

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

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RECOMMENDATION No. R (84) 14

### OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES CONCERNING THE INTRODUCTION OF NON-NATIVE SPECIES

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 June 1984  
at the 374th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members ;

Having regard to the resolutions of the European Ministerial Conferences on the Environment ;

Having regard to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats of 19 September 1979 and in particular to Article 11.2.b thereof which enjoins strict control of the introduction of non-native species ;

Defining "introduction" as the release of a non-native species into the natural environment, from which it was hitherto absent ;

Considering that non-native species are introduced into the natural environment *inter alia* for economic reasons, for hunting and fishing, ornament and attractiveness, biological pest control or accidentally ;

Noting that a diversity of indigenous wildlife is essential to the maintenance of the biological balance of ecosystems ;

Believing that many introductions have aggravated natural imbalances, especially in island systems, and that non-native species may sooner or later cause the destruction of natural ecosystems, indigenous animal and plant species and even the economy ;

Considering that the risks and consequences of introducing a non-native species are frequently incalculable and unforeseeable, even if meticulous research has been carried out, since the species introduced :

— displays in many instances great environmental adaptability and may therefore spread from the biotope to which it was hoped to confine it ;

— may spread rapidly because limiting factors (predators, competition, etc.) are often absent or very few in number ; it may thus become an ecological and economic pest capable of causing the disappearance of one or more local species or of an entire ecosystem, including all the intermediate levels ;

— may transmit diseases to indigenous populations ;

— may alter the genetic make-up of populations of a species and give rise to hybridisation ;

Convinced therefore of the need to control and regulate the introduction of non-native species in Europe,

Recommends that the governments of the member states :

1. prohibit the introduction of non-native species into the natural environment ;
2. authorise certain exceptions to the prohibition on condition that they :
  - have a study carried out—preferably by a research establishment responsible for nature conservation—to evaluate the probable consequences of such introduction for wildlife and ecosystems ;
  - submit such studies for an opinion to the European Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the final decision resting with the governments concerned ;
3. take the necessary steps to prevent as far as possible the accidental introduction of non-native species ;
4. inform governments of neighbouring countries concerned of introduction schemes or accidental introductions.