

EU Policy Update EU 2014.03 Prevention and management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species –Update

Updated: December 2014

Summary of Directive

On 22 October 2014, the European Union adopted a Regulation on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) COM (2013)620.¹ The regulation aims to coordinate the efforts of Member States to combat the threats posed by Invasive Alien Species (IAS). The European Commission states that the legislative package will protect native biodiversity as well as managing the wider threats presented by IAS.

The Regulation focuses on a **List of 50 IAS** of the greatest concern across the EU. The exact species on this list have yet to be confirmed. Once identified, these IAS will be controlled using three key strategies:

- **Prevention** of introduction into Member States,
- **Early warning** and rapid response upon detection of IAS populations,
- **Management** of existing IAS populations, and damage limitation.

Preventative measures contained within the regulation will ban the import and movement of IAS. Exemption permits may be provided for research and ex-situ conservation. The Regulation also allows emergency measures to be taken if a non-listed IAS

¹ European Union, European Union, **Regulation (Eu) No 1143/2014 Of The European Parliament And Of The Council**, 22 October 2014 [accessed 17 November 2014]

becomes an acute issue in a Member State. Appropriate measures controlling movement and imports of IAS must be implemented within 12 months of the regulation being introduced.

Early warning systems will require each Member State to devise its own monitoring strategy and report IAS data at the EU level. Member States have 18 months from the enactment of the legislation to establish a comprehensive monitoring system.

Management of existing IAS measures will require Member States to develop a surveillance strategy to monitor the existing populations and gauge the success of eradication programmes. Member States must also take measures to eradicate emerging populations within three months of their discovery. These management measures must be introduced within 12 months.

The list of which IAS are to be managed by the regulation is currently under consultation. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has developed a framework for the identification of key IAS.² The Framework contains a risk assessment for 80 candidate IAS for the final list of 50. For each species an assessment of the distribution across Member States was also undertaken.³

Background Context to Legislation

There are currently over 12,000 non-native species present across Europe, over 1,500 of which are defined as IAS. They are rapidly growing in number and are causing damage worth at least €12.5 billion per year in control/eradication, hazards to human health, damage to infrastructure and loss in agricultural output.⁴

These wide reaching consequences have caused many Member States to take independent action on IAS. The European Commission has stated that in order to

²IUCN. UK Centre for Ecology & hydrology, **Framework for the identification of invasive alien species of EU concern**, October 2014 [accessed 07 November 2014]

³ Ibid, Pg 159

⁴ European Commission, **Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and Council on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species**, 2013/0307 (COD) [accessed 28 October 2013]

effectively control the issue the EU requires a unified approach as IAS have no consideration for geopolitical borders.⁵

The incursion of non-native species can have a detrimental impact on ecosystems by undermining native species. This can reduce the biodiversity and resilience of the ecosystem. When IAS arrive, they establish themselves by out-competing native species which suffer habitat reduction and population losses. Protecting against the damage and destruction caused by IAS incursion is therefore a crucial step in ensuring biodiversity is maintained.

The EU has existing targets on biodiversity and the current 2020 Biodiversity Strategy contains key goals including the halting of biodiversity loss.⁶ The Strategy contains specific measures to control or eradicate key invasive species by 2020. The strategy also aims to prevent further introduction of IAS.

Relevance to Wales

The Great British Non-Native Species secretariat was established in 2005 and is a combination of English, Scottish and Welsh Government efforts to tackle issues of invasive species. It provides species based, geographically relevant data and risk assessments. Within Wales there is the Wales Invasive Non Native Species group (WINNS) which has the remit to:

- Provide a forum for policy development,
- Coordinate IAS research,
- Raise awareness of IAS issues,
- Assess IAS impact,
- Implement monitoring schemes and the,
- Prioritise and prevent new IAS incursion.

The rate of IAS establishment in the UK has steadily increased since 1800. A study by DEFRA in 2012 reported that there are currently 280 IAS in the UK. It found an average of 1.4 additional IAS were established

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ European Commission, **EU 2020 Biodiversity –Strategy; Towards implementation** [accessed 07 November 2014]

in the UK every year between 2000 and 2010.⁷

In Wales, WINNS has identified the presence of 111 IAS; 11 of which are currently being eradicated and 31 established IAS that are being controlled. There are also 15 high alert species which are imminently expected in Wales.⁸

DEFRA has also commissioned a report by the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience to assess the economic impact of IAS. In Wales it is estimated that the market costs incurred by IAS are £125 million per year.⁹ In addition to these, there are indirect non-market costs such as the loss in ecosystem resilience which are estimated at £7 billion per year in Wales.¹⁰

The Welsh Government recently consulted on the Nature Recovery Plan (NRP).¹¹ The consultation period closed on 3 December 2014. The Nature Recovery Plan aims to develop a strategy for the protection and restoration of Welsh Biodiversity and Ecosystems. The NRP consultation identifies the control of IAS as a key method of improving the resilience of biodiversity and ecosystems.

UK Government position

The UK Government is signatory to the international convention on biodiversity; this convention has targets which align with EU targets to halt biodiversity loss by 2020.¹² The UK Government commented on the Regulation before it was passed.¹³ In its comment, it supported the aims of the EU legislation but demanded greater clarity in a number of areas including:

- the selection of 50 species, how they will be

⁷ NERC Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, **Non Native Species in great Britain: Establishment, detection and reporting to inform effective decision making**. [accessed 17 November 2014]

⁸ Welsh Government, **Welsh Government paper for Environment and Sustainability committee on Invasive Alien Species; Annex A**, 13 June 2103 [accessed 17 November 2014]

⁹ DEFRA Commissioned report from CABl, **The Economic cost of Invasive Non-Native Species on Great Britain**, 2010 [accessed 17 November 2014]

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Welsh Government, **Consultation on the Nature Recovery Plan for Wales**, 10 September 2014 [accessed 17 November 2014]

¹² **International Convention on Biodiversity; Aichi targets**. 29 October 2010 [accessed 17 November]

¹³ House of Commons, **European Scrutiny Committee Report; session 17**, 24 October 2013, 2014 [accessed 17 November 2014]

chosen and whether 50 is an appropriate number

- alien species which are native to other Member States within Europe.

The UK Government has also prioritised IAS in the Infrastructure Bill¹⁴. This provides measures on an England and Wales basis to ensure that IAS can be effectively controlled and that clear procedures are available for their eradication.¹⁵

Welsh Government position

The Welsh Government stated that it supported the UK position on the EU Regulations. As the regulations are now European law, the Welsh Government is now responsible for implementing the Regulation here.¹⁶

Implementation across Member States

Each Member State is obliged to adhere to the Regulation's deadlines and implement its measures within 12 months. The European legislation will be reviewed in 2020 and a deadline for publication of the review has been set for June 2021.¹⁷

¹⁴ UK Government, **Infrastructure Bill**, 5 June 2014 [accessed 14 November 2014]

¹⁵ Welsh Government, **Infrastructure Bill; LCM Progress** [accessed 14 November 2014]

¹⁶ Welsh Government, **Welsh Government Response to the Report of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, Inquiry into Invasive Alien Species**, 11 February 2014 [accessed 17 November 2014]

¹⁷ European Commission, **Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and Council on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species**, 2013/0307 (COD) [accessed 28 October 2013]

Further information

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See Also

The Nature Recovery Plan Blog Post

EU Policy update: Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species – April 2014

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