



## **Conference statement of the “Invasive Alien Predators – policy, research and management” conference in Luleå, Sweden 16-18 June 2013.**

The conference was organised by the LIFE+ project "*Management of the invasive Raccoon Dog (Nyctereutes procyonoides) in the north-European countries – MIRDINEC LIFE+/09/NAT/SE/344*".

The conference gathered approximately 100 participants from 13 countries and three continents, and has seen the active participation of leading experts from all over the world.

The on-going effort to develop a European policy on IAS received particular attention during the conference, and a specific workshop discussed the key points that a European strategy should cover. In the closing discussion, moderated by Dr. Piero Genovesi, the participants (not including national authorities/ministries) to the meeting agreed on the following list of priority actions:

1. the need to adopt without any further delay a stringent EU policy on invasive species to meet the Target 5 of the EU biodiversity strategy as well as Aichi Target 9.
2. the need to secure a dedicated budget to the struggle against IAS, also developing mechanisms for contingency actions against new incursions (early warning rapid response).
3. that countries or regional authorities should designate competent authorities with a specific mandate on IAS.
4. the need to avoid or solve constraints of regulations developed for other sectors, to the management of IAS: for example there should be ways to grant the access to private land for managing key invasives, it should be possible to use all effective measures to control invasive species (e.g. trapping devices, toxic baits), and therefore regulations on the use of toxicants, or of trapping devices should have derogation mechanisms for projects dealing with IAS, for example when protecting endangered species on islands.
5. the need for a stringent regulation of trade (such as pet trade) is a crucial pillar of any coordinated policy on invasive species: the EU should develop a community approach to this issue, and at the same time it should encourage European countries to develop national regulations.
6. that pets and domestic species are an important component of IAS and should be explicitly covered by an EU policy.
7. that IAS has no borders, and it is therefore essential to encourage international cooperation and coordination; one pro-active example has during the conference been shown by the Nordic countries in the LIFE+ raccoon dog project.
8. that Europe should support eradication and control projects, to prevent further damage by already established species, also encouraging research on and development of innovative control techniques.
9. that the involvement of stakeholders is crucial, and any EU policy should find ways – including financial mechanisms – to encourage bottom up approaches to IAS, as in the case of the raccoon dog project.
10. that societal support is essential, and Europe should invest in communication, awareness raising, networking, as well as in voluntary approaches to the issue, for example by supporting the development of codes of conduct.

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*On behalf the “Invasive Alien Predators – policy, research and management” conference in Luleå, Sweden 16-18 June 2013.*