



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
 DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
 ENVIRONMENT  
 Directorate B – Natural Capital  
**ENV.B.2 - Biodiversity**

**2<sup>ND</sup> MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC FORUM ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES**

**4 & 5 APRIL 2016**

**BRUSSELS**

**SUMMARY MINUTES**

The second meeting of the Scientific Forum on Invasive Alien Species was held in Brussels on 4 and 5 April 2016. The following Member States participated in the meeting: AT, BE, CZ, ES, FI, IE, LU, NL, RO, SE and UK. The European Commission (COM) was represented by Unit ENV.B2. The meeting was chaired by the Head of Unit ENV.B.2. A full list of meeting participants is provided in Annex 1.

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

COM welcomed the delegates to the meeting. The proposed agenda was adopted without comments and it was agreed to follow the background document that had been circulated beforehand. There were no items added under "any other business".

**2. RISK ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

A discussion was held on the basis of section 1 of the abovementioned background document. There was general agreement that the material prepared was going in the right direction in order to provide guidance in the preparation of risk assessments. It was recommended that, while information on management measures and costs could be useful to inform risk management, these should be kept separate from the risk assessment per se, so as to keep the two processes – risk assessment and risk management – separate.

Reacting to questions from the members, COM explained that the idea is to develop a tool that can support the preparation of risk assessments compliant with the Regulation as some members of the IAS Committee had indicated that a template might be useful in guiding the work of the MS. The exact status that this tool will finally take remains to be defined.

It was agreed that further consideration should be given to: 1) risk management – good practices on reporting risk management information; 2) the scoring of impacts; 3) how to define presence, establishment and widely-spread.

As a result of the discussion, the Commission will revise and recirculate the background material on the risk assessment methodology for further comments and elaboration from the Scientific Forum members.

Follow-up:

The members of the Scientific Forum are invited to provide their feedback on the new version by 13 May 2016 by email to ENV-IAS@ec.europa.eu.

### **3. WORKING METHODS OF THE SCIENTIFIC FORUM**

The discussion on the working methods of the Scientific Forum was based on section 2 of the abovementioned background document. The UK also made a presentation on this topic. On the basis of the discussion the Commission will revise the material on working methods, integrating the comments and ideas discussed during the meeting. The new version would be given back to the members of the Scientific Forum for further comments and elaboration.

The discussion then focused on the process to manage the influx of submissions: the group proposed that a process with one set deadline a year for the submissions of species for listing would facilitate the work of the Scientific Forum, rather than having to tackle submissions continuously and unexpectedly. There was also agreement that deadlines for comments should be revised to enable the members to properly perform their evaluations. Finally, ideas were discussed to share the work between different scientists to lighten the burden on each single member.

The possibility that each member would freely choose which submissions to review was put forward. For the submission he/she did not directly review, each member of the Scientific Forum would have to rely on the review of other members and on the cover note prepared by the author to document how the various comments were taken into account. Nevertheless, the Commission explained that each member of the Scientific Forum will be called upon to express an opinion on each submission put to the Scientific Forum. After the Scientific Forum has expressed an opinion on every submission, this will be considered the Scientific Forum position and deemed to represent the views of every member of the group.

One additional option that was put forward was to organise the revision of a submission through a rapporteur, whose task would be to integrate the comments of the members that volunteered to review the submission, solve possible contradictions and support the author in the revision process. This option would facilitate the work of the author/reviser but would involve more substantial engagement from the rapporteur and could delay the process.

It was also proposed to collect the feedback from the Scientific Forum by sharing the risk assessments through Wikimedia. All comments could then be inputted on the same version. The Commission agreed to investigate this proposal.

Finally the issue of confidentiality of the feedback from the members of the Scientific Forum was discussed. The members agreed that the opinions and comments of the individual should be kept within the Scientific Forum and not divulged publicly. Only the final position of the Forum should be made public.

Follow-up:

The Commission will send a document on the working method of the Scientific Forum to the members of the Scientific Forum who are invited to provide their feedback by 13 May 2016 by email to ENV-IAS@ec.europa.eu. An updated version taking into

consideration this feedback will be discussed at the next meeting of the Scientific Forum and the Committee on IAS.

#### 4. ONLINE MATERIAL

COM presented an overview of available online material, in support of the implementation work. This overview is available on CIRCABC as well and COM invited the members of the Scientific Forum to provide additional links to COM at any time.

#### 5. ASSESSMENT OF RAS FOR SPECIES UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR INCLUSION ON THE UNION LIST

Due to the absence of many members and to the fact that many members had not managed to complete their analysis of the risk assessments due to time constraints, it was agreed that the Scientific Forum would not deliver a final opinion on the risk assessments discussed. However, a preliminary exchange of views took place on the risk assessments of following species. The requests for advice by the Committee were also discussed.

Scientific name	English name
<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	Alligator weed
<i>Elodea nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's waterweed
<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>	Giant hogweed
<i>Homarus americanus</i>	American lobster
<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i>	Large-leaved lupin
<i>Microstegium vimineum</i>	Japanese stiltgrass
<i>Myriophyllum heterophyllum</i>	Broadleaf watermilfoil
<i>Nyctereutes procyonoides</i>	Raccoon dog
<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	Muskrat
<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>	Crimson fountaingrass

The Scientific Forum agreed to request a cover note from the submitting Member States, summarising how the comments were processed, and explaining why certain comments were not processed.

There was a discussion on the difference between *Elodea nuttallii* and *Elodea canadensis*. Currently, *Elodea nuttallii* is the problem. Although it is very widely spread in certain MS, listing could still prevent it being introduced in areas where it is not yet present. There is a risk of intentional mislabelling if *Elodea nuttallii* is banned, but *Elodea canadensis* is not. However, it was considered that the two species can easily be distinguished.

Giant hogweed is still regularly introduced by beekeepers. Listing the species would stop this practice. Several examples of successful control of giant hogweed were explained, e.g. in LU.

For *Lupinus polyphyllus*, the Forum requested to exactly describe the scope of the risk assessment: are hybrids included? Which hybrids are included?

On *Microstegium vimineum*, birdseed is an important pathway, which could be addressed. The spread through shoes and clothes would need a more generic approach.

*Myriophyllum heterophyllum* is a species that is often mislabelled.

On *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, *Ondatra zibethicus* and *Pennisetum setaceum*, there was some doubt whether the comments had been well processed. For *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, several references were not found in the reference list, there is more evidence on the negative impact of the species than what is found in the RA, the impact on wild animals needs to be better documented. For *Ondatra zibethicus*, NL is spending 30 million EUR/year on its control, FI managed to reduce its population from 600,000 to 6000 specimens, the species has huge impact on threatened mussel populations in LU and AT, in IE the species is kept as a pet, with cases of escapes, the species not only threatens ES and PT, but also IE and UK.

On the question on lookalikes, the Forum considered that if the lookalike is not invasive, it would be a suitable alternative. In general therefore, non-invasive lookalikes should not be listed.

On the species for which a revised risk assessment was not yet available, only the requests for advice by the Committee were discussed.

Scientific name	English name
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box elder
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Common milkweed
<i>Gunnera manicata</i>	Giant rhubarb
<i>Gunnera tinctoria</i>	Chilean rhubarb
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Indian balsam
<i>Lepomis gibbosus</i>	Pumpkinseed (fish)
<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	Egyptian goose
<i>Ameiurus melas</i>	Black bullhead
<i>Bison bison</i>	American bison

On the two *Gunnera*-species, only *Gunnera tinctoria* is invasive, although some hybrids are also invasive. Those hybrids could be included in the risk assessment.

*Acer negundo* is very shadow tolerant and can seriously disturb forest ecosystems.

*Asclepias syriaca* is being explored as a biomass crop, and the impact of this new pathway should be considered carefully.

*Impatiens glandulifera* now also starts invading inside forests in LU. It is still sold in trade for beekeepers (seed mixtures).

For *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, the resolution 6.4 of AEWA (Bonn Convention, 6<sup>th</sup> session of the meeting of the parties, 9-14 November 2015, Bonn, Germany) "*urges the Range States to increase and coordinate their efforts to contain, control and as much as possible eradicate these populations*" of the species.

It was agreed to provide 2 additional weeks for MS to further update updated risk assessments, and for MS to propose updated risk assessments that had not yet been re-

proposed. The risk assessments revised in time would be submitted to the Scientific Forum in order for it to deliver its opinion on them at its next meeting on 21 June (provisional date).

Finally, a prioritisation scheme for selecting plant species to be prioritised for being risk assessed was presented by BE. The Forum considered this a useful tool and recommended to look into expanding it to cover all species. Nevertheless, it was stressed that this tool would be useful to prioritise resource use, but it should not be the tool that identifies the potentially problematic species: other tools, such as horizon scanning would be more appropriate for this.

On the list of RAs under preparation, NL added that it is preparing RAs on *Spartina pectinata* (prairie cordgrass), *Micropterus dolomieu* (small mouth bass) and *Castor canadensis* (American beaver).

## Annex 1

### List of participants

<b>MS</b>	<b>Member State authority &amp; Individual Representative</b>
<b>AT</b>	Federal Environment Agency
<b>BE</b>	Belgian Biodiversity Platform - Belgian Science Policy Office
<b>CZ</b>	Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic
<b>ES</b>	Centro Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)
<b>FI</b>	Natural Resources Institute Finland
<b>IE</b>	The National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Art, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
<b>LU</b>	Ministère du Développement durable et des Infrastructures - Administration de la nature et des forêts
<b>NL</b>	The State of the Netherlands, Ministerie van Economische Zaken - Directie Natuur en Biodiversiteit
<b>RO</b>	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
<b>SE</b>	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
<b>UK</b>	GB Non-Native Species Secretariat

### List of participants – European Commission

- DG Environment, Unit B.2