Notification 2006-116

Views and experiences for the in-depth review of work on invasive alien species

German contribution to the EU-mixed submission

Implementation review of all CBD decisions related to invasive alien species (IAS)

Notification 2006 – 116 of the CBD Secretariat

Hereafter, we will present our experiences with the CBD decisions related to IAS, starting with the most prominent part, the Guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species (Annex to decision VI / 23). Germany considers the guiding principles as a very useful tool to protect biodiversity from IAS.

Views and experiences

Below we describe our experiences with individual COP decisions relevant in the context of IAS, listed according to subjects:

1. Awareness-raising

As requested in decisions VIII / 27 (13)[1], (17)[2]; VI / 23 (27)[3]; VIII / 27 (52)[4] and V / 8 (9)[5], Germany is concerned with raising public awareness on the issue of IAS. This is promoted on federal level by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, e.g. by doing lectures, publishing articles, responding to press and citizen's inquiries, and informing relevant authorities. An online data base maintained by the Agency raises awareness by providing information on invasive alien plant species in Germany (www.neophyten.de).

2. Regulatory framework

[1] VIII / 27 (13): „[The Conference of the Parties] Encourages Parties and other Governments to increase communication and public awareness about the environmental, social and economic impacts of the introduction of invasive alien species (…)"

[2] VIII / 27 (17): „[The Conference of the Parties] Encourages Parties and other Governments to organize training and promote education and awareness raising of (…) relevant persons regarding invasive alien species (…)"

[3] VI / 23 (27): „[The Conference of the Parties] Urges Parties (…) to develop and make available technical tools and related information to support efforts for the prevention, early detection, monitoring, eradication and/or control of invasive alien species and to support public awareness-raising and environmental education to the extent possible"

[4] VIII / 27 (52): "[The Conference of the Parties] Encourages relevant Government departments …) and other relevant organizations (…) to raise awareness with consumers, including through Internet sites (…) and to further study, as appropriate, current safe disposal measures for imported alien species, with a view to considering development of guidance or codes of practice regarding trade in pets, aquarium species and plant seeds, in particular disposal and discard of such species"

[5] V / 8 (9): "[The Conference of the Parties] Encourages Parties to develop effective education, training and public-awareness measures, as well as to inform the public about the different aspects of the issue, including the risks posed by alien invasive species"

As requested in decisions VIII / 27 (62)[6] and (67)[7]; VII / 13 (7)[8]; VI / 23 (III)[9]; VI (23 (IV)[10] and VI / 23 (28 c)[11], Germany has taken steps to provide a regulatory framework to deal with IAS:

The federal states ("Bundesländer") are currently developing a system to deal with IAS. Furthermore, a national Biodiversity Strategy, which shortly refers to IAS, is being elaborated at federal level.

The Ministry for the Environment, supported by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, is working on an amendment of the Federal Nature Conservation Act. Among others, the definition of "alien species" will be improved in line with the CBD decisions VIII / 27 (62) and (67).

From the phytosanitary perspective, there is a very broad spectrum of invasive alien species that can damage plants. This ranges from plant species that oust other plants via fungi that infest specific tree species, for instance, and insects that harm plants through feeding or the transmission of pathogens to non-native flatworms that can indirectly damage plants through a massive decimation of earthworms. In 2001, the conference of member states to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) officially noted that all of these organisms fall within the scope of the International Plant Protection Convention if the definition of quarantine pest applies to them.

A basis for authorisation in the Plant Protection Act (Section 4) to adopt measures and prohibitions that are essentially specified in the Plant Inspection Ordinance lays the foundation for the activities undertaken by the Federal Government and the plant protection services to protect against the introduction and spread of alien organisms that can harm plants or plant products. The Ordinance contains mandatory provisions for around 300 organisms and is based on the EC Quarantine Directive 2000/29/EC. The provisions of the Plant Protection Act and Plant Inspection Ordinance are currently primarily applied to organisms that directly damage arable crops. This includes, for instance, the plants *Abutilon theophrasti* and *Heracleum mantegazzianum* as well as *Anophlophara glabripennis* and *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus* as animal pests. For organisms in biological plant protection (animals, plants or microorganisms, including alien origins), the Plant Protection Act contains in Section 3 (1) number 17 the basis for the authorisation of adopting provisions on their placing on the market and use.

---

[6] VIII / 27 (62): "[The Conference of the Parties] Urges Parties and other Governments to be proactive in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (…)"

[7] VIII / 27 (67): "[The Conference of the Parties] Encourages relevant bodies and organizations to promote clarification and common understanding of terminology related to invasive alien species (…)"

[8] VII / 13 (7): "[The Conference of the Parties] Notes that specific gaps in the international regulatory frameworks at global, regional and national levels persist (…)"

[9] VI / 23 (III): "Noting, however, (…) that there are certain gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework from the perspective of the threats of invasive alien species to biological diversity"

[10] VI / 23 (IV): "Reaffirming the importance of national and regional invasive alien species strategies and action plans, and of international collaboration to address the threats to biodiversity of invasive alien species (…)"

[11] VI / 23 (28 c): "[The Conference of the Parties Requests the Executive Secretary (…) to support the development and dissemination of technical tools and related information on the prevention, early detection, monitoring, eradication and/or control of invasive alien species through, inter alia] Compilation and making available lists of procedures for risk assessment/analysis and pathway analysis which may be relevant in assessing the risks of invasive alien species to biodiversity, habitats and ecosystems"

Suggestion for improvement

In line with decision VII / 13 (7), we note that gaps in the current legal, policy and economic framework for the prevention of introduction and for the control and eradication of invasive alien species persist. These gaps on EU level have been identified in a recent study by the European Commission[12]. Member States of the Community have asked the Commission to assess those gaps.

In September 2006, a conference on IAS took place in Vienna. The 4th NEOBIOTA conference with 350 participants from 45 countries was the biggest conference on IAS that has ever taken place in Europe. The participants adopted a resolution, calling the European Commission to step up its efforts in addressing threats posed by IAS in Europe (Resolution: see attachment).

The European Commission has been invited to prepare in cooperation with the Member States, on the basis of the CBD Guiding Principles on Invasive Alien Species, taking into account the Bern Convention European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species and recognizing the efforts made by relevant Conventions and Organisations such as the IPPC and the EPPO, an EU strategy and an effective early warning system, taking into account biogeographic regions;

3. Research

As requested in decisions VIII / 27 (45)[13]; VI / 23 (24a)[14] and (24b); V / 8 (14d)[15] and (14f)[16], research on IAS has been emphasised in Germany. This applies to the academic context, as well as to research and development projects commissioned by different federal departments.

The German Research Ministry (BMBF) has, for example, funded a project called BIOLOG Europe that studies the impact of environmental change, including IAS, on Europe's biodiversity since 2003..

The German Environment Ministry (BMU) has funded, for example, a study that compiled basics for the development of a national IAS strategy, a project that models the impacts of climate change on the German flora, and a project on IAS and climate change in Germany and Austria, which aims to provide an early-warning system.

An important step in the academic context was the foundation of the research consortium NEOBIOTA in 1999 in Berlin. This consortium has become the biggest expert working group on IAS in Europe.

[12] Miller, Kettunen & Shine (2006): Scope options for EU action on invasive alien species (IAS). Available under http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/home.htm

[13] VIII / 27 (45): "[The Conference of the Parties] Urges Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to raise awareness among scientific research organizations of existing measures to control the spread of invasive alien species, and to put in place measures to prevent or minimize the risks of introduction and spread of invasive alien species associated with scientific research activities"

[14] VI / 23 (24a): "[The Conference of the Parties (…) Urges Parties (…) to promote and carry out, as appropriate, research and assessments on] The characteristics of invasive species and the vulnerability of ecosystems and habitats to invasion by alien species, and the impact of climate change on these parameters" and "The impact of alien species on biological diversity"

[15] V / 8 (14d): "Furthering research on the impact of alien invasive species on biological diversity"

[16] V / 8 (14f): "Developing a system for reporting new invasions of alien species and the spread of alien species into new areas"

Ever since negotiations have begun at international level (1999), the Federal Biological Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry (BBA) has addressed the issue of invasive alien species and has since then been actively involved in the work performed by IPPC, the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) and the EU in the research of dissemination mechanisms and in the identification, control and analysis of the risks posed by certain invasive alien species. A work priority of the BBA is the containment of the allergy-triggering plant *Ambrosia artemisiifolia.* In addition, the BBA is according to Section 33 (2) number 9 of the Plant Protection Act competent for conducting risk analyses. Under the IPPC action programme on invasive alien species, standard no. 11 on risk analysis was in 2003 supplemented by a number of new elements that focus more on the impact of quarantine pests on biodiversity than before.

To conclude, Germany takes the threat of IAS to biodiversity seriously – in accordance with decision VI / 23 (II)[17] and decision VIII / 27 (4)[18].

Annex:

Resolution adopted at the 4th NEOBIOTA conference

[17] VI / 23 (II): „Recognizing that invasive alien species represent one of the primary threats to biodiversity (…)"

[18] VIII / 27 (4): „[The Conference of the Parties] Encourages Parties to build capacity for action at the national level (…), in particular (…) countries that are centres of origin (…), to assist in the improved prevention, rapid response and implementation of management measures to address threats of invasive alien species"