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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Implementation of the Regulation on invasive alien species - Information from the Danish, Greek and Lithuanian delegations

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Danish, Greek and Lithuanian delegations on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 5 March 2018.

Implementation of the Regulation on invasive alien species**- Information from the Danish, Greek and Lithuanian delegations -**

Denmark, Greece and Lithuania would like to thank the Commission for taking into account the many concerns of Member States as expressed in the Committee on Invasive Species and deciding to postpone the update of the Union list until after 2018. This will provide a welcome opportunity to ensure a proper updating process and more efficient implementation of the Regulation.

Denmark, Greece and Lithuania fully support the purpose of Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. Safeguarding wildlife and nature in Europe is an inherently cross-border issue. The implementation of the Regulation is costly and burdensome for Member States and should be done in the most efficient manner in both environmental and cost-efficiency terms. Recent debates in the Committee have made it clear that there is a need for political discussion on the principles underpinning the implementation of the Regulation. This should be based on Member States' experiences in order to ensure the best possible implementation of the Regulation.

On the one hand, the Regulation states that prevention is generally more environmentally desirable and cost-efficient and should be prioritised. On the other hand, it states that the Union list shall include as a priority invasive alien species that are already established and have the most adverse impact. Against this background, Denmark, Greece and Lithuania would like to discuss the priority given to the listing of widely spread species and also species that are not yet present, to ensure that the updating of the Union list fits the purpose of the Regulation. In light of the recurrent discussions in the Committee on the process and speed of updating the Union list, this should be further clarified.

To ensure the most cost-efficient implementation, the EU should focus on invasive species that are not yet widely spread and are most urgent or threatening when considering species for the Union list.

With regard to the frequency in updating the list, enough time must be allowed for proper experience to be gained in implementing the prescribed control of the species, otherwise there is a risk that Member States may end up taking actions that are neither fully effective nor cost efficient. In this context it is clear that annual updates are too cumbersome and do not leave sufficient time to gain the experience in implementing the Regulation that is needed to inform decisions on future updates of the Union list.

The risk assessments submitted by individual Member States must be dealt with by the Scientific Forum, but the examination and discussions could benefit from a less hasty process. If an urgent situation arises between updates and reviews, the emergency measures in Article 10 of the Regulation can be resorted to.

Finally, there is a need to clarify the future extent of the list. During the negotiations on the Regulation, there were discussions about the maximum number of species to be added to the list.
