

PRESS RELEASE
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Council adopts rules on invasive alien species

The Council today adopted¹ a regulation on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species ([PE-CONS 70/14, 13266/14 ADD 1](#)).

"With the formal adoption of the regulation, an agreement has been reached today which is of great significance to the whole of Europe", said Gian Luca Galletti, Italian Minister for the Environment. "The adoption procedure, which was concluded under the Italian presidency thanks to the cooperation of all member states, represents an important step in affirming the value of biodiversity in Europe, which is a key factor for the development of our economy."

The regulation lays down rules to prevent, minimise and mitigate the adverse impacts of the introduction and spread, both intentional and unintentional, of invasive alien species on biodiversity and the related ecosystem services, as well as other adverse impact on human health or the economy.

To this end, the Commission will adopt an open list of invasive alien species of Union concern, which will be regularly updated and reviewed at least every six years. Species on this list may not be intentionally brought into the territory of the EU, nor may they be kept, bred, transported to, from or within the Union, placed on the market, grown or released into the environment.

The new regulation also addresses invasive alien species of regional concern and of member state concern. It allows member states to identify, from their national list of invasive alien species of member state concern, species native or non-native to the Union that require enhanced regional cooperation. Such regional cooperation will be facilitated by the Commission.

The regulation also establishes a surveillance system for early detection and measures for rapid eradication. Furthermore, member states must provide for penalties if the regulation is not correctly applied.

The regulation also provides for a system of authorisations and permits to allow certain activities based on invasive alien species.

The Commission will assess the application of this regulation by 1 June 2021.

Adoption of the regulation follows an agreement reached with the European Parliament at first reading.

¹ At a meeting of the General Affairs Council, without discussion. The German, Bulgarian and Romanian delegations abstained from voting, while the Hungarian delegation voted against.

Background

Invasive alien species are species that are initially moved through human action outside their natural range across ecological barriers, and then survive, reproduce and spread and have been found to threaten or adversely impact upon biodiversity or the related ecosystem services of their new location. They may also have an adverse impact on human health or the economy. It has been estimated that, of the 12 000 or so alien species that are found in the European environment, between 10 % and 15 % have reproduced and spread, having environmental, economic and social impacts. They are estimated to cost the EU at least EUR 12 billion per year.
