

**International Workshop**  
**Invasive Plants in the Mediterranean Type Regions of the World**  
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**25-27 May 2005, Mèze, France**  
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**Conclusions**

The Workshop, co-organized by the Conservatoire Botanique National Méditerranéen de Porquerolles, the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization, the Council of Europe and the World Conservation Union – Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, was held in Mèze (France), from 25 to 27 May 2005.

It was attended by over 110 experts from 24 countries (including 19 EPPO countries: Algeria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Morocco, Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia & Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, and the United Kingdom). Experts from the other Mediterranean Type Regions of the World (Northern Chile, California, the Cape Region of South Africa, and Western Australia) presented their experience with invasive species.

The interdisciplinary programme had the following sessions:

Session 1: Listing invasive plants and criteria, state of the art.

Session 2: Prevention, dealing with introductions and spread of invasive plants (through horticulture, agriculture, forestry and landscape management).

Session 3: Communication, education and awareness-raising on invasive alien plants.

Session 4: Management of invasive plants.

Each session was followed by working groups in which the following issues were considered:

### **Definitions**

Participants stressed the need to clearly define terms like "alien" or "invasive". They noted that biological definitions concerning the importance of spread and impact of non-native species exist and are scientifically sound, but that the terminology used in specific situations may differ. Regardless of the term used, the definition of invasiveness should encompass significant ecological and economic impacts. The participants agreed that the measure of invasiveness should be impact-based, and not strictly determined by plant cover or distribution.

As a result of the Workshop, a synopsis or table will be produced that cross references the terminology used to describe high impact species from region to region or country to country.

### **Lists of plants / Databases**

Participants agreed on the importance of collecting and sharing data on plants and debated how databases may be harmonized. They noted that data on invasive species is still sparse, therefore baseline surveys and field study on IAS in MTE countries are of capital importance.

In this respect, existing international standards (e.g. for taxonomy or for pest reporting) and vocabulary should be used. Participants supported the development of national databases with links to other interfaces (Global Invasive Species databases, GISIN,...).

## **Biological control**

It was noted that biological control of invasive plants has been developed in most of the Mediterranean type regions of the world with the exception of the Mediterranean Basin (and Europe in general). Participants noted the need for a public awareness communication network devoted to solutions based on biological control.

Promotion of flagship examples was retained as a main recommendation for the facilitation of Biological Control.

## **Accompaniment of the horticulture and landscape professions**

Participants noted that plants that are invasive to natural areas often come from gardens and public landscape operations. For most of these plants, sale and movement are not regulated. Thus the promotion of a voluntary program in horticulture to reduce the availability of invasive species will be critical to preserve biological diversity. Education is necessary not only for nursery managers and landscape architects but also for the public who demand these plants for gardening. Some tools to help and motivate the horticulture industry could be for instance an enhanced collaboration with local authorities, who might be persuaded to change approved plant lists used for public landscaping. Voluntary Codes of Conduct (such as those existing in North America) should be developed in this sense.

## **Regulations for trade and introduction**

Even if there is often some legal basis for the prevention of introductions of IAS, there are important gaps and different points of view were expressed concerning a more stringent approach versus legislation not being a realistic approach.

More information on the species present or absent in the different countries is required and there is also a need for a system of surveillance to monitor what is happening and to assess when eradication, containment or control are required. In a global perspective, cooperation and communication between relevant sectors is recommended. An increased application of Voluntary Codes of Conduct and recommendations (« soft law ») by relevant bodies is needed, and initiatives with nursery industries creating a favourable environment are to be encouraged.

## **Communication and education on Invasive Species**

Participants acknowledged that communication is a fundamental tool to help deal with invasive species issues. They considered that communication should first focus on how to stop the use of main well-known invasive species, in particular in public areas. They recommended that specific messages should be developed for specific target audiences, including the publicising of a comprehensive list of invasive plants in each country.

## **Human Dimension in dealing with Invasive Plants**

The group recommended that communication should focus on actions (not only problems) and propose practical measures that people can implement. Involvement of concerned groups is a key point. There is a need for simple, consistent, accurate and credible messages to communicate to the public.

It was noted that research in social sciences should also be encouraged to better understand relation of the public to IAS issues and to obtain an interdisciplinary approach of the topic (cultural, social, economic and biological).

## **Predictive spatial modelling**

Predictive models are important multipurpose tools for managing invasive species, (e.g., they help prioritise management and control efforts and make up for a lack of data). However it might be preferable to restrict their use over shorter time-frames to get more reliable results. Prediction of species ranges must be conducted with an understanding of their historical expansion in the region, potential impacts on ecosystems, synergies with various scenarios (e.g., climate change). This approach needs to be conducted on a species-by-species basis. Networks should be promoted between different regions for exchanging data concerning in particular the behaviour of species in native and invaded ranges.

The following preliminary set of candidate species was identified as a priority to create spatial models: *Carpobrotus edulis*, *Acacia mearnsii*, *Pinus* spp. (*P. pinaster*, *P. halepensis*, *P. radiata*), *Opuntia maxima*, *Eschizolchia californica*, *Chrysanthemoides monilifera*, *Cortaderia selloana*.

One of the results of this group is that participants will develop a network of interested people to compile species data for the key species and spatial models of selected species in the following months.

## **Cooperative Islands Initiative – Managing IAS on Mediterranean Islands**

Recommendations and actions to be taken are the following:

1. Information and Experience sharing (to be completed by December 2005)

A webpage / platform for experience and information sharing on IAS on Mediterranean Islands designed and hosted by IUCN – Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation An electronic newsletter on IAS on Mediterranean Islands will be produced.

2. Raising awareness on IAS (to be done by July 2008 )

An education programme is initiated in cooperation of the federal or regional ministries of education.

3. Demonstration projects (to be implemented by July 2006)

Constitution of a task force to identify some potential IAS Demonstration projects involving prevention, eradication and control objectives.

## **New network for the management of Mediterranean Invasive Plant Species**

Participants discussed how to perpetuate the results of the workshop by building a new network:

- to maintain a link between the participants: to create a website, to develop links with other networks, to disseminate an electronic newsletter and to appoint one contact person from each country.

- to officialise the workshop: by organizing other workshop and by the adoption and dissemination of the Mèze Declaration.

- to make people work together on projects (e. g. predictive models of invasions).

- to exchange information: to publish a book on Mediterranean species, to built a list of invasive species in Mediterranean type ecosystems.

As a result of the Workshop, the participants drafted the Declaration of Mèze that will be promoted by the associated structures of the workshop.