

NGO Position Paper on Invasive Alien Species

This paper presents the position of the NGOs gathered to participate on the 4th Intergovernmental Biodiversity in Europe Conference, 22-24 February, 2006, hosted by the Croatian Government.

The CBD has identified Invasive Alien Species as a major cross-cutting theme and in 2002 the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision VI/23 “*Alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats and species*” and the annexed Guiding Principles that may be considered as the basis for actions on IAS. This issue has also been addressed by other Conventions and on Pan-European level in the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity.

In the Resolutions it reads: “*By 2008, the pan European Strategy on Invasive and Alien Species developed under the Bern Convention, fully compatible with the Guiding Principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity, will be implemented by at least half of the countries of the pan European region through their respective Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans*”.

NGOs recognize that:

- The spreading of IAS is causing serious threat to biodiversity and human health. (e.g. *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* causing allergic reactions).
- The ever accelerating and increasing transport (e.g. tourism and trade) is inevitably contributing to the quick and wide spread of IAS.
- Climate change causes increased migration of species and also poses a selection force. Species with narrower tolerance for change in environmental conditions may be replaced more easily by IAS.
- IAS spread across borders and require international cooperation.

Therefore NGOs welcome the topic of IAS being put on the agenda of this meeting, and NGOs request the following:

IAS strategies

European States should prioritize preparation of **national strategies on IAS** and incorporate these in their Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

Governments should establish **intersectoral coordination bodies** – involving relevant stakeholders - to develop and implement the commitments.

Relevant expert **NGO groups should be part of the preparation process** and their expertise and practical local knowledge should be used, as well as their potential for disseminating information on IAS to the local public. NGOs offer their capacities for this work.

Annual budgets for human and institutional capacity for the practical implementation of IAS strategies should be increased.

States should **report on actions** taken at the next Pan-European meeting (Serbia, 2007) in the Environment for Europe process, making this topic a key theme for international cooperation at that meeting.

Comprehensive European Policy

The European Union should spearhead the development of a **Comprehensive European IAS policy**, which should be part of the EU strategy for halting biodiversity loss by 2010. NGOs would welcome an EU Directive or other **legal instrument** to address the growing problems of IAS. This would also be an incentive for countries outside the EU to pass binding legislation to prevent spread, and draw up an integrated surveillance and control program.

The EU should further mobilize resources in order to enable the European Environmental Agency for **preparing a database on IASs**.

Existing **regional and national IAS databases** should be published immediately to widen stakeholder knowledge and participation in the prevention, eradication and control.

Serious penalties for introduction of invasive alien species should be developed and applied.

Communication

European States should prepare effective **communication strategies** in order to inform the wider public on the threats caused by the IAS. NGOs are committed to offer their communications tools and channels for helping such communication activities.

The topic of IAS should be incorporated in the **national education curricula**.

Invasive species are becoming more numerous and wide spread. We need action now!