

# Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



## Standing Committee

### **Recommendation No. 91 (2002) on Invasive Alien Species that threaten biological diversity in Islands and geographically and evolutionary isolated ecosystems**

*(adopted by the Standing Committee on 5 December 2002)*

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, in accordance with Article 14 of the Convention,

Having regard to the aim of the Convention which is notably to ensure the conservation of wild flora and fauna, by giving particular attention to species, including migratory species, which are threatened with extinction and vulnerable;

Recalling that under Article 11, paragraph 2.b of the Convention, each Contracting Party undertakes to strictly control the introduction of non-native species;

Bearing in mind Recommendation No. R (84) 14 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member states on the introduction of non-native species, adopted on 21 June 1984;

Recalling Recommendation No. 57 (1997) on the Introduction of Organisms belonging to Non-Native Species into the Environment, and the use it makes of terms such as “native species” and “introduction”, as well as to the species, subspecies or varieties to which Recommendation 57 refers to;

Recalling Recommendation No. 77 (1999) on the eradication of non-native terrestrial vertebrates;

Recalling that under Article 8.h of the Convention on Biological Diversity, each Party undertakes to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species;

Recalling Decision VI/23 of the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, on Alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species, and the definitions used in that text;

Conscious of the high threat that invasive alien species cause to ecosystems, endemic species, and natural habitats in islands and in geographically or evolutionary isolated ecosystems (referred hereafter to as “islands and isolated ecosystems”);

Desirous that precautions taken against the spread of invasive alien species be implemented with particular attention in islands and isolated ecosystems;

Noting that no conservation efforts are to be devoted to the protection of alien species introduced in recent historic times;

Considering that, in the case of species introduced in ancient historic times, conservation for historic and cultural reasons may be acceptable if recovery of the original ecosystems is no longer feasible, their conservation does not conflict with or preclude the primary aim of conserving and recovering the native biodiversity (impact assessment before conservation);

Noting that for these species an expansion of the range may have negative effects on native species and habitats, and should not be encouraged;

Noting substantial progress on regulation, management and eradication of invasive alien species has been achieved in Europe in the last five years;

Referring to the measures proposed in the Draft “European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species”, (document T-PVS(2002) 8),

Recommends that Contracting Parties:

1. Establish special mechanisms to prohibit intentional introduction of alien species into and between islands and isolated ecosystems, without prior authorisation from a competent authority. A risk analysis and in some cases environmental impact assessment should be carried out as a part of the evaluation process;
2. Take special precautionary measures to avoid unintentional introduction of alien species to islands and isolated ecosystems, in particular through tourism, trade, travel and transport;
3. Assess the need for stricter legislation to prevent unwanted introductions between distinct regions of the same state or islands of the same archipelago;
4. Carry out a detailed inventory of alien species in insular territories, estimating, among other topics, the following:
  - possible role of the alien species on native ecosystems, habitats or species,
  - impact of the alien species on public health or economic activities,
  - potential invasive character of the species with reference from other regions,
  - time and means of arrival,
  - reasons for introduction,
  - distribution and trends,
  - socio-economic and cultural value to people and other human-related aspects;
5. Identify, on the basis of the above information, which invasive alien species are causing severe damage to island native ecosystems, habitats or species, define priority action, and draw-up and implement plans to eradicate or control species of highest concern; promote containment measures for those invasive alien species that cannot be technically eradicated; draw-up a precise plan for eradication of target invasive species; monitor invasive alien species and update inventories;
6. Disseminate information through appropriate networks, and national and regional clearing-house mechanisms; promote capacity building on IAS and sharing of experiences on eradication and prevention;
7. Actively support the use of native species or varieties in horticulture, afforestation, biological control, aquaculture, landscaping environmental management, erosion control, road construction and other cultural applications; consider in particular the use of incentives to increase availability of commercial stocks of native species for such purposes;
8. Collaborate with other states, bilaterally, multilaterally and through the framework of the Convention and other relevant fora, such as the IUCN ISSG islands initiative, on the issue of prevention, control and eradication of invasive alien species in islands and isolated ecosystems; inform regularly the Standing Committee on progress made on the implementation of this recommendation and of recommendations 57 (1997) and 77 (1999); promote regular exchange of information on progress or success of eradication operations;

9. Promote ecological restoration of areas adversely affected by invasive alien species in islands and isolated ecosystems, taking in consideration the need to maintain and restore ecological processes and the complex biological cycles of some species of conservation concern;

10. Promote education and public awareness on the problems that invasive alien species cause to native ecosystems, habitats and species and the need to take precautionary measures and eradication; approach relevant stakeholders in particular, horticultural, forestry, aquaculture, angling and hunter communities to look for their collaboration in the measures to avoid new introductions and in the eradication of invasive alien species; carry out specific education campaigns aimed to schools, relevant target groups and the general public; actively promote and publicise the benefits for biodiversity of preventing, controlling or eradicating IAS;

11. Promote scientific research on invasive alien species and on their role in ecological processes; improve existing databases; carry out long-term monitoring programmes;

Specific recommendations for the Macaronesian Region:

Recommends that the governments of Portugal and Spain:

12. Consider the creation of a specific framework for co-operation on Invasive Alien Species in the Macaronesian region, involving the Regional Governments of Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands;

13. Examine carefully the possibility to continue eradication of rabbits, rats and feral cats from small islands, islets and promote their containment, to avoid their impact on areas of special importance for Macaronesian endemics; examine carefully the need to reinforce actions of control and containment of plant species threatening endemic species listed in Appendix I of the convention or their natural habitats;

Recommends that Spain:

14. Take effective steps towards the eradication of the mouflon (*Ovis ammon*) from Tenerife and the Barbary sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*) from La Palma, given their high negative impact on endemic species listed in Appendix I of the Convention.