



Scientific Panel on Plant Health

Minutes of the 94th Plenary meeting

**Held on 7-8 July 2021, WEB
(Agreed on 26 July 2021)**

Participants

■ Panel Members

Claude Bragard, Francesco Di Serio, Paolo Gonthier, Josep Jaques Miret, Annemarie Justesen, Alan MacLeod, Sven Christer Magnusson, Panagiotis Milonas, Juan A. Navas-Cortés, Philippe Reignault, Roel Potting, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Wopke van der Werf, Antonio Vicent, Jonathan Yuen and Lucia Zappalà.

■ Hearing Experts

Françoise Petter and Camille Picard (EPPO);

■ European Commission and/or Member States representatives

Maria Kammenou, Maria Belen Marquez Garcia, Maria Mirazchiyska, Panagiota Mylona, Wolfgang Reinert and Leonard Shumbe (EC SANTE).

■ EFSA

Alpha Unit: Caterina Campese, Martina Capelli, Ewelina Czwieniczek, Eduardo De La Peña, Alice Delbianco, Ciro Gardi, Ignazio Graziosi, Virag Kertesz, Svetla Kozelska, Nik Kriz, Andrea Maiorano, Luka Mustapic, Patricia Nascimento, Marco Pautasso, Evgenia Sarakatsani, Giuseppe Stancanelli, Franz Streissl, Emanuela Tacci, Sara Tramontini and Sybren Vos.

AMU Unit: Olaf Mosbach Schulz

GMO Unit: Franz Streissl

■ Tasking Grant

Alzbeta Mikulova

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Scientific Committee/Scientific Panel/ Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Panel members invited to the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process. Certain interests were declared orally by the members before the beginning of the meeting. For further details on the outcome of the screening of the Oral Declaration(s) of Interest made at the beginning of the meeting, please refer to the Annex.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 93rd Plenary

The minutes of the 93rd Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure

5. Election of Chair and Vice-Chairs and review of Working Groups

5.1 Election of Chair and Vice Chairs of EFSA PLH Panel

Election of the PLH Panel Chair and two Vice-chairs were carried out according to the Decision of the EFSA Management Board concerning the establishment and operations of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and of their Working Groups (<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-02/expertselection.pdf>).

Candidates were communicated before voting: Candidates were Claude Bragard (Chair), Francesco Di Serio (Vice-Chair) and Jonathan Yuen (Vice-Chair). All Panel Members present agreed unanimously to waive the secrecy of the voting. The voting was done orally. Claude Bragard was unanimously elected as PLH Panel Chair and Francesco Di Serio and Jonathan Yuen were unanimously elected as PLH Panel Vice Chairs.

5.2 Review of PLH Panel Working Groups

In order to assist the Panel in undertaking all necessary preparatory tasks in relation to draft scientific outputs falling under its remit, the current PLH Panel Working Groups (WG) were confirmed, including their chairmanship:

- Arthropod pest categorisations – WG Chair: MACLEOD Alan
- Plant pathogens pest categorisation – WG Chair: REIGNAULT Philippe

- High Risk Plants – Momordica – WG Chair: MILONAS Panagiotis
- High Risk Plants - Section I – WG Chair: POTTING Roel
- High Risk Plants - Section II – WG Chair: GONTHIER Paolo
- High Risk Plants - Section III – WG Chair: YUEN Jonathan
- Israel and South Africa citrus system approaches for FCM -
WG Chair: MILONAS Panagiotis
- US oak logs with system approach for oak wilt – WG Chair GONTHIER Paolo
- Quantitative Pest Risk Assessment (QPRA) Section I – WG Chair VAN DER WERF Wopke
- Quantitative Pest Risk Assessment (QPRA) Section II – WG Chair VICENT CIVERA Antonio

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption / endorsement

6.1 Art. 29 Scientific Opinion on pest categorisation of *Colletotrichum fructicola*

The EFSA Plant Health Panel performed a pest categorisation of *Colletotrichum fructicola* Prihast., a well-defined polyphagous fungus of the *C. gloeosporioides* complex which has been reported from all the five continents to cause anthracnose, bitter rot, and leaf spotting diseases on over 90 cultivated and non-cultivated woody or herbaceous plant species. The pathogen is not included in EU Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/2072. Because of the very wide host range, this pest categorisation focused on the host plants *Camellia sinensis*, *Citrus sinensis*, *C. reticulata*, *Fragaria x ananassa*, *Malus domestica*, *M. pumila*, *Persea americana*, *Prunus persica*, *Pyrus pyrifolia* and *P. bretschneideri* for which there was robust evidence that *C. fructicola* was formally identified by morphology and multilocus gene sequencing analysis. Host plants for planting and fresh fruits are the main pathways for the entry of the pathogen into the EU. There are no reports of interceptions of *C. fructicola* in the EU. The pathogen has been reported from Italy and France. The host availability and climate suitability factors occurring in some parts of the EU are favourable for the establishment of the pathogen. Economic impact on the production of the main hosts is expected if establishment occurs. Phytosanitary measures are available to prevent the re-introduction of the pathogen into the EU. Although the pathogen is present in the EU, there is a high uncertainty on its actual distribution in the territory because of the re-evaluation of *Colletotrichum* taxonomy and the lack of systematic surveys. Therefore, the Panel cannot conclude with certainty on whether *C. fructicola* satisfies the criterium of being present but not widely distributed in the EU to be regarded as a potential Union quarantine pest unless

systematic surveys for *C. fructicola* are conducted and *Colletotrichum* isolates from the EU in culture collections are re-evaluated.

The opinion on pest categorisation of *Colletotrichum fructicola* was adopted on 8 July 2021.

6.2 Art. 29 Scientific Opinion on pest categorisation on *Phenacoccus solenopsis*

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of *Phenacoccus solenopsis* (Hemiptera: Pseudococcidae) for the European Union (EU) territory. This species is not included in EU Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/2072. *P. solenopsis* is native to North America and has spread to all continents except Antarctica. It has recently been reported from Cyprus, Greece, and Italy. This mealybug is a polyphagous pest, feeding on about 300 plant species. It usually feeds on aerial plant parts, especially new growth, but also occurs on roots, and is often associated with ants. It is an economically important pest of ornamentals, such as hibiscus and lantana, glasshouse vegetable crops, mainly bell pepper, tomato, and eggplant, and field crops, such as cotton. Large populations cause dieback and reduction in yield. Adult and immature *P. solenopsis* could enter the EU with imported fresh fruit, vegetables, and cut flowers, although the main pathway of introduction is likely to be plants for planting. Host availability and climate suitability indicate that most of the EU would be suitable for establishment. The main natural dispersal stage is the first instar, which crawls over the plant or may be dispersed further by wind and animals. All stages may be transported over longer distances in trade. Phytosanitary measures are available and should prevent further introductions and slow the spread within the EU. *P. solenopsis* is under official control in Cyprus and has recently been reported in Greece and Italy. Assuming that these reports reflect a limited distribution, and *P. solenopsis* shortly comes under official control, it would satisfy all the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for it to be regarded as a potential Union quarantine pest.

The opinion on pest categorisation of *Phenacoccus solenopsis* was adopted on 8 July 2021.

6.3 Art. 29 Scientific Opinion on pest categorisation on *Phlyctinus callosus*

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of *Phlyctinus callosus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) for the European Union (EU) territory. This species is not included in EU Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/2072. *P. callosus* is a polyphagous pest native to South Africa which has spread to Australia and New Zealand, Reunion and St Helena. Immature development takes place in the soil where larvae feed on the roots of a variety of plants including grasses, root vegetables and herbaceous plants; adults are noted as significant pests of apples, nectarines and grapes, feeding on foliage and the surface of fruit causing scarring. Soft fruits such as strawberries and blueberries can also be

damaged by adult feeding. *P. callosus* has been intercepted in Europe on apples and peaches from South Africa. Table grapes could also provide a pathway for entry to the EU. Rooted plants for planting could also provide a potential pathway. Hosts are grown widely across the EU in areas with climates comparable to those in parts of South Africa, New Zealand and Australia where the pest is established suggesting that conditions in the EU are suitable for the establishment of *P. callosus*. If introduced into the EU, natural spread would be limited because adults cannot fly and must disperse by walking. However, the movement of host plants for planting within the EU could spread juvenile stages much faster and adults could spread with fruits. The prohibition of soil or growing media from third countries should prevent the entry of *P. callosus* larvae and pupae. Other phytosanitary measures are available to inhibit the entry of *P. callosus*. *P. callosus* satisfies the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for it to be regarded as a potential Union quarantine pest.

The opinion on pest categorisation of *Phlyctinus callosus* was adopted on 8 July 2021.

6.4 Art. 29 Scientific Opinion on pest categorisation on *Resseliella citrifrugis*

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of the citrus fruit midge, *Resseliella citrifrugis* Jiang (Diptera: Cecidomyiidae), for the territory of the EU. This species is not included in EU Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/2072. This oligophagous species, which feeds on *Citrus* spp. fruits, is known to occur in China (provinces of Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, and Sichuan). First generation adults emerge in April and oviposit on the peduncle and calyx of citrus fruits. Larvae feed on the albedo (the white layer between skin and pulp) of the fruit, which they tunnel. Infested fruit most often drop prematurely. Larvae pupate either within the fallen fruit or in the soil. This species has three main peaks of activity (May, June-July, August-September) and four generations per year in its native range. Mature larvae from the last generation are the overwintering stage. Potential entry pathways for *R. citrifrugis*, such as *Citrus* spp. plants for planting with foliage and soil/growing media, and soil/growing media can be considered as closed. The citrus fruit pathway remains open from countries where *R. citrifrugis* is known to occur. Indeed, this species was intercepted in fresh pomelos 11 times from December 2020 to January 2021 in the EU. Should *R. citrifrugis* enter the EU, the ample availability of hosts (*Citrus* spp.) and the climatic conditions in citrus growing areas of southern EU Member States would most probably allow this species to successfully establish and spread. Economic impact in citrus production is anticipated if establishment occurs. *R. citrifrugis* satisfies the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for this species to be regarded as a potential Union quarantine pest. There is uncertainty about the nomenclature of *R. citrifrugis* and its exact host range. However, because the name *Resseliella citrifrugis* is used in multiple sources reporting it as a

pest of citrus in China, where symptoms, biology and impact are described, these uncertainties do not affect the conclusions of this categorisation.

The opinion on pest categorisation of *Resseliella citrifrugis* was adopted on 8 July 2021.

6.5 Art. 29 Scientific Opinion on Commodity risk assessment of grafted plants of *Malus domestica* from Moldova

The draft opinion was presented and discussed. High uncertainties were identified regarding pests status, as some pests not reported in the dossier or in literature for Moldova are reported in neighboring countries and/or widespread in Europe. Little information on plant pests of *Malus domestica* in Moldova can be found in scientific literature databases. In addition, the dossier on *Malus domestica* from Moldova lacks details on risk mitigation measures, thus adding to the uncertainties. After a discussion on the dossier and the content of the opinion, it was decided to ask clarifications on the above issues to the NPPO of Moldova and to postpone accordingly the discussion for possible adoption of this draft opinion. In particular, the Panel suggested to require additional information regarding surveillance details (when available) to validate the status of some pest species in the country and, by doing so, to give the opportunity to Moldova NPPO to reduce the level of uncertainty by providing more information regarding the pests status.

6.6 Art. 29 Scientific Opinion on Commodity risk assessment of Citrus L. fruits from South Africa for *Thaumatotibia leucotreta* under a systems approach

The European Commission requested EFSA Panel on Plant Health to evaluate a dossier from South Africa where the application of the systems approach to mitigate the risk of entry of the false codling moth, *Thaumatotibia leucotreta* (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae), into the EU when trading citrus fruits is presented. After collecting additional evidence from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development of South Africa, and having reviewed the published literature, the Panel performed an assessment on the likelihood of pest freedom for *T. leucotreta* on citrus fruit at the point of entry in the EU considering the proposed systems approach. An expert judgement was given on the likelihood of pest freedom following the evaluation of the risk mitigation measures on *T. leucotreta*, including uncertainties. There were three options (i.e., A, B and C) within the systems approach followed in South Africa, differentiating mainly in the sampling intensity in the field and in the packing house as well as in the temperature conditions during shipment. Therefore, three independent elicitations were conducted, one for each option. The main uncertainties were: 1) whether one sampling per orchard can be representative for subsequent harvests (within four weeks) from the same orchard; 2) the correct implementation of the temperature regimes during shipment; 3) the mortality rate in fruit estimated for the different

temperature regimes. The Expert Knowledge Elicitation indicated with 95% certainty that 9,182 out of 10,000 pallets for option A, 8,478 out of 10,000 pallets for option B, and 9,743 out of 10,000 pallets for option C will be free from *T. leucotreta*. In light of the additional information provided by South Africa after the elicitations were performed, it became apparent that the setting temperature during shipment was not achieved in 12 out of 14 cases of interceptions at EU border. Therefore, there is increased uncertainty on pest freedom. The Panel identified the weaknesses associated with the risk mitigation measures in the systems approach and made recommendations that could increase its effectiveness.

The opinion was adopted by the Panel on 8/07/2021.

7. Feedback from Scientific Panel including their Working Groups, Scientific Committee, EFSA and European Commission

7.1 Feedback from EFSA process improvement initiative and workshop on Quantitative Pest Risk Assessment (QPRA)

Conclusions from the workshop were shared by EFSA staff, as well as ideas for improvement of the process for production of quantitative pest risk assessment. Feedback from Panel members on professional benefits of the workshop activity were collected.

7.2 Update from QPRA WGs (section 1 and 2) & work plan

Workplan on QPRA was shared with the Panel.

The proposal to address the PRA sections applying tier 2 approach for entry and tier 1 approach for spread and impact was presented. Tier 1 for spread and impact would be addressed with thematic workshops keeping the web-based settings due to the pandemic circumstances. EFSA staff shared with the Panel possible scenarios of workshop structure and organisation and possible ways to address the climate suitability (establishment) of the pests to be studied.

7.3 Update from WGs on Pest Categorisation & workplan

The panel was informed on the composition of the WG Pathogen pest categorisation. An overview was presented on the pests for which a pest categorisation opinion needs to be developed. Future meeting dates and pest categorisations which will be sent to the panel for review and possible adoption in the September plenary were presented.

Arthropod pest categorisation WG Chair gave a brief update on the current workload and next opinions to be sent to the PLH Panel for its revision.

7.4 Update High Risk Plants WGs (section 1, 2 and 3) & workplan

The status of the ongoing activities in the three WGs was presented.

7.5 Welcome to new trainees in PLH team and updates on changes in EFSA PLH team

The Panel and team welcomed the new trainees and were informed about the changes in the EFSA PLH team.

7.6 Update on EFSA teleworking and meetings policy until Dec 2021

ALPHA head of unit informed the panel that the policy of EFSA staff teleworking, meeting and mission via web is in force until December 2021.

7.7 Feedback and activities update from Uncertainty training

The results of the feedback survey on the EFSA PLH uncertainty training were shared with the Panel. A brief discussion followed on how the course was perceived and possible improvements for future courses on the topic.

7.8 EFSA standard operating procedure on risk assessment for generic mandates

This point of the agenda had to be postponed to the next Plenary in September.

7.9 Update on EFSA outsourcing

PLH team leader presented to the panel the EFSA Art. 36 grants launched on EFSA website as well as the outsourcing plan for the rest of 2021.

7.10 Feedback from the European Commission

EC SANTE observer informed the PLH panel on the discussion in PAFF Committee for the first amendment of Implementing Regulation 2019/2072, taking into account the results of the previous pest categorisation mandate to EFSA, and the pest risk assessments delivered by EFSA and EPPO. These draft legal acts appear in the Better Regulation Portal (BRP) for 4 weeks stakeholder consultation and are notified to WTO-SPS for a 60-day commenting period. The Panel was also informed that, after the publication of each HRP scientific opinion, this is presented and discussed in the PAFF committee

7.11 Feedback from Scientific Committee

PLH panel chair updated Panel on the SC discussion on the update of the EFSA guidance on EKE and on the EFSA strategy. SC has also discussed the work plan for the EFSA Scientific conference in 2022.

7.12 Meeting calendar

PLH Panel confirmed the plenary meetings calendar and also the half-day web plenaries scheduled for October and December 2021 to ensure more time for discussion and possible adoption of a high number of draft opinions.



ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH UNIT

Annex

Interests and actions resulting from the Oral Declaration of Interest done at the beginning of the meeting

With regard to this meeting, Dr. Francesco Di Serio declared the following interest with regard to the draft Scientific opinions on:

- Commodity risk assessment of grafted plants of *Malus domestica* from Moldova;

He informed the Panel that he participates to the work on this opinion as coordinator of an EFSA Art. 36 Tasking Grant Specific Contract. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management², and taking into account the specific matters discussed at the meeting in question, the interest above was deemed to represent a Conflict of Interest (CoI).

This results in the exclusion of the expert from discussion or voting as PLH Panel Member of item 6.5, however, he can participate to this agenda meeting to present the work he conducted as coordinator of the related EFSA Art 36 Tasking Grant Specific Contracts.

¹ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

²

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf