

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003281/25
to the Commission
Oliver Schenk (PPE), Norbert Lins (PPE)
(25 August 2025)**

Subject: Classification of the sika deer as an invasive species — impact on husbandry and management

On 20 June 2025, the Committee on Invasive Alien Species classified the sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) as an invasive alien species. Implementing this decision could lead to far-reaching restrictions or a complete ban on keeping this species, including for animals kept in fenced enclosures or controlled facilities.

Although isolated cases of hybridisation with native species are known, the risk posed by animals kept in closed facilities is not comparable to an uncontrolled spread in the wild.

1. What scientific evidence and risk assessments support the inclusion of sika deer in the Union list?
2. Does the Commission plan to distinguish between wild populations and controlled rearing in fenced enclosures?
3. Does the Commission intend to issue recommendations or allow scope for national exemptions, transition periods or differentiated implementation, especially where there is no environmental risk?

Submitted: 25.8.2025

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(26 September 2025)**

The inclusion of the Sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) on the list of invasive alien species of Union concern was underpinned by a risk assessment⁽¹⁾ which, like those for other species included on the Union list, was deemed fit for purpose by the Scientific Forum, which comprises experts appointed by all Member States.

In accordance with Article 7 of the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation⁽²⁾, invasive alien species of Union concern shall not be intentionally kept or bred, including in contained holding. Pursuant to Article 8 of the IAS Regulation, establishments involved in ex-situ conservation, research or medicinal applications of listed species may apply for permits to their Member State, provided that the conditions outlined in the said Article are met.

The Commission finds no justification for national exemptions, transition periods (other than those already specified in Articles 31 and 32 of the IAS Regulation) or differentiated implementation. The aforementioned risk assessment clearly states that releases or escapes from captive facilities have been documented in the past and are very likely to occur again. The environmental risks, including hybridisation with native red deer, are elaborated in detail in the risk assessment.

⁽¹⁾ https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/98665af0-7dfa-448c-8bf4-e1e086b50d2c/library/5891b3af-e561-4750-86cc-709857e88c94?p=1&n=10&sort=modified_DESC.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species, OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35-55.