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Session 6 – Pathways and dispersal of invasive species

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INVASIVE ALIEN PLANT SPECIES IN THE FLORA OF UKRAINE AND POLAND

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The scope of the study is to synthesise Polish and Ukrainian approaches to the establishment, spread, and role of alien plant species in the flora of both countries, with particular emphasis on invasive ones, against the background of the biogeographical differences between the two countries. We focused on assessing the participation of invasive alien species of plants (IAS-P); identifying the pathways of their introduction and spread; evaluating the degree of dissemination of selected IAS- in analyzed countries; and the degree of invasiveness of selected IAS-P with different statuses in the floras of Ukraine and Poland. In general, four groups of invasive alien species can be distinguished: i) highly invasive species in both countries (8 species: *Acer negundo*, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, *Echinocystis lobata*, *Heracleum sosnowskyi*, *Impatiens parviflora*, *Reynoutria japonica*, *Robinia pseudoacacia*, *Solidago canadensis*); ii) species with a high status of invasiveness in one country and less or unknown in another (20); iii) species which are moderately or potentially invasive in both countries (5); iv) species whose status in one of country requires clarification and additional research (6). Among selected species, 7 are on the current list of species posing a threat to the EU, while 3 are included on the list posing a threat to Poland (a member state). It was found that some of the studied species in the both countries or botanical and geographical zones have varied statuses, e.g., *Grindelia squarrosa* and *Ulmus pumila* in the Steppe zones of Ukraine are highly invasive species instead in Poland, the first species is locally established and the second one so far does not spontaneously occur in Poland. Information on how and why alien species are introduced to new regions provides the foundation for pre- and at-border management strategies that aim to prevent the introduction of alien species.