

The 7th European Conference of Apidology

7-9 September 2016

Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Edited by Daniel S. Dezmirean

The European Life Project STOPVESPA: first year of activity and most relevant results.

Laurino D., Manino A., Bertolino S., Lioy S. and Porporato M.

Department of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences, University of Turin, Largo Paolo Braccini 2, 10095, Grugliasco (Turin), Italy.

E mail: marco.porporato@unito.it

The yellow legged hornet *Vespa velutina* Lepeletier 1836 is an Asiatic hornet species introduced in France in 2004 that is rapidly colonizing other European countries. In Italy *V. velutina* was observed for the first time in 2012 and first nests detected in 2013; since then the species is quickly spreading throughout the northwest part of the country, and at the end of 2015 *V. velutina* occupied an area of about 930 km².

V. velutina is an invasive alien species in Europe because of its impact on natural ecosystems, apiculture and human well-being. In fact, *V. velutina* could actively prey honeybees, wild bees and other native insects, producing economic and biodiversity losses. In addition nests can be constructed in urban areas and might be considered a risk for human population.

For these reasons, an European Life Project (LIFE14 NAT/IT/001128 STOPVESPA) recently started in Italy. The actions carried out by this project in the first year of activity are: *i*) monitoring the evolution of *V. velutina* populations in Italy; *ii*) controlling the populations by nest-localization and nest-destruction (in 2015 181 nests were observed and 23 collected for nest analysis); *iii*) developing an harmonic radar to track the hornets while flying back to their nests; *iv*) evaluating the impacts of *V. velutina* on natural communities, ecosystems and beekeeping; *v*) establishing of an Early Warning and Rapid Response System at a national level.

In this work we present the most relevant results obtained by the STOPVESPA project in the first year of activity.