

**Question for written answer E-002085/2020  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Aurelia Beigneux (ID)**

Subject: The proliferation of terrestrial flatworms

With the intensification of world trade, the importation of invasive species has become a scourge for European ecosystems. In some parts of Europe, the most common invasive species have been the stink bug and the Asian hornet. But lesser-known species are also destroying European ecosystems. The terrestrial flatworm (a species native to Argentina), is an unobtrusive, but equally devastating species. In Europe, it is found in a number of countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium).

In February, a team of French researchers published the findings of 7 years' work<sup>1</sup>. The species is found in seventy-two French departments. It has no natural enemies in Europe which means that it is a predator.

The species eats animals in the soil: earthworms, snails and insects which are essential for the balance of the ecosystem. Soil is a complex environment, with species that interact with each other. Terrestrial flatworms therefore disturb this environment. Counts have made it possible to estimate the production of individuals, per reproduction, at one thousand worms per hectare per day.

1. Does the Commission have a strategy to help scientists develop protocols for this species which is damaging the soil ecosystem in Europe?
2. If so, can it outline this strategy?

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<sup>1</sup> Justine J, Winsor L, Gey D, Gros P, Thévenot J. 2020. Obama chez moi! The invasion of metropolitan France by the land planarian *Obama nungara* (Platyhelminthes, Geoplanidae) PeerJ 8:e8385