

**Question for written answer E-011920/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Inclusion of *Vespa velutina* in new EU legislation on invasive species

The arrival in the EU of *Vespa velutina*, or the Asian predatory wasp, has been causing serious problems for the agricultural, fruit and vegetable, and beekeeping sectors since 2004, as well as seriously harming native species, biodiversity in general and human health (eight stings require hospitalisation). Although the most worrying invasion of this species has been observed in Garrotxa (Catalonia), specimens of the Asian predatory wasp have been found in several parts of northern Spain and all this suggests that it could move south towards Tarragona.

This large wasp, which feeds its larvae essentially with native honeybees, feeds on fruit nectar. Given its tremendous capacity to reproduce (12 000 specimens per fertilised female at a ratio of 200 queens per nest), the absence of a natural predator for this species and its ability to spread rapidly – it can travel 30 km on each gust of wind –, *Vespa velutina* is causing a large number of beehives to disappear and is threatening crops and fruit. On top of this, the wasp is difficult to get rid of; it is currently exterminated largely through visual detection and destruction of the nests.

Considering that, according to the Commission's figures, invasive species cost the European Union at least EUR 12 billion per year, is the Commission monitoring developments and the damage caused by *Vespa velutina* in the EU, in socioeconomic and environmental terms?

Has the Commission received any communication from the Spanish authorities or any request for help to control and combat this pest?

Does the Commission plan to consider including of this type of wasp when it draws up the list of 50 invasive alien species set out in its proposal for a regulation COM(2013) 620?

What action is the Commission prepared to take to prevent the cross-border spread of *Vespa velutina*, which, since arriving in France by sea, has already been found in three EU countries?