

Prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species

2013/0307(COD) - 09/09/2013 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to prevent, minimise and mitigate the adverse impacts of invasive alien species (IAS) on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: it has been estimated that of the over 12 000 alien species that are found in the European environment, 10-15% have reproduced and spread, causing environmental, economic and social damage.

Invasive alien species (IAS) are one of the **major, and growing, causes of biodiversity loss** and species extinction. They can be vectors of diseases or directly cause health problems. They can damage infrastructure and recreational facilities, hamper forestry or cause agricultural losses, to mention but a few. IAS are estimated to cost the Union at least EUR 12 billion per year and damage costs are continuing to rise.

The European Union currently lacks a comprehensive framework to address the threats posed by IAS. With the [2020 Biodiversity Strategy](#), the Union undertook to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020, in line with the international commitments adopted by the parties to the Convention for Biological Diversity in 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: in addition to the baseline option (option 0), which would maintain the status quo, the following options were identified:

- **Option 1:** Enhancing cooperation and supporting voluntary action.
- **Option 2.1:** Basic legislative instrument.
- **Option 2.2:** Basic legislative instrument + permits for release of IAS of Member State.
- **Option 2.3:** Basic legislative instrument + a strict general ban on the release of alien species, unless found to be safe.
- **Option 2.4: Basic legislative instrument + an obligation for the rapid eradication of newly establishing IAS of Union concern:** with this option, when it comes to rapid response, Member States would not have a choice, but rather an obligation to eradicate quickly any newly establishing IAS of Union concern and share information. Derogations are possible if approved by the Commission.

Option 2.4 was retained and informs the present proposal.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 192(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

CONTENT: this proposal aims to tackle the issues highlighted above by establishing a **framework for action** to prevent, minimise and mitigate the adverse impacts of IAS on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Furthermore, it will seek to limit social and economic damage.

In practical terms, the proposal seeks to attain these objectives through measures addressing : (i) the **intentional introduction of IAS** into the Union and their intentional release into the environment; (ii) the unintentional introduction and release of IAS, the need to set up an **early warning and rapid response system**; (ii) the need to **manage the IAS** spread throughout the Union.

The proposal:

- provides the tools for prioritising IAS of Union concern to enable Union resources to be prioritised on the basis of risk and scientific evidence;
- establishes the measures necessary to prevent the introduction into the Union and the introduction or release into the environment of IAS;
- sets out the tools to ensure that IAS of Union concern can be detected early in the environment and at the Union borders and describes the measures that are triggered when these IAS are detected;
- establishes the obligations necessary to tackle IAS of Union concern that are already present in the Union or new ones that have eluded the prevention measures and early detection measures and managed to spread widely.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: the budgetary implication on the credit appropriations of an administrative nature is estimated at EUR 560 000 for the first seven years (2015-2021).

DELEGATED ACTS: the proposal contains provisions empowering the Commission to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).