



Strasbourg, 24 August 2022

T-PVS(2022)17

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

42nd meeting

Strasbourg, 28 November - 2 December 2022

**RECOMMENDATION ON
THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF
INVASIVE ALIEN TREE SPECIES AS A NATURE-
BASED SOLUTION TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE**

- Draft -

*Document prepared by
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention*



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. XXX (2022) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 2 December 2022, on Risks associated with the use of invasive alien tree species as a Nature-based Solution to mitigate climate change.

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;

Noting that Invasive Alien Species is one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide, as reported by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, in its 2019 Global Assessment Report,

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

Recalling the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Global Programme 2013-2016, adopted by the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2012, which aimed at halting biodiversity loss and applying nature-based solutions to conserve biodiversity,

Recalling Recommendation No. 193 (2017) on the European Code of Conduct for Invasive Alien Trees,

Recalling the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 which recognises the importance of nature-based solutions, such as protecting and restoring wetlands, peatlands and coastal ecosystems, or sustainably managing marine areas, forests, grasslands and agricultural soils, to be essential for emission reduction and climate adaptation,

Recalling the European Green Deal, which aims at being climate-neutral by 2050,

Conscious that invasive alien species are assessed as one of the five 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),

Conscious that that tree planting can help balancing anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, and that alien trees and well-managed planted forests of alien tree species can provide opportunities for adaptation to climate change and global change,

Conscious of the risks associated with the usage of invasive alien tree species as a Nature-based Solution to mitigate climate change,

Referring to the Position paper on the risks associated with the use of invasive alien tree species as a Nature-based Solution to mitigate climate change. [document [T-PVS/Inf\(2022\)39](#)];

Recommends that Contracting Parties:

1. Ensure transparency, access to information, participation, and the respecting of rights in all tree planting initiatives;
2. Prioritise conservation and protection of remaining natural forests, old-growth forest, and other types of wooded and tree-less habitats, such as wetlands, peatlands, grasslands, for the long term and climate change adaptation;
3. Protect existing forest and adopt adequate preventive measures to analyse and reduce the risk of negative impact from biotic and abiotic risks, including fire risks;
4. Restore degraded natural forest ecosystems, avoiding tree planting in natural non-forested habitats, such as wetlands, peatlands, grasslands, and prioritise areas that improve conservation value;
5. Be aware of, and adopt, whenever possible, the Ten Golden Rules - supported by scientists from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (RBG Kew) and Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) - for reforestation to optimize carbon sequestration, biodiversity recovery and livelihood benefits;
6. Apply the precautionary principle and rigorous pre-entry screening or risk assessment for all new alien trees, in particular when these species do not have a documented history of planting with limited risk of escaping from plantation sites, while favour those trees species that are risk assessed in the area where they are to be planted;
7. Be aware of the documented existence of a time lag between first alien tree introduction and invasive behaviours as well as possible range-shift driven by anthropogenic climate-change;
8. Apply the precautionary principle and rigorous biodiversity safeguards to all large-scale planting tree projects, and forest restoration initiatives - including those labelled as Nature-based Solutions and under the Bonn Challenge;
9. Promote the use of native and threatened tree species in reforestation/afforestation/restoration initiatives and highlight the risks of planting invasive alien tree species in areas rich of native/endemic tree biodiversity;
10. Take into account these key principles when designing incentives, subsidies, and planning to mainstream the adaptation of forest, urban forest, and forestry to climate change.