

**Article 8h Alien species**

86. What is the relative priority afforded to implementation of this Article and the associated decisions by your country?							
a) High		b) Medium		X		c) Low	
87. To what extent are the resources available adequate for meeting the obligations and recommendations made?							
a) Good		b) Adequate		c) Limiting	X	Severely limiting	
Further comments on relative priority and on availability of resources							
<p>In general, most Belgian legislative tools are related to plant health regulation (crop protection). Few measures explicitly consider the issue of alien invasive species as a threat for natural ecosystems, even if coastal and freshwater habitats begin to be invaded by numerous exotic species.</p> <p>In the national strategy (publication foreseen for 2002), alien species will be specifically addressed and integrated in plans for the concerned sectors.</p> <p>For Flanders, the resolution of the Flemish Executive concerning the introduction of non-indigenous species (31.07.1993) inhibits any intentional release of animal species at places where escapes into nature may be expected. The Nature Conservation Decree (21.10.1997) aims at an enhancement of the native fauna and flora, and the protection of plant and animal species and their habitat communities. Together with the 'stand-still' principle, this also assumes the counteraction of the invasion of alien species.</p> <p>For Wallonia, the resolution of the Walloon Government regulating the release of non indigenous animal species in the wild and the introduction of these species in game reserves (29.11.1990) foresees a.o. a permit system and a compulsory assessment of the impacts of the non indigenous species on indigenous fauna and nature, and an evaluation of the risks that the species would spread to adjacent areas. No introductions may harm the local fauna and flora. For the moment, the applicability of this resolution is uncertain due to the lack of a list of indigenous species in Wallonia.</p>							

88. Has your country identified alien species introduced?	
a) no	
b) only major species of concern	
c) only new or recent introductions	Br. / Wa.
d) a comprehensive system tracks new introductions	
e) a comprehensive system tracks all known introductions	Fl.
89. Has your country assessed the risks posed to ecosystems, habitats or species by the introduction of these alien species?	
a) no	
b) only some alien species of concern have been assessed	X
c) most alien species have been assessed	
90. Has your country undertaken measures to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species?	

a) no measures	
b) some measures in place	X
c) potential measures under review	
d) comprehensive measures in place	

**Decision IV/1 Report and recommendations of the third meeting of SBSTTA**

91. Is your country collaborating in the development of projects at national, regional, sub-regional and international levels to address the issue of alien species?	
a) little or no action	
b) discussion on potential projects under way	Wa.
c) active development of new projects	Fl.
92. Does your national strategy and action plan address the issue of alien species?	
a) no	
b) yes - limited extent	X
c) yes - significant extent	

**Decision V/8. Alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species**

93. Is your country applying the interim guiding principles for prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species in the context of activities aimed at implementing article 8(h) of the Convention, and in the various sectors?	
a) no	
b) under consideration	X
c) limited implementation in some sectors	
d) extensive implementation in some sectors	
e) extensive implementation in most sectors	
94. Has your country submitted case-studies to the Executive Secretary focusing on thematic assessments?	
a) no	X
b) in preparation	
c) yes	
95. Has your country submitted written comments on the interim guiding principles to the Executive Secretary?	
a) no	X
b) yes	
96. Has your country given priority to the development and implementation of alien invasive species strategies and action plans?	
a) no	X
b) yes	

97. In dealing with the issue of invasive species, has your country developed or involved itself in mechanisms for international co-operation, including the exchange of best practices?	
a) no	
b) transboundary co-operation	X
c) regional co-operation	
d) multilateral co-operation	X
98. Is your country giving priority attention to geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystems in its work on alien invasive species?	
a) no	X
b) yes	
99. Is your country using the ecosystem approach and precautionary and bio-geographical approaches as appropriate in its work on alien invasive species?	
a) no	X
b) yes	
100. Has your country developed effective education, training and public-awareness measures concerning the issue of alien species?	
a) no	
b) some initiatives	X
c) many initiatives	
101. Is your country making available the information which it holds on alien species through the CHM?	
a) no	
b) some information	X
c) all available information	
d) information available through other channels (please specify)	X
102. Is your country providing support to enable the Global Invasive Species Programme to fulfil the tasks outlined in the decision and its annexes?	
a) no	
b) limited support	X
c) substantial support	

**Further comments on implementation of this Article**

<p>(88) Flanders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flora. A database is being developed for higher plants in Flanders. It will contain all recently introduced species (after '72). For the established plants, there is an extensive list of all species. This list also contains species introduced before 1972. There is active eradication of the cherry (<i>Prunus serotina</i>) in some parts of Flanders, leading to good results <i>i.a.</i> in the Kempen.</li> <li>- Breeding birds. There is a program in which rare, colonial and introduced breeding bird species are being monitored. Among them, alien breeding bird species as the white fronted goose (<i>Anser erythropus</i>), the Canada goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>), the barnacle goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>), the Nile goose (<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>), the mandarin duck (<i>Aix galericulata</i>), the ring-</li> </ul>
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necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) and the monk parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*) are being monitored. This program is called the 'Bijzondere Broedvogels Vlaanderen Project' (Flemish Special Breeding Bird Project).

- Mammals. The Asiatic ground squirrel (*Eutamias sibiricus*) and the coypu (*Myocastor coypus*) are studied to investigate the necessity of monitoring. There is active eradication for the muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) because this species is known to provoke serious harm to waterways.

- Fish. Through the monitoring and inventory of fish occurring in the Flemish inland waters, alien fish species are also being monitored.

(88) Wallonia - Alien species are identified through inventories of species for some groups (e.g. mosses and liverworts, vascular plants, crustaceans, birds, mammals). The Nature, Forest and Woods Research Centre is currently monitoring invasive species in the Walloon watercourses.

(88) An example of the identification of introduced alien species is provided by the National Botanic Garden of Belgium which has documented the spread of some alien invasive species. Special attention has been given to some bryophytes (e.g. *Lophocolea semiteres*) and to invasive C4 grasses (e.g. *Setaria macrocarpa*, *S. verticilliformis*, *Panicum dichotomiflorum*) in the weed communities of maize-fields in Flanders.

(90) The Belgian law of 20 January 1999 on the protection of the marine environment in marine areas under Belgian jurisdiction (MMM law) forbids the intentional introduction of non indigenous species in the marine environment without special license (Art. 11, §1). This provision mirrors those included in international instruments like the CBD.

The unintentional introduction of non indigenous species via ballast water of ships can be prohibited by royal decree (Art. 11, §2). Due to the specific and international character of the issue of non indigenous species in ballast water of ships, however the new Belgian framework law did not specifically touch this issue, and this activity is to be regulated by an implementation decree. For the protection of the marine biota, measures can be taken (by royal decree and after scientific consultation) for the extermination of non indigenous nuisance species (Art. 11, §3).

The new law also prohibits the intentional introduction of genetically modified organisms into marine areas (Art. 11, §4).

(91) The Walloon Region finances the activities of the Secretariat of the Bern Convention, regarding alien species.

(91) GISP made a call for action to be part of the extended collaborative information exchange system on invasive alien species. The Belgian National Focal Point has submitted the form and will act as the national focal point for this programme.

Moreover, the Belgian NFP, in co-operation with the Flemish Region (AMINAL), is currently working on the establishment of a contact group on alien species that will operate under the authority of the Steering Committee 'Biodiversity Convention'. This contact group will address, among others, the issues of inventory, monitoring, reporting and legislation.

There are a few individual initiatives from scientists, who take part in international research programmes dealing with invasive organisms.

Belgium, through the Belgian Biodiversity Platform, participated to the Montpellier EPBRS meeting on alien species (2000).

(92) The alien species issue (invasion mechanism understanding, impact assessment methods, etc.) is part of the research priorities of the Second

Plan for a Sustainable Research Programme (2000-2004) of the Federal Office for Scientific, Technical and Cultural Affairs, both on terrestrial ecosystems (one project: 'invasion and biodiversity in grasslands and field borders') and on marine and freshwater ecosystems. URL: [www.belspo.be](http://www.belspo.be)

(92) Flanders - Action 117 under the theme 'Loss of biodiversity' in the Environmental Policy and Nature Development Plan 1997-2001 (MINA-Plan 2) implies the elaboration of a framework to consider the desirability of (re-)introduction of species and to avoid unwanted (re-)introductions. This also implies taking into account the genetic diversity within species in case of (re-)introduction and considering the consequences of the use of GMOs on local biodiversity.

The Institute for Forestry and Game Management is currently developing a documented database of the non-native fish species of Flanders, which may be used in the future as a reference system for information on the occurrence and the ecology of non indigenous fish species in Flanders.

(101 b) A page with information on alien species in Belgium is under preparation and will be available soon on the B CHM website.

(101 d) A brochure on Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) was published by the Brussels Capital Region.

The Flemish Region published a brochure directed to the general public on *Prunus serotina*, *Eutamias sibiricus*, *Rana catasbeiana*, *Trachemys scripta elegans*, *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*, and rhododendrons at the end of 2000. Articles *inter alia* on alien amphibian species were published in periodicals of nature organisations.

A symposium on the Belgian fauna, with emphasis on alien species, is planned on 14 December 2001. The publication of proceedings is foreseen.