

**Question for written answer E-005307/2013  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Struan Stevenson (ECR)**

Subject: Combating invasive alien species

In the UK, there is a growing need to prevent the spread of certain invasive alien species, many of which are detrimentally impacting native species. In Scotland, the non-native plant species *Rhododendron ponticum* is causing significant damage to native oakwoods.

This alien species possesses dense thickets, which shade out indigenous plants, preventing regeneration of trees in woods and obliterating the ground vegetation on moors. It is poisonous to livestock and cannot be controlled by grazing. It also plays host to the disease organisms *Phytophthora ramorum* and *P. kernoviae*, which attack oak and beech trees. The costs of eradicating this species in the region of Argyll and Bute alone have been calculated at GBP 9 million, rising to a staggering GBP 64 million by 2028 if action is not taken promptly. Furthermore, similar scenarios have been noted across the EU, particularly in western France.

Is the Commission aware of the impact that invasive alien species are having in certain regions of the European Union? If so, what steps will the Commission take to ensure that effective legislative proposals are submitted to prevent the release of non-native plants into the environment?