

Citizens' summary

Tackling invasive alien species – EU proposal

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

When non-native animals and plants are brought into a new environment – one where they are not normally found – they can cause serious damage. Whether accidental or deliberate, introducing alien species can result in:

- major **biodiversity** loss – sometimes even the extinction of native species. This problem particularly affects EU territories outside Europe, which are important biodiversity hotspots;
- transmission of **disease** to humans
- economic damage, for example **crop losses and infrastructure** damage costing billions of euros.

The problem is growing. New invasive alien species are coming into Europe with increased international trade and travel. Climate change may make matters even worse.

WHAT'S THE EU PROPOSING?

New measures to prevent new invasive alien species from entering the EU and to deal more effectively with the ones that are already established here.

WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

Public authorities – less money spent on limiting, repairing and compensating for the damage done by invasive alien species

Small businesses – less damage to infrastructure and environment for farms, animal breeders, fisheries, forestry firms and the tourism and leisure industry

Public – better protection from health hazards, damage to property and the environment.

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

Uniform rules across the EU are essential because:

- invasive alien species do not respect national borders
- current national measures are too fragmented to be effective – one country may take action on a particular one species while its neighbour does not.

WHAT EXACTLY WILL CHANGE?

- There will be a complete ban on importing, selling, growing, using, releasing etc. the most problematic invasive alien species ('priority species')
- To enforce the ban, EU member countries will have to organise border checks, and introduce a surveillance system to detect banned species. They will also need to put in place measures to detect those species that come into Europe accidentally.
- When EU countries detect the presence of a banned species in the EU, they will have to take immediate action to stop the species from spreading. Everyone's help will be needed to help spot the species and notify their presence to the authorities
- For banned species that are already, or become, widely spread, EU countries will need to put in place measures to keep them under control.

WHEN IS THE PROPOSAL LIKELY TO COME INTO EFFECT?

- The proposal is likely to come into effect in 2016.