

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU REGULATION ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: A GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS

**EU 4 Green: Support the implementation of the Green Agenda for the
Western Balkans**

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Guidance Document for the Implementation of the IAS-Regulation

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
EASIN	European Alien Species Information Network
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Environment Agency
EIONET	European Environment Information and Observation Network of the EEA
EPA MNE	Environmental Protection Agency Montenegro
EPPO	European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization
EU	European Union
GBIF	Global Biodiversity Information Facility
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IAS-Regulation	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
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JRC	Joint Research Centre, a research institute by the EC
KEPA	Kosovo Agency for Environmental Protection
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Albania
MERS	Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development of Montenegro
MES	Macedonian Ecological Society
MESPI	Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure of Kosovo
MoEPP	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of North Macedonia
MPVS	Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry of Montenegro
MTE	Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Albania
NAPA	National Agency of Protected Areas, Albania
NFA	National Forestry Agency, Albania
NOTSYS	IAS Notification System by the JRC/EASIN

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NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics, a classification system based on regions by the EU
WB6	Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo ¹ , Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia)

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and it is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo* declaration of independence.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are among the most rapidly growing threats to biodiversity, ecosystem services, human health, and economic activities worldwide. Within the European Union (EU), this challenge is addressed through “Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species” (known as the IAS-Regulation). The Regulation focuses on prevention, early detection and rapid eradication, and the management of widely spread IAS in the EU.

The first part of the document provides a structured overview of the IAS-Regulation, its key provisions, and associated reporting obligations and a comprehensive collection of links to other sources to guide successful implementation efforts for the Western Balkan region. The IAS-Regulation places strong emphasis on prevention and early action, recognising that timely intervention is far more cost-effective than long-term management of established species. Tools such as the European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN) and the Notification System (NOTSYS) play a central role in surveillance, information exchange, and coordinated responses among Member States.

The second part of the document presents the outcomes of EU4Greens regional workshop with representatives from all WB6, with participants from governmental bodies, national parks, and academia held in Tirana, Albania, in June 2025. The workshop introduced the IAS-Regulation with talks from international experts and assessed the current status of IAS-related legislation, data availability, institutional capacity, and resource effectiveness in the WB6. The findings reveal that while awareness of IAS issues is increasing, implementation efforts remain at an early stage. Common challenges include limited financial and human resources, insufficient data, unclear institutional responsibilities, and low political prioritisation of IAS prevention and management.

Based on these findings, the document identifies key gaps and proposes targeted recommendations to support the implementation of IAS-related policies in the WB6. Central to these recommendations is the development of a clear and realistic roadmap that defines responsibilities, strengthens surveillance and official controls, improves data management, identify and prioritises pathways of introduction, and fosters regional cooperation. By aligning national efforts with the principles and mechanisms of the EU IAS-Regulation, WB6 economies can enhance their preparedness, reduce future ecological and economic costs, and contribute to broader biodiversity conservation and biosecurity objectives.

2. INTRODUCTION

Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are a major threat to nature, nature's contributions to people, and good quality of life. Alien species are being introduced by human activities to all regions and biomes of the world at unprecedented rates. Some become invasive, causing negative and in some cases irreversible impacts on nature, including loss of uniqueness of biological communities, contributing to the unparalleled degree of deterioration of the biosphere upon which humanity depends². The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) thematic assessment on IAS and their control² concluded that IAS and their impacts are increasing rapidly and are predicted to continue rising in the future, but their negative impacts can be prevented and mitigated through effective management.

In recognition of the threats and following a gap analysis of existing environmental legislation in the European Union, it was concluded that a specific and dedicated legal instrument to protect biodiversity and related ecosystem services is needed alongside existing regulations in the animal and plant health sectors. In partial fulfilment of the obligations under Article 8(h)³ of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)⁴, to which the EU is a signatory since 1994, and Aichi-Target 9⁵, 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" (IAS-Regulation)⁶ entered into force on the 1st of January 2015. The aim of the IAS-Regulation is to "prevent, minimise and mitigate the adverse impact on biodiversity of the introduction and spread within the Union, both intentional and unintentional, of invasive alien species" (Article 1).

Further and more recent policy developments, e.g. within the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020⁷ and 2030⁸, contain targets and commitments to reduce the negative impacts from IAS. The full implementation of the IAS-Regulation is seen as instrumental to achieve these targets, focusing on the prevention of new introductions, a functional early warning and rapid response mechanism, and the management of established and wide-spread IAS, specifically in protected habitats and areas.

² IPBES (2023). Summary for Policymakers of the Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Roy, H. E., Pauchard, A., Stoett, P., Renard Truong, T., Bacher, S., Galil, B. S., Hulme, P. E., Ikeda, T., Sankaran, K. V., McGeoch, M. A., Meyerson, L. A., Nuñez, M. A., Ordonez, A., Rahlao, S. J., Schwindt, E., Seebens, H., Sheppard, A. W., and Vandvik, V. (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7430692>

³ Article 8(h): Each Contracting Party shall, as far as possible and as appropriate prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species. <https://www.cbd.int/>

⁴ Convention on Biological Diversity (1992). *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619. <https://www.cbd.int/>

⁵ Aichi-Target 9: By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/1143/oj/eng>

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/biodiversity-strategy-for-2020.html>

⁸ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en

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As the combined drivers of biodiversity loss continue to exert pressure on species and ecosystems, the facilitation of the establishment of Invasive Alien Species with increasing land-use and climate change will become more and more important in considering potentially IAS in the EU.

The following chapters provide a short overview of the structure and content of the IAS-Regulation including the associated reporting obligations for Member States. It then identifies key gaps and proposes targeted recommendations to support the implementation of IAS-related policies in the WB6. Central to these recommendations is the development of a clear and realistic roadmap that defines responsibilities, strengthens surveillance and official controls, improves data management, identifies and prioritises pathways of introduction, and fosters regional cooperation.

3. THE EU REGULATION ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

3.1. Document Structure

After the general provisions, the following chapters are structured according to the “classical” 3-step invasion model into three chapters: i) Prevention (Articles 7-13), ii) Early detection and rapid eradication (Articles 14-18), and iii) Management of IAS that are widely spread (Articles 19-20) (Figure 1). Note that the chapters on Article 1 and 6 of the IAS-Regulation are omitted due to their lack of relevance in this context. After outlining the IAS-Regulation, the document focuses on IAS activities in each WB6 economy and provides recommendations for the implementation of the IAS-Regulation in the WB6.

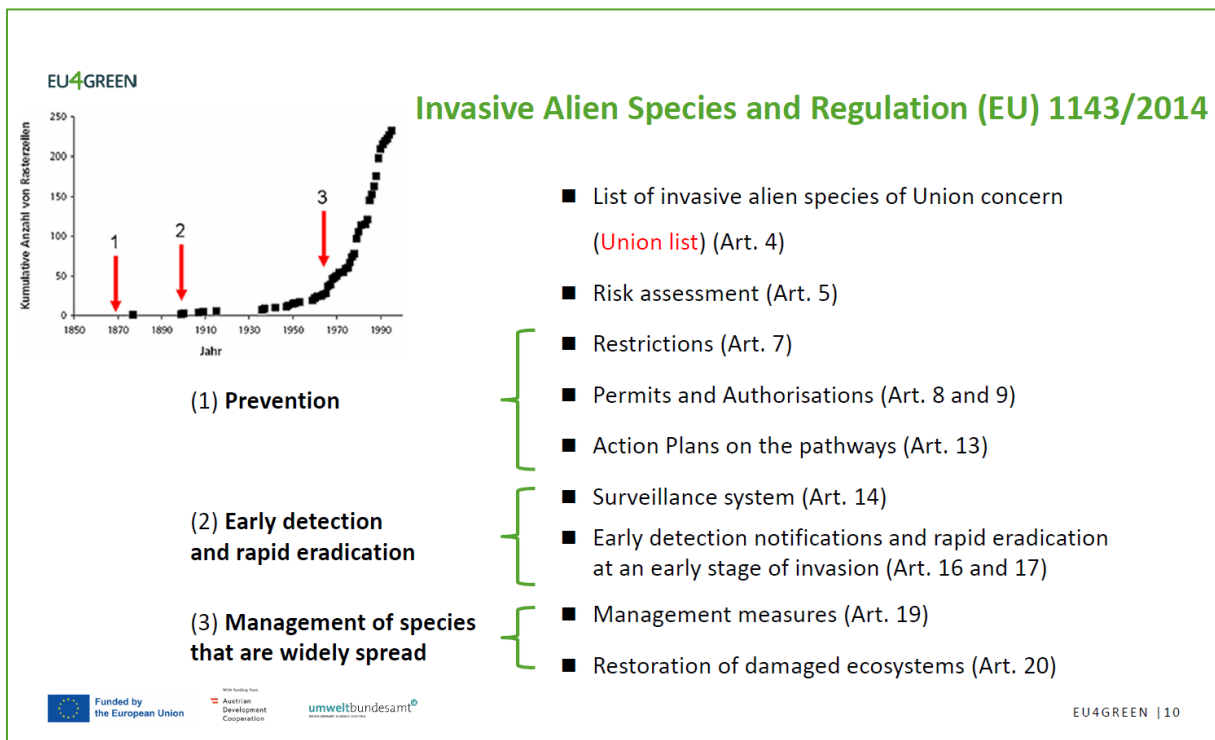


Figure 1: Overview of the structure of this document.

3.2. CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

3.2.1. Scope (Article 2)

The IAS-Regulation does not apply to alien species that are regulated elsewhere, specifically excluded are species:

- changing their natural range without human intervention, in response to changing ecological conditions and climate change;

- genetically modified organisms as defined in point 2 of Article 2 of Directive 2001/18/EC;
- pathogens that cause animal diseases;
- harmful organisms listed in Annex I or Annex II to Directive 2000/29/EC;
- species listed in Annex IV to Regulation (EC) No 708/2007 when used in aquaculture.

3.2.2. Definitions (Article 3)

The IAS-Regulation provides definitions to specific terms, e.g.:

- **'alien species'** means any live specimen of a species, subspecies or lower taxon of animals, plants, fungi or micro-organisms introduced outside its natural range; it includes any part, gametes, seeds, eggs or propagules of such species, as well as any hybrids, varieties or breeds that might survive and subsequently reproduce;
- **'invasive alien species'** means an alien species whose introduction or spread has been found to threaten or adversely impact upon biodiversity and related ecosystem services;
- **'invasive alien species of Union concern'** means an invasive alien species whose adverse impact has been deemed such as to require concerted action at Union level pursuant to Article 4(3) (see chapter 3.2.3);
- **'invasive alien species of Member State concern'** means an invasive alien species other than an invasive alien species of Union concern, for which a Member State considers on the basis of scientific evidence that the adverse impact of its release and spread, even where not fully ascertained, is of significance for its territory, or part of it, and requires action at the level of that Member State;
- **'pathways'** means the routes and mechanisms of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species;
- **'widely spread'** means an invasive alien species whose population has gone beyond the naturalization stage, in which a population is self-sustaining, and has spread to colonize a large part of the potential range where it can survive and reproduce.

However, some relevant terms (e.g. 'widely spread', 'ex-situ conservation', 'early detection', 'compelling public interest') are not well-defined and consequently interpreted and used by Member States in different ways. In the future, some clarifications and instructions from the European Commission (EC) on how to apply these terms would be beneficial. Some of these issues and the consequences are discussed further below.

3.2.3. List of Invasive Alien Species of Union concern (Article 4)

The IAS-Regulation only applies to the species listed as "IAS of Union concern". As of November 2025, this list contains 114 species (Table 1). To be eligible for listing, a species must meet a set of criteria, which are indicated in Article 4(3), e.g. being alien to the territory of the EU excluding the outermost regions, which are French Guiana, Guadeloupe,

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Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion Island and Saint-Martin (France), Azores, Madeira (Portugal) and the Canary Islands (Spain) (and for which other rules apply). This means that if a species is native to some part of the EU, it is not eligible for listing. It also has to be demonstrated by a risk assessment carried out pursuant to Article 5(1) (see chapter 3.2.4) that concerted action at Union level is required to prevent their introduction, establishment or spread. The risk assessments of the listed species, but also of those species that have been considered, but in the end were not listed, are publicly available (see chapter 4.3).

Proposals for adding a species to the list can be made by the EC and every Member State by submitting a valid risk assessment (according to Article 5; see chapter 3.2.4) that subsequently will be evaluated by the Scientific Forum (Article 28; see chapter 3.7.5) and – if approved (Table 2) – subjected to a vote by the Member State Committee (Article 27; see chapter 3.7.4). Before the vote, there are additional consultations included by stakeholders, other Directorate Generals (DGs) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Table 1: Development of the list of Invasive Alien Species of Union concern since the first adoption.

Implementing Regulation (EU)		Number of species
2016/1141	First list	37
2017/1263	1st update	12
2019/1262	2nd update	17
2022/1203	3rd update	22
2025/1422	4th update	26
TOTAL		114

Table 2: Species already accepted as fit-for-purpose for future listing by the Scientific Forum.

Scientific name	Common name
<i>Amyntas spp.</i>	Asian jumping worms
<i>Hydrocharis laevigata</i>	Amazon frogbit
<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	African boxthorn
<i>Potamocorbula amurensis</i>	Amur river clam
<i>Procambarus acutus</i>	White river crayfish
<i>Vallisneria australis</i>	Australian eelgrass

3.2.4. Risk assessment (Article 5)

Before a species can be listed as of Union concern, a risk assessment has to be carried out (Table 3 & Table 4). The elements of such a risk assessment are laid out in Article 5 and in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2018/968 of 30 April 2018 (see chapter 4.3).

Table 3: Species for which risk assessments are currently under review by the Scientific Forum.

Scientific name	Common name
<i>Araujia sericifera</i>	Cruel climber
<i>Cortaderia selloana</i>	Pampas grass
<i>Cyprinella lutrensis</i>	Red shiner
<i>Gracilaria salicornia</i>	A red alga
<i>Lissachatina fulica</i>	Giant East African snail
<i>Misgurnus dabryanus</i>	Dabry's weatherfish
<i>Pelodiscus sinensis</i>	Chinese softshell turtle
<i>Solidago canadensis</i> & <i>Solidago gigantea</i>	Canadian & Giant goldenrod
<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>	American red squirrel

Table 4: Species for which risk assessments are currently in preparation.

Scientific name	Common name
<i>Acacia decurrens</i>	Early green wattle
<i>Cancer irroratus</i>	Atlantic rock crab
<i>Elaphe schrenckii</i>	Amur rat snake
<i>Macrobrachium nipponense</i>	Oriental river prawn
<i>Nylanderia fulva</i>	Tawny crazy ant
<i>Procambarus alleni</i>	Florida crayfish
<i>Sagittaria platyphylla</i>	Broad-leaf arrowhead
<i>Vespa soror</i>	Southern giant hornet

3.3. CHAPTER II PREVENTION

3.3.1. Restrictions (Article 7)

This Article describes which restrictions apply to IAS of Union concern. These shall not be intentionally:

- (a) brought into the territory of the Union, including transit under customs supervision;
- (b) kept, including in contained holding;
- (c) bred, including in contained holding;
- (d) transported to, from or within the Union, except for the transportation of species to facilities in the context of eradication;
- (e) placed on the market;
- (f) used or exchanged;
- (g) permitted to reproduce, grown or cultivated, including in contained holding; or
- (h) released into the environment.

3.3.2. Permits (Article 8)

Competent authorities of Member States can issue permits to derogate from the restrictions of Art. 7 for specific purposes:

- to carry out research
- for ex-situ conservation
- for medicinal use

Several conditions apply (e.g. a continuous surveillance system and a contingency plan covering possible escape or spread of the species), and inspections are carried out by their competent authorities to ensure that the establishments comply with the conditions set out in those permits issued. Permits have to be made publicly available on the internet, including information on the species, the number or volume of specimens, the purpose and the CN-code (see Article 15).

3.3.3. Authorisations (Article 9)

In the case of “compelling public interest, including those of a social or economic nature”, Member States may issue permits allowing establishments to carry out other activities than those set out in Article 8, but only after authorisation by the EC. For example, Implementing Regulation 2025/1422, the fourth update of the list of species of Union concern, point (7)

refers to the American mink: “The species *Neogale vison* (Schreber, 1777) is farmed for fur production in several Member States. Insofar as Member States may have to prepare applications for the authorisations referred to in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014, the inclusion of that species on the Union list should be deferred in order to give Member States time to prepare such applications before the listing of the species takes effect.”

3.3.4. Emergency measures (Article 10)

If a species not listed is found “on the basis of preliminary scientific evidence, to be likely to meet the criteria set out in Article 4(3)”, the Member State “may immediately take emergency measures, consisting of any of the restrictions set out in Article 7(1)”. So far, no such cases occurred in the EU.

3.3.5. Invasive Alien Species of regional concern and species native to the Union (Article 11)

Member States can identify species that require enhanced regional cooperation and request the EC to facilitate cooperation and coordination among those Member States. So far, no such cases have been applied for in the EU. Considering the close geographic relationships between the WB6 economies, this Article holds some potential to cooperate in prevention or management of IAS causing similar problems.

3.3.6. Invasive Alien Species of Member State concern (Article 12)

Member States can establish a national list of IAS of Member State concern and apply, in their territory, measures such as those provided for in Articles 7, 8, 13 to 17, 19 and 20, as appropriate. As of November 2025, 12 Member States have such national lists, encompassing between 3 and more than 200 species.

3.3.7. Action plans on the pathways of Invasive Alien Species (Article 13)

Member States shall identify those pathways of unintentional introduction and spread that require priority action due to the species volume or the potential damage (“priority pathways”) within 18 months of the adoption of a new list of species of Union concern. For those pathways, a single action plan or a package of several action plans including specific measures shall be created and implemented within three years of the adoption of a new list of species of Union concern. The measures shall be described and include voluntary actions and codes of good practice. They shall raise awareness and minimise contamination of commodities, vehicles, machinery and equipment. Action plans shall be reviewed and sent to the EC at least every six years.

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For the prioritization and also for the reporting purposes (Article 24; see chapter 3.8), the CBD classification of pathways shall be used (Figure 2).

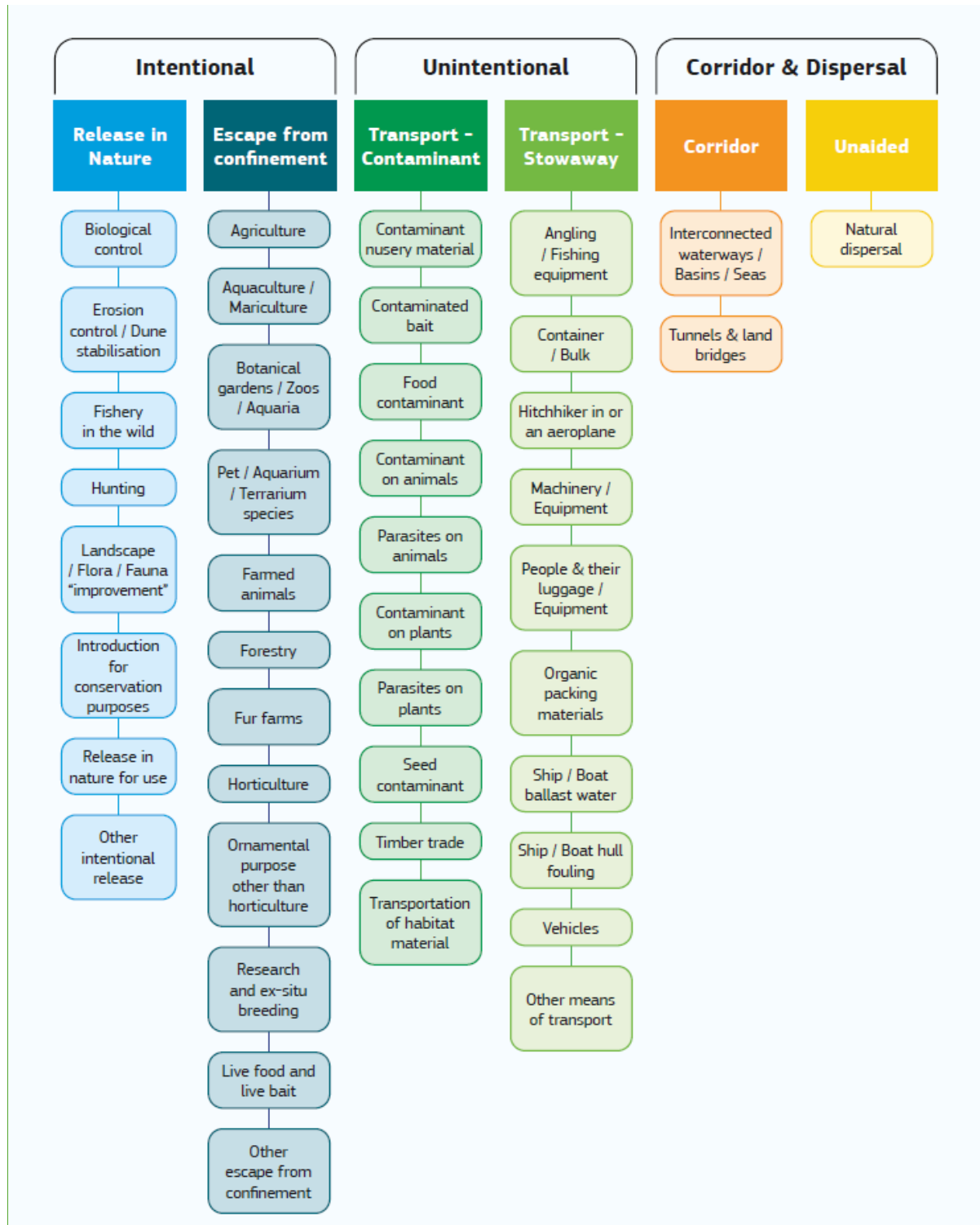


Figure 2: Overview of the CBD classification of pathways of introduction of IAS. ©European Commission⁹

3.4. CHAPTER III EARLY DETECTION AND RAPID ERADICATION

3.4.1. Surveillance system (Article 14)

A dynamic system for surveillance must be set up or integrated into existing systems in such a way that previously absent species are discovered as early as possible (“early warning system”). The system is also intended to document the distribution of species in the territory and their increase or decrease.

This means that – contrary to for example the Habitat or Bird Directives or the Water Framework Directive – no dedicated IAS monitoring is foreseen in the IAS-Regulation. For the surveillance system, it is recommended to make use of existing national monitoring systems (although these usually have several limitations) and use new technologies (e.g. eDNA, AI) and Citizen Science platforms (e.g. iNaturalist¹⁰).

3.4.2. Official controls (Article 15)

Member States shall have in place fully functioning structures to carry out the official controls necessary to prevent the intentional introduction of IAS of Union concern into the EU. Those official controls shall apply to the categories of goods falling within the Combined Nomenclature codes¹¹. Competent authorities shall carry out the appropriate risk-based controls to the goods verifying that (a) they are not on the Union list; or (b) they are covered by a valid permit as referred to in Article 8 (see chapter 3.3.2).

Every Implementing Regulation amending the list of IAS of Union concern includes an Annex with the relevant Combined Nomenclature (CN) codes of the species for “live specimens” and for “parts that can reproduce”. Examples for the Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) and the African clawed frog (*Xenopus laevis*) see Table 5.

Table 5: Examples of Combined Nomenclature (CN) codes for IAS of Union concern.

Species	CN codes for live specimens	CN codes for parts that can reproduce
<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i> Thunb.	ex 0602 90 50	ex 1209 99 99 (seeds)
<i>Xenopus laevis</i> (Daudin, 1802)	ex 0106 90 00	–

In the example in Table 5, “ex 0602 90 50” is the CN code for “Other outdoor plants” and “ex 1209 99 99 (seeds)” is the CN code for “Other seeds”. “ex 0106 90 00” is the CN code for („Other live animals“). For a full list of all CN codes see the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/1926 of 22 September 2025 amending Annex I to Council Regulation

⁹ European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Guidance for interpretation of the CBD categories of pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species*, Publications Office, 2020, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/6172>

¹⁰ <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

¹¹ https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/customs-4/calculation-customs-duties/customs-tariff/combined-nomenclature_en

(EC) No 2658/87 on the tariff and statistical nomenclature and on the Common Customs Tariff:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32025R1926>

Such structures are usually available for the plant and animal health obligations, and can be used, although the jurisdiction might need legal amendments.

If official controls detect IAS of Union concern during their inspections, this has to be reported and notified using the NOTSYS-tool¹² provided by JRC. This information is available and searchable under “Notifications Search – Official Control Detections (Art 15)”. Filters per Member State, species and time period can be applied. Between 2019 and 2025, 21 such cases have been notified, most of them from the Netherlands, followed by Germany.

3.4.3. Early detection notifications (Article 16)

Without delay, Member States shall notify the EC, in writing, of the early detection of the introduction or presence of IAS of Union concern and inform the other Member States. For these notifications, JRC provides the online tool NOTSYS¹². It is the “official tool for EU Member States to notify the EC and inform the other Member States as required by Reg. 1143/2014 on invasive alien species (IAS). In particular, the tool has been designed to facilitate a timely comprehensive notification of new detections of IAS of Union concern, related eradication measures and their effectiveness (Art. 16 & 17), official control detections (Art. 15), and derogations from the obligation of rapid eradication under Art. 18”¹². The notification is done by authorized officials appointed by the Member State Competent Authority.

This information is found under “Notifications Search – Early Detections (Art 16)”. Filters per Member State, species and time period can be applied. Between 2016 and 2025, 432 cases have been notified, most of them from Germany (117), Poland (47), Denmark (44) and Luxembourg (40). It is apparent that Member States understand and use this obligation in different ways.

3.4.4. Rapid eradication at an early stage of invasion (Article 17) and Derogations from the obligation of rapid eradication (Article 18)

After early detection and within three months after the transmission of the early detection notification via NOTSYS¹², Member States shall apply eradication measures, notify the EC of those measures and inform the other Member States, also using NOTSYS. If eradication is not feasible (e.g. technically or financially), containment or management measures shall be put in place.

¹² <https://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/notsys>

Recently, IUCN launched an European IAS Rapid Response Fund¹³, co-funded by the EU. Rapid eradication measures are funded with 10,000-50,000 Euro and need to be executed and (ideally) finished within a year. Eligible projects must target the early stage of invasion by alien plant or animal species with high potential to spread and cause significant impacts to biodiversity and ecosystem services, i.e. the call is open for not-listed IAS as well.

3.5. CHAPTER IV: MANAGEMENT OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES THAT ARE WIDELY SPREAD

As explained above, the decision if an IAS falls under the “Early Warning” or the “Management” Articles, hence the question if a species is considered “widely spread” or not, falls to the competent authority of the Member State. Without any clear specification or standard, it is likely that Member States interpret and consequently act differently with regard to the management of these species.

3.5.1. Management measures (Article 19)

For IAS of Union concern considered “widely spread” in the territory of the Member State, effective management measures shall be in place to minimise their impact on biodiversity, the related ecosystem services, and, where applicable, on human health or the economy.

Management measures shall be proportionate to the impact on the environment and appropriate to the specific circumstances of the Member State, i.e. shall be prioritised based on the risk evaluation and their cost effectiveness. They shall avoid non-target effects and spare avoidable pain, distress or suffering when animals are targeted.

3.5.2. Restoration of the damaged ecosystems (Article 20)

Member States shall “carry out appropriate restoration measures to assist the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed by invasive alien species of Union concern unless a cost-benefit analysis demonstrates, on the basis of the available data and with reasonable certainty, that the costs of those measures will be high and disproportionate to the benefits of restoration.” There is an overlap with the EU Nature Restoration Law¹⁴, but the details of potential synergies need to be explored in the future.

3.6. CHAPTER V: HORIZONTAL PROVISIONS

Articles 21 to 23 refer to “Costs recovery” (the polluter pays principle), “Cooperation and coordination” (similar to Article 11) and “More stringent national rules” but have received not much attention so far by Member States.

¹³ <https://www.iucnsos.org/initiative/european-invasive-alien-species-rapid-response-fund/>

¹⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024R1991&qid=1722240349976>

3.7. CHAPTER VI FINAL PROVISIONS

3.7.1. Reporting and review (Article 24)

See chapter 3.8.

3.7.2. Information support system (Article 25)

Data support mechanisms shall be established by the EC to facilitate the application of the IAS-Regulation. This is partly executed by EASIN (see chapter 4.5) and by the European Environment Agency (EEA) (see chapter 4.6).

3.7.3. Public participation (Article 26)

Both, the Pathway Action Plan (Article 13; see chapter 3.3.7) and the Management Measures (Article 19; see chapter 3.5.1) must be subjected to a public consultation process.

3.7.4. Committee (Article 27)

One or several representatives of each Member State is part of the committee to support the EC (e.g. vote on listing proposals).

3.7.5. Scientific Forum (Article 28)

Member States can appoint representatives of the scientific community to give advice to the EC. The rules of procedure and working method for the delivery of opinions on submitted risk assessments can be found here:

<https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/98665af0-7dfa-448c-8bf4-e1e086b50d2c/library/0fea9d13-36ad-4e8a-94dc-cd0b5224f7a9/details>

3.7.6. Exercise of the delegation (Article 29)

The EC has the power to adopt delegated acts unless the European Parliament or the Council opposes the power. This does not affect the validity of any delegated act already in force.

3.7.7. Penalties (Article 30)

Member States shall lay down provisions on penalties applicable to infringements of the IAS-Regulation.

3.7.8. Transitional provisions for non-commercial owners and commercial stocks (Articles 31 & 32)

A transitional period for non-commercial owners (usually until the end of the animals' natural life) and for commercial owners (two years after listing) is granted as long as it is guaranteed that individuals of the species cannot reproduce or escape into the wild.

3.8. The reporting according to Article 24 and other reporting obligations

The reporting cycle is six years, and it is aligned (since the current reporting cycle) with the Habitats Directive¹⁵ and the Birds Directive¹⁶. The last reporting period encompassed 1.1.2019 to 31.12.2024. The current reporting period extends from 1.1.2025 to 31.12.2030, with a tentative deadline for submission of the national reports in 2031.

The legal basis for the last reporting cycle was Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/574, specifying the technical formats for reporting by Member States (see chapter 4.2).

The technical infrastructure for the data input (spatial, tabular, text) has changed between both previous reporting cycles, and it cannot be foreseen what tools will be provided in 2031. For the recent reporting cycle, Reportnet 3 was used, the e-Reporting platform for reporting environmental and climate data to the EEA. The IAS-dataflow is publicly available and the data for the IAS-reporting of Member States for the period 2019-2024 can be found (and downloaded) here:

<https://reportnet.europa.eu/public/dataflow/1528>

3.8.1. The reporting template

The reporting template was specified and officially published as EC Implementing Regulation (see chapter 4.2). It is structured into three sections as outlined in the following three chapters.

3.8.2. Section A – Information on IAS of Union concern and IAS of regional concern

This section comprises questions for each of the IAS on the Union list in force by the end of the last calendar year covered by the report. The requested information consists of

- species presence in the environment and/or in holdings;

¹⁵ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive_en

¹⁶ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/birds-directive_en

- species reproductive status (e.g. self-sustaining populations exist or not or are likely in the near future);
- species reproductive patterns (e.g. sexual, asexual);
- spatial information (based on 10 x10 km grid cells);
- species introduction patterns (e.g. species was already introduced before the reporting period, or it was predominantly introduced through unintentional or intentional human assistance, or there is no evidence of new introductions into the Member State during the reporting period);
- species spread patterns (e.g. species predominantly dispersed within the Member State through natural dispersal, or it was predominantly spread through unintentional or intentional human assistance, or there is no evidence of dispersal within the Member State during the reporting period);
- details of the issued permits (including the year of validity, the purpose, and number of concerned individuals or volumes);
- details of the inspections of the establishments and the compliance with the conditions set out in the permits;
- information on rapid eradication measures according to Article 17 (in most cases available via NOTSYS; see chapters 3.4.3 & 3.4.4), including e.g. start/end date of measures, applied methods, side-effects and effectiveness;
- information on management measures according to Article 19 (see chapter 3.5.1), including e.g. start/end date of measures, applied methods, side-effects and effectiveness.

IAS of regional concern according to Article 11 (see chapter 3.3.5) have not been identified in the EU yet. In the reporting template, information is requested which Articles are applied to such species (if any) pursuant to Articles 13, 14, 16, 17, 19 or 20.

3.8.3. Section B – Information on IAS of Member State concern

This section comprises questions for IAS of Member State concern as provided for in Article 12 (see chapter 3.3.6). The requested information consists of:

- does the Member State have such a list?
- if yes, provide the scientific and common (optional) name;
- species presence in the environment and/or in holdings;
- species reproductive status (e.g. self-sustaining populations exist or not or are likely in the near future);
- spatial information (based on 10 x10 km grid cells) (optional);
- measures applied pursuant to Article 7 (e.g. ban on trade and/or holding) or Articles 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19 or 20.

As of 2024, twelve of the 27 EU Member States have such national lists, which contain between 3 and more than 200 species.

3.8.4. Section C – Horizontal information

This section comprises questions (all free text) with information on cross-cutting (horizontal) issues of the implementation of the IAS-Regulation. The requested information consists of e.g.:

- for which IAS of Union concern has an analysis and prioritization of the pathways of unintentional introduction and spread been performed
- list of the “priority pathways”;
- status of pathway action plan(s) (e.g. finalized/draft, fully/partly/not implemented)
- description of the surveillance system;
- description of the official controls system (including if fully/partly/not operational, categories of goods that are controlled);
- description of measures to inform the public (including public participation on the pathway action plan(s) and management measures), and any actions that citizens have been requested to take;
- information on the costs of action to implement the IAS-Regulation.

The latter information can be provided in detail if this information is available or as a lump sum when the costs cannot be separated by different categories.

3.8.5. Other reporting obligations

Member States have to inform the EC about the competent authorities, including:

- issuing permits: „competent authorities are empowered to issue permits for activities carried out in contained holdings” (Art. 8; see chapter 3.3.2);
- carry out inspections at these establishments/holdings (Art. 8; see chapter 3.3.2);
- apply for authorizations (Art. 9; see chapter 3.3.3) and take emergency measures (Art. 10; see chapter 3.3.4);
- official control at EU borders: „competent authorities should verify IAS of Union concern at the first border control entity or point of entry” (Art. 15; see chapter 3.4.2);
- appoint one or more representatives to officially use the NOTSYS tool and inform about new arrivals and measures (Art. 16-18; see chapters 3.4.3 & 3.4.4);
- nominate lead reporters (to EEA) responsible for the delivery of national reports (Art. 24; see chapters 3.7.1);
- appoint a representative for the Committee (Art. 27; see chapter 3.7.4);
- appoint a representative of the scientific community (Art. 28; see chapter 3.7.5).

4. ONLINE RESOURCES

4.1. European Commission

This webpage provides a short introduction to the IAS-Regulation, including links to further legal documents (“secondary law”), the risk assessments, and the involved parties and stakeholders (IAS-Committee, IAS-Scientific Forum, IAS-Expert Group, IAS-Working Group). It also describes the process for adding species to the Union list and includes the document that has been produced to review the Union list according to Article 4.2 (see chapter 3.2.3). It further provides information materials on prevention, early warning and rapid detection and Management, including identification guides, and management costs.

https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/invasive-alien-species_en

4.2. IAS-Regulation and Implementing Regulations

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

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1483614313362&uri=CELEX:32014R1143>

First list of species of Union concern:

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 of 13 July 2016 adopting a list of invasive alien species of Union concern pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1468477158043&uri=CELEX:32016R1141>

First update of the species of Union concern:

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/1263 of 12 July 2017 updating the list of invasive alien species of Union concern established by Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32017R1263>

Second update of the species of Union concern:

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1262 of 25 July 2019 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 to update the list of invasive alien species of Union concern

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1565100914543&uri=CELEX:32019R1262>

Third update of the species of Union concern:

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1203 of 12 July 2022 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 to update the list of invasive alien species of Union concern

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R1203>

Fourth update of the species of Union concern:

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/1422 of 17 July 2025 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 to update the list of invasive alien species of Union concern

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2025/1422/oj/eng

Format of the document serving as evidence for the permit issued by the competent authorities of Member States:

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/145 of 4 February 2016 adopting the format of the document serving as evidence for the permit issued by the competent authorities of Member States allowing establishments to carry out certain activities concerning invasive alien species of Union concern pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016R0145>

Specifying the technical format for reporting:

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/574 of 15 February 2024 specifying the technical formats for reporting by the Member States pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/1454

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2024/574/oj

4.3. Risk Assessments

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2018/968 of 30 April 2018 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to risk assessments in relation to invasive alien species:

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.174.01.0005.01.ENG&toc=OJ:L:2018:174:FULL

The approved Risk Assessments of the 114 currently listed species are publicly available on the CIRCABC-Platform:

<https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/98665af0-7dfa-448c-8bf4-e1e086b50d2c/library/7cd5920d-25bb-43c7-84bb-49de217c1563?p=1>

The CIRCABC-Platform includes risk assessments of 38 species that have not been listed such as *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*. The risk assessments of some of these previously dismissed species could be re-assessed in the future if new evidence, e.g. on impacts, appears. The Platform also includes risk assessments of IAS that are currently under review or in preparation for future updates of the list of species of Union concern.

Finally, there are documents available that explain the procedure and working methods of the listing process.

4.4. Pathway-scheme and sources

According to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2018/968 the CBD-pathway scheme shall be used in the risk assessments. This scheme is also to be used according to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/574 in the reporting procedure. The CBD-pathway scheme can be downloaded here:

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-18/official/sbstta-18-09-add1-en.pdf>

A guidance document how to interpret the scheme and the pathways was developed and is available here:

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f8627bbc-1f15-11eb-b57e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

4.5. EASIN

EASIN, the European Alien Species Information Network, is an initiative of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the EC. It provides distribution maps and an alien species catalogue, a citizen science app, and the official notification tool NOTSYS (see chapter 3.4.3).

<https://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/easin>

It also provides a collection of voluntary Code of Conducts for different sectors and industries, developed by the Council of Europe, based on obligations from the Bern Convention¹⁷. The following Code of Conducts are available:

- Boating
- Botanic Gardens
- Horticulture
- Hunting
- International Travel
- Plantation Forestry
- Pets
- Protected Areas
- Recreational fishing
- Zoological Gardens and Aquaria

<https://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/easin/Documentation/Codesofconduct>

4.6. European Environment Agency

The EEA maintains the portal containing information for the reporting period 2015-2018 under Article 24 (see chapter 3.8) of the IAS-Regulation. The data and information for the recent reporting period 2019-2024 is currently under review and should become available in 2026.

<https://ias.eea.europa.eu/products/ias-of-union-concern>

<https://ias.eea.europa.eu/products/european-statistics/dashboard-ias-of-union-concern>

The reference portal for the reporting is available via EIONET and includes official documents e.g. the reporting format, the list of species of Union concern, common names, the pathways, NUTS codes, biogeographical regions, marine and river basin subregions, explanatory notes and guidelines and information about submission of spatial data.

https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/ias_regulation

¹⁷ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention>

4.7. IUCN Sources

The International Union for Conservation of Nature is a major player in the field of biological invasions at the global and the European level. Over the years the European offices have supported the EC in several contracts, producing information on different aspects, which can be found here:

<https://iucn.org/our-work/topic/invasive-alien-species/invasive-alien-species-external-resources>

For example, an introduction to the IAS-Regulation is provided¹⁸, including a useful illustration of the key provisions (see Annex 1 in chapter 7.1).

Within the “Prevention & Pathways” section, information can be found e.g. on

- European guidelines on protected areas and IAS (2014)¹⁹
- Pathways for invasive alien wasps (2021)²⁰
- Pathways for invasive alien ants (2021)²¹
- Legal provisions on soil import (2018)²²
- Preventing the spread of IAS through the movement of topsoil, in particular in the context of large-scale infrastructure projects (2023)²³
- Invasive alien flatworms: Threats posed and potential for phytosanitary measures (2021)²⁴
- Biofouling management for recreational boating. Recommendations to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive aquatic species (2022)²⁵
- Poster: Preventing the spread of aquatic IAS (2022)²⁶

Within the “ID & Surveillance” section, information can be found e.g. on

- Illustrations and posters
- Customs and surveillance guides
- Guidance on establishing surveillance systems (2024)²⁷
- Case studies on surveillance methods (2024)²⁸

¹⁸ <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/4cd6cb36-b0f1-4db4-915e-65cd29067f49/library/5dd20d11-1526-4b44-95d2-642049132667/details>
¹⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/168063e4a0>

²⁰ <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/4cd6cb36-b0f1-4db4-915e-65cd29067f49/library/15427278-c6e1-4c20-ad87-8300eae67a6d/details>

²¹ <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/4cd6cb36-b0f1-4db4-915e-65cd29067f49/library/4cf7ff57-c519-4c2f-9605-99ea4e6eca35/details>

²² <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/4cd6cb36-b0f1-4db4-915e-65cd29067f49/library/96fbf64a-c3e8-49ab-bb5f-efb6cdc16e85/details>

²³ <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/4cd6cb36-b0f1-4db4-915e-65cd29067f49/library/c579d48e-b788-42b9-8803-4f8ea2a60ac6/details>

²⁴ <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/4cd6cb36-b0f1-4db4-915e-65cd29067f49/library/21b7fa8d-bb9e-4930-9f5e-820d4b48208f/details>

²⁵ https://www.glofouling.imo.org/_files/ugd/34a7be_89161017a5964044a861e48a8d584bc2.pdf

²⁶ https://www.glofouling.imo.org/_files/ugd/34a7be_01b3d9f1ddd24a9e9bd492268f9822de.pdf

²⁷ <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/4cd6cb36-b0f1-4db4-915e-65cd29067f49/library/e47f663b-11d8-453f-8dc2-74286a9f3b9b/details>

²⁸ <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/4cd6cb36-b0f1-4db4-915e-65cd29067f49/library/60237473-3d90-4051-89ac-618f028671f2/details>

Guidance Document for the Implementation of the IAS-Regulation

Within the “Management” section, documents of the “Management measures and costs for invasive alien species” for all species on the Union list and a few not listed species as well as a “Manual for the management of vertebrate invasive alien species of Union concern – incorporating animal welfare²⁹” (from 2022) are available. Further documents consider the management of IAS to protect pollinators, the marine environment, and 22 fact-sheets are provided on species native to some parts and alien to other parts of the European Union.

Recently, the IUCN led a horizon scanning exercise to prioritise “at least 100 species likely to arrive, establish, spread and have an impact on native biodiversity or ecosystem services over the next ten years” for future risk assessments. The report produced 165 species considered the most likely to enter or spread in the EU, with 57 of these presenting the highest threats to biodiversity. The report is available here:

<https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/98665af0-7dfa-448c-8bf4-e1e086b50d2c/library/fd66907c-7db5-4f65-8693-491ca2a93c69/details>

²⁹ https://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/easin/Document/Final-deliverables-humane/Manual_management_vertibrate_IAS_incl_welfare_medres.pdf

5. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IAS-REGULATION IN THE WB6

5.1. Methods to assess the status of the IAS-Regulation in the WB6

This chapter presents the outcomes of an interactive workshop held in Tirana, Albania, on June 12th and 13th 2025. This workshop was part of the workshop and webinar series ‘EU4Green support to the implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans for the Protection of Nature and Biodiversity’. The participants, who were proposed by the beneficiaries based on participants’ profiles, were representatives from governmental bodies like ministries and environmental/nature protection agencies, national park representatives, and scientific experts on IAS and conservation. In total, 25 participants from all WB6 economies contributed to the workshop.

During the workshop, a common understanding of the provisions of the IAS-Regulation was fostered through a wide range of talks, also highlighting best practice examples of implementation from different EU member states (AT, BE, IT). Then, participants of each WB6 worked in small groups to assess the current status of structures, data and legislative tools to implement the IAS-Regulation in their respective economies along a questionnaire (**Table 6**). The outcomes of these group works are presented. Note that the workshop took place shortly before the release of the “fourth update of the species of Union concern”³⁰ and thus the discussed list of species Union concern refers to the “third update of the species of Union concern”³¹ with 88 IAS (see chapter 3.2.3).

Table 6: Workshop questionnaire for the participants of each economy.

Question	Type
Legislation & Governance	
The implementation of the IAS-Regulation requires the information (nomination) of a competent authority (or authorities) in charge of the implementation of the IAS-Regulation . These authorities will also be responsible for cooperation and coordination with the EC, e.g. for the Reporting (Art. 24), the Committee (Art. 27), and the Scientific Forum (Art. 28). Has your economy already identified these authorities?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
If yes, which authority (or authorities) will be in charge ? If no, are there any authorities you can think of that could be considered? Which additional stakeholders are relevant?	Open question
Which authority (or authorities) could be in charge of setting up a permit system (Art. 8) to allow the use of IAS of Union concern for different purposes (research, ex situ conservation, medicinal use)?	Open question
Are official border control authorities aware of the requirements of the IAS-Regulation?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown

³⁰ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2025/1422/oj/eng

³¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R1203>

Guidance Document for the Implementation of the IAS-Regulation

Question	Type
Which institution is in command of the border control authorities ?	Open question
Have any legislation (e.g. hunting, fisheries) been adapted regarding the IAS-Regulation (or is your economy in the process of doing so)? This includes setting up penalties for any infringements of the IAS-Regulation.	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
Data availability	
Is there data on the presence/absence of the IAS of Union concern in the environment of your economy?	Single choice question: yes (with specifications)/no/unknown
Is there data on the presence/absence of the IAS of Union concern in contained holdings (e.g. zoos) in your economy?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
Is there data available on the pathways of introduction and spread of the IAS of Union concern (or other IAS) in your economy?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
Are you aware and prepared that these pathways need prioritization , followed by (one or several) action plan(s) with timetables and measures to prevent unintentional introduction and spread into or within the economy?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
Is there any other list of relevant IAS for your economy or for some of its entities, unrelated to the Union list?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
If yes, is there a particular method that was used to assess the impact of these species? If not, do you know if there are plans for developing a list? Who should be involved?	Open question
Which of the data mentioned above can be easily accessed? How and where?	Open question
Resource effectiveness	
Are there any elements of current observation networks in your economy that could be used for contributing to the surveillance system of IAS of Union concern?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
If yes, which ones?	Open question
Have you heard / used EASIN (European Alien Species Information Network) and their Notification System NOTSYS before this day?	Single choice question: yes, we used it already/yes, we had of it before but did not use it/no, we were not aware of this
Are there any ongoing management measures towards IAS of Union concern in your economy?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
If yes, for which IAS? Is this documented, e.g. objectives, methods, effectiveness, side effects, costs?	Open question
Is there any documentation on the costs of action with regard to IAS of Union concern and/or other IAS in your economy?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
The IAS-Regulation supports regional cooperation between different economies (Art. 11). Would your economy consider such joint activities?	Single choice question: yes/no/unknown
If yes, what topics could be relevant for regional cooperation in the Western Balkans?	Open question
Workshop reflexion	
What are the goals regarding IAS in your economy?	Open question

Question	Type
What slows the process down? Which obstacles stand in the way of reaching your goals?	Open question
What helps reaching the goals ? What synergies with other developments could be used?	Open question

The following chapters summarize the workshop results for each economy. They are based on the knowledge of the participants and their responses to the questionnaire.

5.2. Workshop results for Albania

5.2.1. Legislation and governance

During the workshop it was not possible to determine ~~It is unknown~~, whether Albania has yet identified the competent authority for the implementation of the IAS-Regulation. Possible authorities for this task are the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Environmental Agency. Additional relevant stakeholders include the Plant Protection Institute, the National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA), the National Forestry Agency (NFA), fisherman organizations, municipalities and species experts. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE) and the Ministry of Public Health could be the authorities in charge of the permit system. It is unknown whether border control authorities are aware of the requirements of the IAS-Regulation and who is in charge of the border control authorities. Some legislative texts are already being adapted in accordance with the IAS-Regulation.

5.2.2. Data availability

There is a draft list of species of Union concern being present in Albania available, but the presence of those species in contained holdings are not known and pathways of introduction and spread are unknown for most species. There is a national list of invasive species from the MTE available.

5.2.3. Resource effectiveness

There is no observation network that could be used as a surveillance system for IAS of Union concern. The NOTSYS system is known but has not been used as a data or information source. There are neither management measures, nor estimations of costs of actions.

5.2.4. Conclusion and next steps

Based on the workshop results, it appears that Albania is ~~very much~~ in the beginning of the process of implementing the IAS-Regulation, however there is a national list of IAS already available. The goals regarding IAS in Albania are to prevent the introduction of IAS and to reduce the impact on health and the environment with management and international cooperation. The process is slowed down by a lack of knowledge and funding, thus far, this topic has received little priority in politics. Thus, IAS are only detected at late stages, and lack

of regional cooperation further slows this process down. To overcome these obstacles, strong legislation, funding and an early detection system are essential. Synergies are also found with biodiversity and climate legislation as well as with agricultural and biosecurity goals. Citizen science could help to enhance public engagement.

The next steps proposed in the systematic implementation of the IAS-Regulation in Albania could be:

1) Species list: There is already a draft list of IAS of Union concern being present in Albania. Finalising this list by compiling information and implementing the species of Union concern into national legislation ~~must-should~~ be one of the priorities for better alignment with the IAS-Regulation.

2) Establishment of the surveillance system and clarification of the data flow: Albania has not yet ~~to-used~~ the NOTSYS system as a data or information source. Furthermore, no As no national surveillance system ~~is-was~~ established so far, also ~~and~~ the information and data flow for newly arriving IAS is unclear. Clarifying and prioritizing these steps will help to take early measures against IAS before they become established.

3) Establishment of the official controls: Border control authorities in Albania are not aware of the IAS-Regulation. Clarifying the responsibilities in this process and starting with training for border officials are recommended ~~one of the next~~ implementation goals.

5.3. Workshop results for Bosnia and Herzegovina

5.3.1. Legislation and governance

Bosnia and Herzegovina has not yet identified the competent authorities for the implementation of the IAS-Regulation. Possible authorities are expert agencies in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and the Brčko District. Other relevant stakeholders are local communities. The permit system (Art. 8) could be authorized by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. The border control authorities under the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations are not aware of the requirements of the IAS-Regulation and no respective legislation has been adopted in accordance with it yet.

5.3.2. Data availability

There is no information on the presence and status of the species of Union concern in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the wild or in contained holdings, pathways of introduction and spread are also unknown and unprioritized. However, there is a list of invasive species that are present in Bosnia and Herzegovina (unrelated to the IAS-Regulation). The available data is

found in the publication: Inventarisation and geographical interpretation of invasive species in Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation³².

5.3.3. Resource effectiveness

There are several management plans in place that could be used as a surveillance system. The NOTSYS system is known but has not been used as a data or information source. A management plan for *Ailanthus altissima* is currently being developed which also includes the expected cost of action. Bosnia and Herzegovina would be interested in participating in joint activities in the Western Balkans and would like to discuss a common methodology applicable in all Western Balkan economies.

5.3.4. Conclusion and next steps

Bosnia and Herzegovina is ~~very much~~ in the beginning of the process of implementing the IAS-Regulation. However, there is a publication on the invasive species in Bosnia and Herzegovina available and first management actions against an invasive plant species have started. The goals regarding IAS are to implement the IAS-Regulation on national level, compile the list of species of Union concern being present and to build capacity regarding the management of IAS. The process is slowed by a lack of funding, lack of capacity and ineffective administration. To overcome these obstacles, transnational cooperation will help as well as implementing national strategies faster.

The next steps proposed in the systematic implementation of the IAS-Regulation could be:

1) Species list: There is already a national list of IAS available for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Compiling information on the presence of the species of Union concern and implementing actions into national legislation ~~must~~ should be one of the priorities for better alignment with the IAS-Regulation.

2) Establishment of the surveillance system and clarification of the data flow: Bosnia and Herzegovina has yet to use the NOTSYS system as a data or information source and no national surveillance system is established and the information and data flow for newly arriving IAS is unclear. However, several observation networks could be adapted to implement a surveillance system. Prioritizing this step will help to take early measures against IAS before they become established.

3) Establishment of the official controls: Border control authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not aware of the IAS-Regulation. Clarifying the responsibilities in this process and starting with training for border officials are recommended ~~one of the next~~ implementation goals.

³²Dug et al. 2019: INVENTARIZACIJA I GEOGRAFSKA INTERPRETACIJE INVAZIVNIH VRSTA U FEDERACIJI BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE. Available from: https://fmoit.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/dokumenti/Invazivne-vrste_F-BiH_Dorada_Decembar_2019.pdf

5.4. Workshop results for Kosovo

5.4.1. Legislation and governance

In Kosovo, no authorities have been assigned to be in charge of the implementation of the IAS-Regulation. Proposed authorities to take over this task are the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure of Kosovo (MESPI) and the Kosovo Agency for Environmental Protection (KEPA), and the Inspectorate is an important stakeholder. The permit system (Art. 8) is best suited to be developed by the Environment Department. Border control is authorized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but border police and inspectorate are not aware of the requirements of the IAS-Regulation, and no legislation has been adopted yet.

5.4.2. Data availability

There is a list of the IAS of Union concern being present in Kosovo available, but species in contained holdings and pathways of introduction and spread are unknown. No impact assessment of IAS has been performed yet, but data is available through scientific literature and research repositories. However, there is no central database for such data, thereby increasing the effort in data collection and management when performing an impact assessment.

5.4.3. Resource effectiveness

There is no observation network available for the surveillance system, but the University of Prishtina has some elements of an observation network available. Participants from Kosovo were not aware of the NOTSYS system prior to this workshop. No IAS management is currently undertaken, and possible costs of action have not been calculated. Kosovo would be interested in joint activities in the Western Balkans and would like to discuss topics such as the regional coordination of national lists of IAS.

5.4.4. Conclusion and next steps

Kosovo is ~~very much~~ in the beginning of the process of implementing the IAS-Regulation. However, there is already a list of species of Union concern recorded in Kosovo available. The goals regarding IAS are to increase the data quality, public awareness and transboundary cooperations. On the institutional level the goal is to set up a monitoring and management system, control pathways of introduction and spread and assess the economic losses from IAS. The process is slowed down by a lack of funding, legislation and expertise. The importance of this topic has not yet reached decision making bodies and coordination at the regional level is weak. To overcome these obstacles, a legal basis and increase in capacity building is needed, as well as clear definition of roles and responsibilities to increase institutional awareness.

The next steps proposed in the systematic implementation of the IAS-Regulation could be:

1) Clarification of the responsibilities: There are already institutions identified in playing a key role in this process. However, designating clear responsibilities and roles in these institutions is still outstanding.

2) Assessing the occurrence of IAS of Union concern: There is a list of species of Union concern present in Kosovo available, however detailed information is lacking. Collecting already available information such as distribution and status on the species is one of the next steps, which would also allow to identify where further research is needed.

3) Establishment of the surveillance system and clarification of the data flow: Kosovo has yet to use the NOTSYS system as a data or information source and no national surveillance system is established. The information and data flow for newly arriving IAS is unclear. Prioritizing this step will help to take early measures against IAS before they become established.

5.5. Workshop results for Montenegro

5.5.1. Legislation and governance

Montenegro reported that the EPA MNE (Environmental Protection Agency Montenegro) has already been nominated as a competent authority to be in charge of the implementation of the IAS-Regulation. Other relevant identified stakeholders are the managers of protected areas. However, there is a need for species- or group-specific experts on IAS (taxonomy, ecology, management). The EPA MNE was proposed as the relevant authority regarding the permit system to allow the use of IAS of Union concern. There is a need for clarification whether border control authorities, which are subject to the custom service and ministry of finance, are aware of the requirements of the IAS-Regulation. First legislative adoptions by the MERS (Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development) and the MPVS (Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry) towards implementing the IAS-Regulation have been made.

5.5.2. Data availability

Regarding data availability of species of Union concern, Montenegro reported the availability of presence/absence data for all and spatial information for some species of Union concern. Also, the presence of such species in contained holdings is known. The main pathways of introduction and spread are vehicles, boats and the transportation of goods. There is also a list of other relevant national IAS, which are not on the list of species of Union concern. However, the impact of these species yet needs to be determined.

5.5.3. Resource effectiveness

There is currently no observation network that could be used as a surveillance system of IAS of Union concern in Montenegro. The NOTSYS system has been known but has not been used as a data or information source. There is interest in joint regional activities and cooperation with neighboring economies. There are no ongoing management measures

towards IAS of Union concern and no estimate of the costs of action towards IAS. Montenegro would be interested in joint activities in the Western Balkans and would like species specific topics.

5.5.4. Conclusion and next steps

Montenegro has made good progress towards the implementation of the IAS-Regulation regarding legislation and governance topics. Some data on species of Union concern are readily available. However, no surveillance system is in place and better cooperation within authorities and between economies is recommended. The goals regarding IAS in Montenegro are to prevent the introduction and spread of IAS into agricultural land and meadows and to educate experts and citizens alike. The process of implementation is slowed by limited financial resources, limited coordination between institutions and lacking species and monitoring data. To overcome these obstacles, the knowledge of experts on the biology of several IAS in different eco-regions should be improved. Furthermore, best practice examples of impact assessments on species of regional IAS lists could be used as a starting point.

The next steps proposed in the systematic implementation of the IAS-Regulation could be:

- 1) Species list:** There is a list of species of Union concern present in Montenegro. However, some information on reproduction or status are lacking for certain species. Collecting those detailed species information, including spatial data, is one of the next steps.
- 2) Establishment of the surveillance system and clarification of the data flow:** Montenegro has yet to use the NOTSYS system as a data or information source and no national surveillance system is established. The information and data flow for newly arriving IAS is unclear. Clarifying and prioritizing this step will help to take early measures against IAS before they are established.
- 3) Establishment of the official controls:** During the workshop, it remained unknown whether border control authorities are aware of the IAS-Regulation. Clarifying the responsibilities in this process and trainings for border officials are one of the next implementation goals. Crucial steps are the compilation of training materials in Montenegrin language (e.g. by translating the materials available from IUCN³³, see chapter 4.7.) and targeted trainings for border officials.

5.6. Workshop results for North Macedonia

5.6.1. Legislation and governance

For North Macedonia the MoEPP is the proposed authority for the implementation of the IAS-Regulation and the permit system (Art. 8). Whether border control authorities are aware

³³ <https://iucn.org/our-work/topic/invasive-alien-species/invasive-alien-species-external-resources>

of the IAS-Regulation and if any legislation has been adapted in regard of the IAS-Regulation could not be determined ~~remained unknown~~ during the workshop.

5.6.2. Data availability

There is ~~a~~ data for species of Union concern being present in North Macedonia available that includes spatial information, date and reproductive status. Another list of 110 invasive plant and animal species (unrelated to the IAS-Regulation) is available. Relevant stakeholders and data sources for the establishment of those lists were biodiversity monitoring data, involvement of local conservation groups, monitoring networks and rangers of protected areas. The data can be accessed from reports of conservation projects and databases of the Macedonian Ecological Society (MES) and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP). However, the pathways of introduction and spread are unknown and thus have not been prioritized.

5.6.3. Resource effectiveness

There are several platforms available that could be used to contribute to a surveillance system such as citizen science platforms. Participants from North Macedonia were not aware of the NOTSYS system prior to this workshop. There is ongoing management for IAS in several pilot eradication programs in cooperation with Greece and Albania. Monitoring of IAS is included in the biodiversity monitoring scheme. However, the costs of these activities are unknown. North Macedonia would be interested in joint activities in the Western Balkans and would like to strengthen cooperation with established scientific working groups for developing the Natura 2000 network and biodiversity monitoring.

5.6.4. Conclusion and next steps

North Macedonia has made good progress in terms of collecting data and has already started eradication programs. The first goals regarding IAS in North Macedonia are to have a list of IAS of Union concern being present in North Macedonia that includes spatial information and status. Further goals are the formulation of an action plan, establishing a monitoring network and improving institutional cooperation. The process is slowed down by a lack of human capacities in the authorities as well as for monitoring and the lack of funds for actions against IAS. The public has a low level of awareness regarding the problems that IAS cause, cooperation between ministries and stakeholders is difficult. To overcome these obstacles, funding for IAS projects needs to be ensured, and capacity building and cooperation on different organizational levels strengthened.

The next steps proposed in the systematic implementation of the IAS-Regulation could be:

1) Assessing the occurrence of IAS of Union concern: There is already data available of species of Union concern occurring in North Macedonia. Establishing a list of all occurring IAS of Union concern with spatial information and status and implementing actions into national legislation ~~must~~ should be one of the priorities for better alignment with the IAS-Regulation.

2) Establishment of the surveillance system and clarification of the data flow: North Macedonia has yet to use the NOTSYS system as a data or information source, no national surveillance system is established and the information and data flow for newly arriving IAS is unclear. Prioritizing this step will help to take early measures against IAS before they are established.

3) Establishment of the official controls: It is unknown whether border control authorities are aware of the IAS-Regulation. Clarifying the responsibilities in this process and starting with training for border officials are recommended ~~one of the next~~ implementation goals.

5.7. Workshop results for Serbia

5.7.1. Legislation and governance

Serbia reported that the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, Provincial Institute for Nature Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency could be authorities in charge and are relevant stakeholders. The permit system could be implemented by the Ministry of Environmental Protection. National border control authorities are not aware of the requirements of the IAS-Regulation but of the national IAS requirements. The Ministry of Finance commands the border control authorities and therefore would need to supervise the implementation of the IAS-Regulation at the national border. Legislation for fisheries has already been adopted in accordance with the IAS-Regulation.

5.7.2. Data availability

There is a draft list of species of Union Concern being present in Serbia and detailed information is available for invasive freshwater fish species. IAS species of Union concern in contained holdings are known, but pathways of introduction and spread are not. An impact assessment of IAS in Serbia has not been conducted yet but should in any case involve institutions such as the Institute of Nature Protection of Serbia, Provincial Institute for Nature Protection and academic institutions. The aforementioned institutions and the Fisheries District Managers could provide relevant data.

5.7.3. Resource effectiveness

There is an established observation network for fish species which could be adapted to other IAS as well. The NOTSYS system has been known but has not been used as a data or information source. Management measures towards IAS of Union concern have been implemented for fish species by the Law on Protection and Sustainable Use of Fish Stocks, but costs of these actions are unknown. Serbia would be interested in joint activities in the Western Balkans and would like to focus the discussion on IAS such as *Ailanthus altissima*, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, *Fallopia japonica* and *Pacifastacus leniusculus*.

5.7.4. Conclusion and next steps

Serbia has made good progress towards the implementation of the IAS-Regulation regarding legislative topics and has already a draft list of the species of Union concern being present which might be adopted in the new nature protection act. There is spatial data available for species of Union concern. However, no surveillance system is in place and better cooperation within authorities and between economies is advisable. The goals regarding IAS in Serbia are to prevent the introduction and spread of IAS to protect biodiversity, to have authorities (and possibly stakeholders) officially assigned and a well-working institutional set up to support the IAS-Regulation. The process of implementation is slowed by administrative procedures to transfer jurisdiction to local levels, lack of training for enforcement authorities and public awareness and the use of citizen science should be strengthened. To overcome these obstacles, synergies with the EU integration process and EPPO³⁴ standards were identified and the establishment of species expert groups for IAS and more public awareness will help to reach goals faster.

The next steps proposed in the systematic implementation of the IAS-Regulation could be:

1) Clarification of the responsibilities: There are already some institutions identified that play a role in this process. However, designating clear responsibilities and roles in these institutions has yet to be done.

2) Assessing the occurrence of IAS of Union concern: There is a draft of a list of species of Union concern being present in Serbia, however only for fish species detailed information like distribution and status are known. Collecting information on the remainder of the species is a recommended one of the next steps.

3) Establishment of the surveillance system and clarification of the data flow: Serbia has yet to use the NOTSYS system as a data or information source and no national surveillance system is established and the information and data flow for newly arriving IAS is unclear. Prioritizing this step will help to take early measures against IAS before they are established.

³⁴ https://www.eppo.int/ABOUT_EPPO/about_eppo

6. SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WB6

6.1. Gaps

Across all WB6 a few reoccurring issues can be identified that hinder a successful strategy against the introduction and establishment of IAS:

Limited data and experts

Economy-specific IAS lists in the WB6 are often incomplete or not harmonized with IAS of Union concern. Basic occurrence data, reproductive status and a sufficient number of IAS species experts across different groups of organisms are lacking. This shortage of experts and data limits the scientific basis for decision-making and risk assessments.

Limited funds

The implementation of the IAS-Regulation is significantly hindered by limited financial resources. Budgets for research and management for IAS are typically small and irregular. As a result, key activities – such as the collection of occurrence data, early detection and rapid response – remain underdeveloped and inconsistently executed.

Administrative procedures

Administrative procedures tend to be slowed down due to undefined responsibilities, bureaucratic complexities, and limited technical expertise. The slow pace of decision-making reduces the effectiveness of rapid response measures and weakens cross-border cooperation - an essential element in managing species that spread quickly across national boundaries.

Legislation

Invasive Alien Species rarely receive political attention in the region. Environmental conservation in general ranks low on political agendas, and IAS management in particular struggles to compete with socio-economic and political priorities. Without public and political visibility, IAS can spread more easily and will cause greater ecological and economic damage in the future, including human health related issues (e.g. vector-borne diseases).

6.2. Recommendations

Below, a few general recommendations are suggested, but these would need fine-tuning and consideration of economy-specific requirements.

a) Clarification of responsibilities

The implementation of the IAS-Regulation requires the nomination of competent authorities and experts for different tasks (e.g. nomination of scientific experts for the Scientific Forum). This can include authorities at different governmental levels, e.g. ministries and provincial authorities, so it is also recommended to establish an information exchange mechanism where all involved authorities come together to plan, discuss and agree on relevant topics. National legislation needs to be checked and potentially modified where necessary (including defining penalties for infringements).

b) Species list, distribution and status of IAS of Union concern in the territory in the wild

Knowledge of the presence, distribution (based on 10x10 km grid cells) and reproductive status of the currently 114 IAS of Union concern in the wild is needed. Data can be searched online (e.g. GBIF³⁵) or in scientific literature, but should be validated by taxonomic experts. Data should be stored safely in a central database repository.

c) Species list of IAS of Union concern in the territory in holdings

Keeping of IAS of Union concern in holdings (e.g. zoos, farms) for research or ex-situ conservation requires a valid permit from the competent authority. Knowledge of the numbers or volumes of specimens is needed. Competent authorities should also carry out inspections at these holdings.

d) Establishment of the surveillance system (using existing structures) and clarification of the data flow (including Notifications of newly introduced species)

Evaluation of which monitoring/surveillance systems already exist and how they could contribute to the IAS-surveillance system. This includes a taxonomic validation process, a determined information and data flow, and a central data repository. As part of the clarification of responsibilities a person (or institution) needs to be identified with access to NOTSYS (see chapter 4.5).

e) Establishment of official controls

Official border control authorities need to be identified, instructed and provided with the legal remit to inspect imported goods and eventually act upon infringements if necessary.

³⁵ <https://www.gbif.org/>

f) Prioritization of pathways of introduction and spread and development of Pathway Action Plans with measures

The pathways of introduction and spread need to be identified and prioritized. Measures on the prioritized pathways need to be developed and executed, e.g. the “Check-Clean-Dry” campaign that is rolled out in several Member States³⁶.

g) Development of management measures for widely spread IAS

IAS of Union concern that are considered as widely spread cannot be eradicated. However, measures to reduce their negative impact should be conducted, considering conservation targets and cost-efficiency.

h) Develop guidance and awareness materials for authorities and the public

Public and governmental awareness is crucial to understand the sometimes diverging perceptions and opposing interests of IAS. Tailored guidance material in appropriate language for different stakeholders can help to develop a better understanding of the problems and possible solutions (see chapter 4.7).

i) Considering attempts of full eradication of species with a very local distribution

A few species maybe have a very localized distribution and could be completely eradicated at comparatively low costs. Such cases should be identified, management plans developed and executed.

j) List of IAS of Member State concern

The IAS-Regulation provides the opportunity to develop a national list of IAS and to apply different elements of restrictions on these species. First, a discussion is needed if such a list is useful and desired. Criteria need to be developed to select the species (e.g. impact assessment, legal considerations, public perception, stakeholder involvement, management goals) and which measures shall be applied.

6.2.1. A roadmap is needed

Given these systemic challenges, a clear and realistic roadmap is essential. Such a roadmap should define responsibilities, timelines, funding needs and data flow mechanisms. Establishing a structured pathway towards explicit goals would support more efficient

³⁶ <https://invasives.ie/biosecurity/check-clean-dry/>

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implementation, improve institutional coordination, and strengthen overall preparedness against IAS in the WB6.

7. ANNEX

7.1. Annex 1

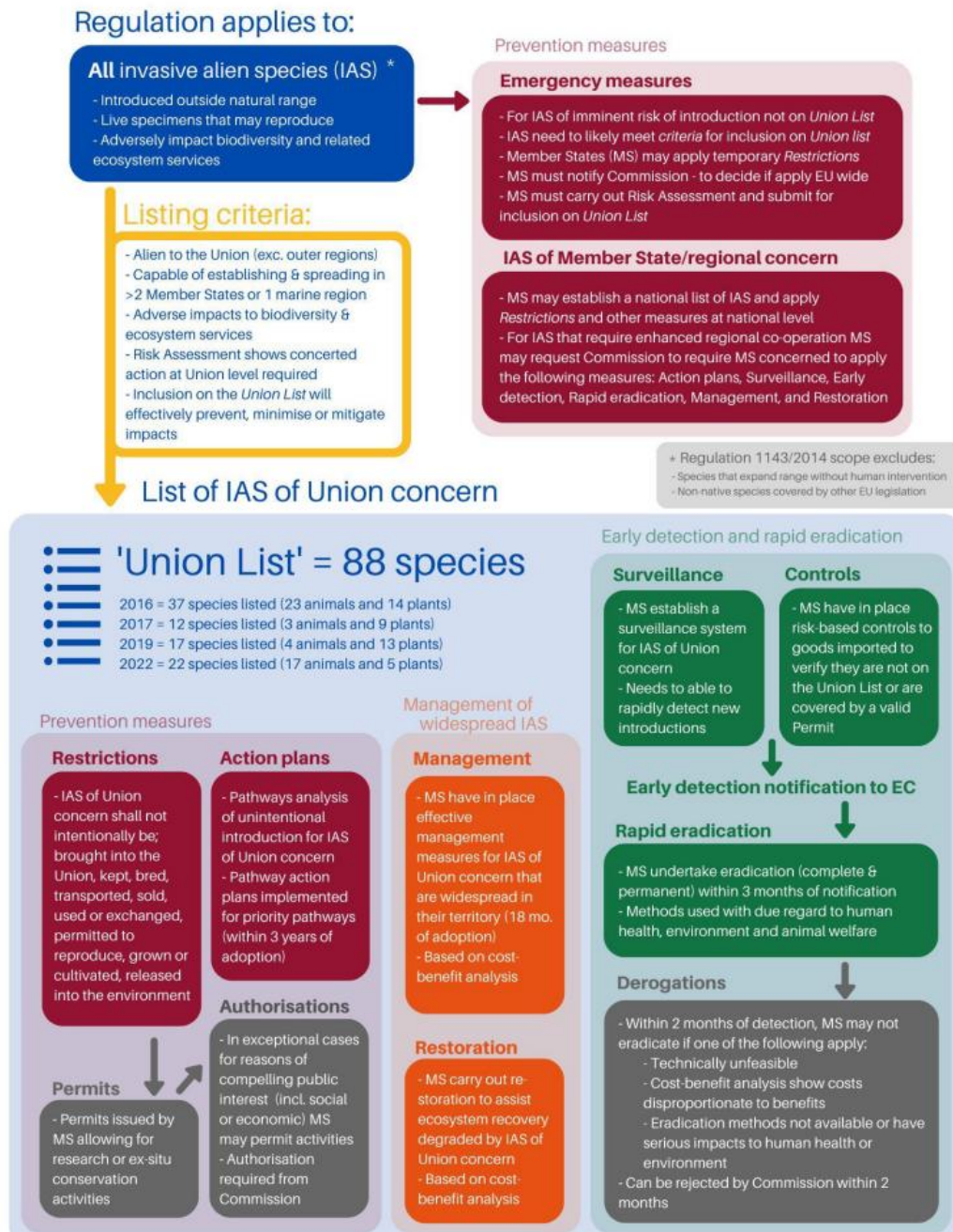


Figure 3: Illustration of the key provisions of the IAS-Regulation. ©IUCN³⁷

³⁷ <https://iucn.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/2022-ec-ias-regulation-info-high.pdf>