For more information:

[Questions & Answers](#) on the EU list of Invasive Alien Species

IAS website: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/index_en.htm

Audio-visual material can be downloaded from tvlink.org