

Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 215 (2022) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 2nd December 2022, on alien pathogens and pathogens spread by Invasive Alien Species.

The Standing Committee to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention.

Having regard to the aims of the Convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and its natural habitats;

Recalling that Article 11, paragraph 2.b, of the Convention requires parties to strictly control the introduction of non-native species;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 99 (2003) on the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species, which refers to the need to prevent disease incursions at source, and on arrival, through border control and quarantine measures;

Recalling its Recommendations addressing pathways for the introduction of Invasive Alien Species, which led to the development of several codes of conduct, most of which including measures to prevent pathogens being moved by alien species through the relevant pathways either directly or indirectly, as appropriate, as shown in:

- Recommendation No. 160 (2012) on European Code of Conduct for Botanic Gardens on Invasive Alien Species,
- Recommendation No. 161 (2012) on the European Code of Conduct on Zoological Gardens and Aquaria and Invasive Alien Species,
- Recommendation No. 166 (2013) on the European Code of Conduct on Hunting and IAS,
- Recommendation No. 170 (2014) on the European Code of Conduct on Recreational Fishing and Invasive Alien Species,
- Recommendation No. 193 (2017) on the European Code of Conduct for Invasive Alien Trees,
- Recommendation No. 194 (2017) on the European Code of Conduct on International Travel and Invasive Alien Species;

Recalling the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 with its 20 headline Aichi targets for 2020, adopted at COP 10 of the CBD and in particular Target 9 devoted to Invasive Alien Species (IAS): “By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritised, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment”, and welcoming the future post-2020 global biodiversity framework and its foreseen target on invasive alien species, expected to be adopted at CBD COP 15;

Recalling its Recommendations focusing on alien pathogens affecting native herpetofauna, such as Recommendation No. 176 (2015) on the prevention and control of the *Batrachochytrium*

salamandrivorans chytrid fungus and the Recommendation No. 197 (2017) on biosafety measures for the prevention of the spread of amphibian and reptile species diseases;

Recalling the Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species;

Recalling the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 aiming, inter alia, at managing established Invasive Alien Species and decreasing the number of Red List species they threaten by 50%;

Conscious that invasive alien species are assessed as one of the five main direct drivers of biodiversity loss in the IPBES [Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#), approved by the IPBES Plenary at its 7th session in May 2019 in Paris, France (IPBES-7);

Acknowledging that the introduction of alien species that may in themselves cause disease or may be vectors for transmitting pathogens may contribute substantially to the spread of emerging infectious diseases (EIDs), which represent a major threat not only to humans, but also to biodiversity and ecosystem services;

Noting that to date, the attention paid so far to the impact on biodiversity caused by alien pathogens and by pathogens spread by IAS seems has largely focused on the impact on human health, cropping systems and livestock production, and that the spread of those alien pathogens affecting only wildlife (wild animals and plants) has not yet received adequate attention despite the magnitude of their known and potential effects on native and endangered species, ecosystems, and ecosystem services;

Recalling the need to address the main gaps in knowledge, science, policy and legislation which may have an impact on the conservation objectives set by the Bern Convention;

Noting that the capacity to effectively protect wildlife from the threat currently posed by alien pathogens and pathogens spread by IAS, is likely to be limited by the incomplete knowledge and the very fragmented and dynamic policy and legislation framework on the issue, and that the development of interdisciplinary capacity, expertise and coordination to identify and manage threats is seen as critical to address the discussed knowledge and policy gaps;

Referring to Report on Alien Pathogens and Pathogens Spread by Invasive Alien Species in Europe [\[document T-PVS/Inf\(2022\)40\]](#) and the discussion held at the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee;

Recommends that Contracting Parties:

1. Identify all concerned actors, including but not limited to experts on invasive alien species (IAS) and emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) and authorities competent for dealing specifically with wildlife pathogens and relevant pathways.
2. Improve knowledge on alien pathogens and pathogens spread by IAS.
3. Analyse existing measures, policy and legislation to assess gaps, constraints and barriers which prevent effective management of alien pathogens and pathogens spread by IAS affecting wildlife.
4. Prioritise the management of introduction pathways by assessing the risk of invasion by alien pathogens and pathogens spread by IAS in both risk assessments (and relevant management annex) and pathway action plans.
5. Increase awareness on the impact of wildlife pathogens among policy and decision makers, wildlife managers, scientists, and citizens.