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**EUROPEAN CODE OF CONDUCT
ON PROTECTED AREAS AND IAS**

FIRST DRAFT VERSION

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Protected areas and Invasive alien species

1.2 A global picture of the issue: the GISP Scoping Report

1.3 The role of the LIFE Programme in management of IAS in protected areas in EU

2. CONTEXT

2.1 The International context

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The CBD recognises the importance of IAS impacts and calls on contracting parties to “*prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats and species*”.

The CBD has identified IAS as a major cross-cutting theme and at the 6th CBD-COP in 2002 adopted the decision VI/23 (<http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=7197>) “Alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species” and his annex “Guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species”.

A technical note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/32 5 November 2003, <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-09/information/sbstta-09-inf-32-en.pdf>) was prepared an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) pursuant to paragraph 9 of decision VI/23 which requested to identify and explore from a technical perspective specific gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework of the threats of invasive alien species (IAS) to biological diversity. The technical note address to the protected areas in a specific section on Restoration and invite Parties to actively promote “*positive measures to encourage the use of native plant species in landscaping, countryside management, revegetation, erosion control, protected area management and international assistance programmes*”.

The outcome of the AHTEG was adopted by CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) at its 11th Meeting, in November 2005, as a Recommendation XI/12.

Lastly, at the 10th CBD-COP in Nagoya, 2010, the Decision X/31 “Protected areas” (<http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=12297>) highlights the IAS management as an issue that need greater

attention and noting the role of invasive alien species as a key driver of biodiversity loss invites Parties to consider the role of invasive alien species management as a cost effective tool for the restoration and maintenance of protected areas and the ecosystem services they provide, and thus to include management of invasive alien species in the action plans for implementation of the programme of work on protected areas, taking into account decision X/38, on invasive alien species.

The Ramsar Convention

At the 10th COP of the Ramsar Convention in Korea, 2008, the Resolution X.1 (The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015, http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-documents-resol/main/ramsar/1-31-107_4000_0) highlighted invasive alien species among “challenges that still require urgent attention in order to achieve wetland wise use under the Convention “. One of the strategies In order to achieve this goal involves IAS (Strategy 1.9):

Encourage Contracting Parties to develop a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently and/or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands, especially Ramsar sites, and ensure mutual supportiveness between the national inventory and IUCN’s Global Register on Invasive Species (GRIS); develop guidance and promote procedures and actions to prevent, control or eradicate such species in wetland systems.

Key Result Areas By 2015:

- *All Parties to have a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological characters of wetlands, especially Ramsar sites.*
- *Parties to have identified more comprehensively the problems posed by invasive species in wetland ecosystems within their territories.*
- *National invasive species control and management policies or guidelines in place for wetlands.*
- *Comprehensive and up-to-date global guidance on invasive species, in cooperation with GISP, available to all stakeholders.*
- *Increased collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity on actions to address gaps in international regulations relating to invasive alien species.*

Previously other Resolutions has been adopted by the COP within the framework of the Ramsar Convention:

- Resolution VII.14: Invasive Species and Wetland (VIIth COOP, Costa Rica, 1999)
- Resolution VIII.18: Invasive Species and Wetland (VIIIth COOP, Spain, 2002)

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The Vth IUCN World Parks Congress, in Durban, South Africa, September 2003, considered the need to manage IAS as an "emerging issue", stating that “*management of invasive alien species is a priority issue and must be mainstreamed into all aspects of protected area management. The wider audience of protected area managers, stakeholders and governments needs urgently to be made aware of the serious implications for biodiversity, protected area conservation and livelihoods that result from lack of recognition of the IAS problem and failure to address it. Promoting awareness of solutions to the IAS problem and ensuring capacity to implement effective, ecosystem-based methods must be integrated into protected area management programmes. In addition to the consideration of benefits beyond boundaries, the impacts flowing into both marine and terrestrial protected areas from external sources must be addressed*” (http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/pa/pa_event/wcpa_wpc/).

2.2 The European context

The Birds Directive

Article 11 of the Directive 79/409/EEC (2009/147/EC) on the conservation of wild birds (“The Birds Directive”) relates to the prevention of damage to local flora and fauna by the introduction of bird species which not occur naturally in the wild state in the European territory of the Member States.

The Habitat Directive

The Habitats Directive established the "Natura 2000 Network", the largest ecological network of special protected areas. It comprises special areas of conservation designated also includes special protection areas classified pursuant to the "Birds Directive". The Article 22.b of the Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (“The Habitat Directive”) ask to Member States to “*ensure that the deliberate introduction into the wild of any species which is not native to their territory is regulated so as not to prejudice natural habitats within their natural range or the wild native fauna and flora and, if they consider it necessary, prohibit such introduction*”.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The WFD Directive 2000/60/EC is the main policy document for the management of inland, transitional and coastal waters in the EU. The WFD institute a Register of Protected Areas. The protected areas are identified as those requiring special protection under existing national or European legislation, either to protect their surface water or groundwater, or to conserve habitats or species that directly depend on those waters.

The WFD states that water quality management be centered on river basins. Management of these basins will be achieved through management plans including the assessment of pressures and impacts caused by humans. The WFD does not explicitly require Member States to take account of alien species for the assessment of ecological status of their surface water bodies. Because of this a debate has arisen on the role of alien species in classification of area under the WFD.

The Bern Convention

Article 11.2.b of the Convention of Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (“Bern convention”, 1979) requires Parties to promote the reintroduction of native species and strictly control the introduction of non-native species.

In 2003 the Bern Convention adopted a **European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species** (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/external/cop-09/bern-01-en.pdf>). The strategy identifies priorities and key actions in order to prevent or minimise adverse impact of IAS, and proposes measures required to recover species and natural habitats affected by IAS.

The Barcelona Convention

The Barcelona Convention (1976) has been updated with the adoption of the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (1995), requires Parties to adopt measures aimed promote the reintroduction of native species and strictly control the introduction of non-native species (Article 6.d) and invites them to take all appropriate measures to regulate the intentional or accidental introduction of non-indigenous species (Article 13).

Several documents has been recently adopted within the framework of the Barcelona Convention:

- The Action Plan Concerning Species Introduction and Invasive Species in the Mediterranean Sea (2005) <http://www.rac-spa.org/telechargement/PA/invasive.pdf>
- Guide for Risk Analysis Assessing The impacts of the Introduction of non-indigenous species (2008) http://www.rac-spa.org/dl/LD_ANALYSE.pdf

- Guidelines for controlling the vectors of introduction into the Mediterranean of non-indigenous species and invasive marine species (2008) http://www.rac-spa.org/dl/LD_CONTOLE.pdf

3. AIM OF THE “EUROPEAN CODE OF CONDUCT ON PROTECTED AREAS AND IAS”

The Code aims to draw a set of key actions to be adopted in order to prevent and manage the threat of invasive alien species into protected areas at site, national and regional scale. The Code is addressed to support protected area managers and decision makers in the mainstreaming of the IAS issue into all aspects of protected area management. The Code is also addressed to those (e.g. authorities, politicians and funders) that can contribute to the enforcement of well planned and effective management programs. It also aims at raising awareness on this threat, and at improving the information on this issue.

The Code takes account of existing initiatives and relevant obligations and principles of the Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitat directive), the Directive 79/409/EEC (the Birds Directive), the Bern Convention, the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

This European Code of Conduct on Protected Areas and IAS should be considered as an implementation of the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species and aims to contribute to the ongoing development of the EU strategy on IAS.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 Principle 1: Raise awareness at all levels

- Staff, park managers, politicians, general public, etc.
- Protected areas as focal points of diffusion of knowledge on IAS issue

4.2 Principle 2: Integrate IAS issue into protected area management

- Complex problems, complex solutions: the adaptive management approach
- Enforce well planned and effective management programs
- Legislation and regulatory aspects

4.3 Principle 3: Implement site-based prevention actions as a priority

- Assess protected area goals, values and objectives
- Assess site-specific pathways
- Elaborate and apply code of best practices and regulatory measures

4.4 Principle 4: Develop staff capacities on all relevant aspects of IAS management

- Build awareness about the importance of prevention
- Permanent targeted training of personnel
- Streamline knowledges, experiences, skills and equipment: Mobile Specialized IAS Management Teams

4.5 Principle 5: Set up rapid detection and prompt response framework

- Identify potential invaders (black list, alarm list, watch list)
- Identify sites and habitats that are vulnerable
- Assess risks and setting priorities
- Involve volunteers (general public and stakeholders) in surveillance system (“citizen science”)

4.6 Principle 6: Manage IAS beyond the park boundaries

- Work at the landscape scale
- Involve local communities
- Cooperate with surroundings landowners and institutions

4.7 Principle 7: Network to exchange information on IAS

- Open the drawer: sharing knowledges on a large scale
- Build an easy-to-use web source of consolidated information

4.8 Principle 8: Lobby with Institutions and decision-makers to support stringent policy on IAS

- Development of strategic framework to deal with IAS
- Budget and funding for IAS tackling should be secured and maintained

5. REFERENCES