

**Question for written answer E-003431/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Mireille D'Ornano (ENF)

Subject: Proliferation of the grey squirrel

Native to North America, the grey squirrel *Scirus carolinensis* was introduced into the UK at the beginning of the 20th century.

The grey squirrel, which is not native to European ecosystems, drives out the red squirrel *Scirus vulgaris* by depriving it of its habitat and introducing the parapoxvirus. The grey squirrel carries this virus, but is itself unaffected by it.

The proliferation of the grey squirrel also has an adverse impact on local ecosystems, in particular by depriving certain bird species of their habitat. Both these phenomena have been observed in the UK, where the red squirrel is facing imminent extinction.

In accordance with Regulation 1143/2014 of 22 October 2014 and its annex, the grey squirrel is recognised as an invasive species. Regulation 2015/736 imposes a ban on introducing it into the EU.

1. Will the Commission encourage measures to control the grey squirrel in territories where it has not yet officially become established?
2. How does the Commission assess the feasibility and, more particularly, the cost of measures to eradicate the grey squirrel in territories where it is well established, in particular in the UK?