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## Press Release

**Together with ELO, ENA, ZVG, Copa and Cogeca express concerns about the vote of the EU Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Committee, warning socio-economic impact not properly assessed.**

Together with ELO, ENA, ZVG, Copa and Cogeca expressed their concerns today about the EU Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Committee vote on adding species to the EU list on IAS, warning that the socio-economic impact of this has not been properly assessed.

The EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) aims to protect nature biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as to minimize and mitigate the impact on human health and the economy that invasive alien species can have. It includes three types of actions: prevention, early detection and rapid eradication, and management. The Committee vote this week aimed to amend the list of invasive alien species to take account of the EU's concerns.

Following this vote, 12 new species are being added to the EU list of IAS that was adopted in July 2016. Among these 12 species, 3 species are of socio-economic importance to the horticulture sector, namely *Asclepias syriaca* (Common milkweed); *Gunnera tinctoria* (Chilean rhubarb); *Pennisetum setaceum* (Crimson fountaingrass).

But Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen warned "We regret the Committee's vote on listing these 3 species since we consider that the socio-economic benefits of them were not properly assessed or taken into consideration

ELO Secretary-General said "We generally consider that the scientists who are carrying out the risk assessments for the species are not able to properly assess the socio-economic benefits. In order for the Risk Assessments to be robust and fact based, they should also include economic experts alongside the environmental ones.

Josep M. Pagès, Secretary General European Nursery Association added "We also urge the Commission to make a distinction between Invasive Alien Species and their sterile varieties. Ornamental plant breeders have used a number of methods to develop sterile varieties, with low or no effective reproductive and dispersal mechanisms, that can therefore not become invasive as defined under Article 3 (2). This distinction has so far not been made by the Regulation. Sterile varieties coming from species that are undergoing risk assessments should be excluded from the Regulations 'scope'".

"Finally, the list should primarily focus on species that are at an early stage of invasion since combatting already widely spread species would in many cases neither be cost-efficient nor feasible. Furthermore, Member States should make use of national lists, since many of the proposed species are actually only a problem under very specific climatic conditions and don't pose any risk in other

Member States.”, Bertram Fleischer, Secretary General of ZVG, the German Horticultural Association, concluded.

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