

Please note that the Austrian submission on alien species has been divided into two separate reports on alien plant species and alien animal species.

Please provide the following details on the origin of this report on alien plant species

Contracting Party	AUSTRIA
<i>National Focal Point</i>	
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<i>Submission</i>	
Signature of officer responsible for submitting national report:	
Date of submission:	January 3, 2001

Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report

Ad stakeholders: The members of the Austrian National Biodiversity Commission have been invited to participate in the preparation and discussion of this questionnaire filled in by plant specialists. The National Biodiversity Commission was entrusted by the Federal Ministry of Environment in 1996 to coordinate and harmonize the numerous activities and programs as well as to promote the flow and exchange of information. This commission is composed of representatives from administrative departments (Federal Ministries and Provincial authorities), unions and management, science and NGOs.

Additional remark: It was not possible to reach all stakeholders who are interested in alien plant species. This is partly because there is no German version of the thematic report on alien species and because general information in the context of this report is lacking. The EU as signatory could offer this useful general information and a German version.

Ad material: Research projects on alien plant species are in realisation. Additional knowledge was gathered from actual monitoring projects (e.g. the mapping of the flora of Austria) and a recent study. Expert knowledge of specialists was used too.

Ad process: The Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management involved the Austrian National Biodiversity Commission, where a discussion of the actions to be taken in the context of alien species took place. Afterwards, contracts with plant specialists were made to provide a study on alien plant species in Austria. These plant specialists filled in the questionnaire, the final version was discussed in the Austrian National Biodiversity Commission before it was sent to the SCBD.

Article 8h Alien species

1. What is the relative priority afforded to implementation of this Article and the associated decisions by your country?					
a) High		b) Medium	X	c) Low	
1. To what extent are the resources available adequate for meeting the obligations and recommendations made?					
a) Good		b) Adequate		c) Limiting	X 1)
				d) Severely limiting	

1. Has your country identified alien species introduced?	
a) no	
b) only major species of concern	X 2)
c) a comprehensive system tracks introductions	
1. Has your country developed national policies for addressing issues related to alien invasive species?	
a) no	X
b) yes – as part of a national biodiversity strategy (please give details below)	
c) yes – as a separate strategy (please give details below)	
1. Has your country assessed the risks posed to ecosystems, habitats or species by the introduction of these alien species?	
a) no	
b) only some alien species of concern have been assessed	X
c) most alien species have been assessed	
1. Has your country undertaken measures to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species?	
a) no measures	
b) some measures in place	X
c) potential measures under review	
d) comprehensive measures in place	

Decision IV/I Report and recommendations of the third meeting of SBSTTA

1. Is your country collaborating in the development of projects at national, regional, sub-regional and international levels to address the issue of alien species?	
a) little or no action	
b) discussion on potential projects under way	
c) active development of new projects	X

1. Does your national strategy and action plan address the issue of alien species?	
a) no	
b) yes – limited extent	X
c) yes – significant extent	

Case-studies

1. Has your country submitted case-studies on the prevention of introduction, control, and eradication of alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species, in response to the call by the fourth meeting of SBSTTA?	
a) no – please indicate below whether this is due to a lack of available case-studies or for other reasons	
b) yes – please give below any views you may have on the usefulness of the preparation of case-studies for developing a better biological understanding of the problem and/or better management responses.	?
1. How many case-studies are available that could be used to gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding alien species in your country?	
a) none	
b) 1-2 – limited understanding	?
c) >2 – significant information available	

Transboundary issues

1. Are known alien invasive species in your country also a problem in neighbouring or biogeographically-similar countries?	
a) not known	
b) none	
c) a few – but in general alien invasive species problems are specific	
d) more than a few - in general we share common problems with other countries	X
1. Is your country collaborating in the development of policies and programmes at regional, sub-regional or international levels to harmonise measures for prevention and control of alien invasive species?	
a) little or no action	
b) discussion on potential collaboration underway	X
c) development of collaborative approaches for a limited number of species	
d) consistent approach and strategy used for all common problems	

Further comments

1) Extremely limiting is financial support. E.g., the Austrian government has recently decided, not to support the „Global Taxonomy Initiative“ financially. For getting sufficient knowledge on Neobiota, a better financial funding is essential.

Not limiting is the number of specialists working in this field in Austria.

2) The knowledge about alien species is differing widely between different taxonomic groups. Relatively well-known are vascular plants, poorly known are e.g. algae and fungi. The knowledge existing is the result of many scientific projects and special emphasis should be put on this field in coming years. E.g. thesis at universities or projects should be dedicated to the most harmful and problematic alien plant species in Austria. But intense research in this field requires better financial support.

Law:

The introduction of alien plant species requires a permission in 8 of the 9 Austrian „Laender“. Above that, in 6 „Laender“ „modern“ agriculture and forestry is excepted from this obligation.

SUMMARY

Establishing a permanent Austrian monitoring system for alien plant species would be very important. This monitoring system should focus on the most problematic alien plant species. It should offer accurate and reliable data concerning the relevance of certain alien plant species in Austria and, if necessary, it should offer strategies to combat alien plant species.

A first inventory of alien plant species is being produced at the moment. This inventory will be published.

There is a great necessity (based on reliable scientific data) to investigate the threats alien plant species pose on the diversity of the autochthonous flora. Unfortunately, case-studies explicitly dealing with this subject are lacking for almost all groups.

Please provide the following details on the origin of this report on alien animal species

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<i>National Focal Point</i>	
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<i>Submission</i>	
Signature of officer responsible for submitting national report:	
Date of submission:	January 3, 2001

Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report

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Additional remark: It was not possible to reach all stakeholders who are interested in alien animal species. This is partly because there is no German version of the thematic report on alien species and because general information in the context of this report is lacking. The EU as signatory could offer this useful general information and a German version.

Ad material: Research projects on alien animal species are in realisation. Additional knowledge was gathered from actual monitoring projects and a recent study. Expert knowledge of specialists was used too.

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Article 8h Alien species

1. What is the relative priority afforded to implementation of this Article and the associated decisions by your country?					
a) High		b) Medium	X	c) Low	
2. To what extent are the resources available adequate for meeting the obligations and recommendations made?					
a) Good		b) Adequate		c) Limiting	X
				d) Severely limiting	

1. Has your country identified alien species introduced?	
a) no	
b) only major species of concern	X
c) a comprehensive system tracks introductions	
2. Has your country developed national policies for addressing issues related to alien invasive species?	
a) no	X
b) yes – as part of a national biodiversity strategy (please give details below)	
c) yes – as a separate strategy (please give details below)	
3. Has your country assessed the risks posed to ecosystems, habitats or species by the introduction of these alien species?	
a) no	X
b) only some alien species of concern have been assessed	
c) most alien species have been assessed	
4. Has your country undertaken measures to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species?	
a) no measures	X
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Decision IV/I Report and recommendations of the third meeting of SBSTTA

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a) little or no action	X
b) discussion on potential projects under way	
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a) no	X
b) yes – limited extent	
c) yes – significant extent	

Case-studies

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Further comments

Information on alien animal species is scattered widely in the literature or known by the relevant experts of the groups only. There is a great demand for a comprehensive survey of which species actually occur in Austria and – on a larger scale – a great necessity (based on reliable scientific data) to investigate the threats those species pose on the diversity of the autochthonous fauna. Unfortunately, case-studies explicitly dealing with this subject are lacking for almost all groups.

Financial support of such studies would obviously pay back the often enormous costs of eradicating invasive species afterwards.

Concerning birds, reptiles and amphibians no case studies dealing with consequences of alien animal species on the autochthonous fauna are available.

The collecting of relevant data concerning distribution of alien animal species is done by NGOs and museums.

The knowledge about alien animal species is differing widely between different taxonomic groups. Relatively well-known are vertebrates, poorly known are most of the other animal groups. The knowledge existing is the result of many scientific projects and special emphasis should be put in this field in the coming years. E.g. thesis at universities or projects should be dedicated to the most harmful and problematic alien animal species in Austria. But intense research in this field requires better financial support.

A first inventory of alien animal species is being produced at the moment. This inventory will be published.

Law:

The introduction of alien animal species requires a permission in all 9 Austrian „Laender“. In 7 „Laender“ „modern“ agriculture and forestry is excepted from this obligation.