



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

STATEMENT

Brussels, 29 September 2014

Commission welcomes the Council's adoption of the Invasive Alien Species Regulation

Today the EU adopted legislation that will tackle the rapidly growing threat to biodiversity from invasive species. The Regulation is a crucial step towards achieving the EU's 2020 [biodiversity targets](#), while also delivering on a commitment under the Convention on Biological Diversity to establish rules to address the threats posed by these species.

European Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik said: *"This new Regulation fills a long-recognised gap in EU biodiversity protection. It is carefully targeted, focusing on the most serious threats from invasive species. By working together within the EU to tackle a problem estimated to cost EUR 12 billion every year, we are taking a decisive step towards meeting our objective of halting the loss of biodiversity in the EU by 2020."*

The Regulation equips Europe with an effective system that will prevent the introduction and spread of species that can cause significant adverse impacts on the environment, the economy, and human health. The system will be based on a list of species of Union concern, to be drawn up with the Member States on the basis of comprehensive risk assessments and robust scientific evidence. The list will focus on the species that cause the most serious damage. When considering species for listing, their socio-economic benefits, and the concerns of established commercial sectors, will be taken fully into account.

Background

Alien species are plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms that have been transported across ecological barriers such as mountain ranges, or oceans as a result of human intervention, and have become established in an area outside their natural range.

About a quarter of these species are brought into Europe intentionally, but most arrive by accident. There are currently more than 12 000 alien species in the European environment. In their new environment, some spread rapidly and become invasive alien species (IAS), causing significant damage to biodiversity, human health or the economy. Roughly 10-15 % of alien species arriving in Europe eventually become invasive.

These species are a major cause of biodiversity loss, and they can also cause significant damage to human health and the economy. Examples include the American bullfrog, allergy-causing ragweed and musk rats that damage infrastructure.

Invasive alien species are estimated to cost EUR 12 billion annually in health care and animal health costs, crop yield losses, fish stock losses, damage to infrastructure, damage to the navigability of rivers, and damage to protected species.

Contacts for the press:

[Joe Hennon](#) (+32 2 295 35 93)

[Andreja Skerl](#) (+32 2 295 14 45)

For the public: **Europe Direct** by phone **00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11** or by [e-mail](#)