

**Question for written answer E-003547/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: The electric ant: a threat to our European ecosystems

France is faced with a new invasive alien species: *Wasmannia auropunctata*, also known as the electric ant or little fire ant. It is native to South America and is characterised by its small size (1.5 millimetres), its golden-brown colouring, and its particularly painful bite, which can be fatal for many species of insect.

The electric ant has been rampant in Europe since 2016, specifically in the area around Malaga in Spain. According to France's National Inventory of Natural Heritage (INPN), it is one of the three most invasive ant species in the world, and has been added to the EU's List of Invasive Alien Species of Union Concern. Having only recently been identified in France, the species has potentially already spread to cover an area measuring half a hectare in Toulon.

The ant is easily transported alongside plants. Its invasive nature apparently stems from its unique reproductive capabilities: queen ants in this species reproduce by parthenogenesis, a type of cloning which does not require fertilisation by a male ant. The INPN has stated that the ant has a serious ecological and economic impact, with tens of millions of dollars being spent every year to combat its spread.

How does the Commission intend to combat this invasive alien species at European level?

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