ALPHA UNIT, PLANT HEALTH TEAM

EFSA Network on Risk Assessment in Plant Health Minutes of the 17th meeting

Held on 09-10 December 2021, WEB CONFERENCE

(Agreed on 6 January 2022)

Participants

- **Network Representatives of Member States (including EFTA Countries):**

Country	Name
Austria	Sylvia Bluemel
Belgium	Kristien Braeken
Bulgaria	Tatyana Velichkova, & Irena Bogoeva
Cyprus	Despina Koukkoularides
Croatia	Dario Ivic
Czech Republic	Vaclav Stejskal
Denmark	Jørgen Søgaard Hansen
Estonia	Birger Ilau, Mart Kinkar
Finland	Salla Hannunen
France	Xavier Tassus, Christine Tayeh
Germany	Ernst Pfeilstetter, Bernhard C. Schäfer
Greece	Stavroula Ioannidou
Hungary	Sándor Bogya
Ireland	Oliver McEvoy, Conor McGee, Andy Bourke
Italy	Apologies
Latvia	Līga Grišāne
Lithuania	Loreta Valatkevičiene, Monika Linkevičiūtė
Luxembourg	Monique Faber Decker
Malta	John Baptist Cassar
Netherlands	Dirk Jan Van Der Gaag
Poland	Tomasz Kaluski
Portugal	Ana Paula Cruz De Carvalho
Romania	Paulina Gabor
Slovakia	Martin Pastirčák
Slovenia	Anita Benko Beloglavec
Spain	Belen Martinez, José Maria Cobos Suarez
Sweden	Sofia Windstam, Niklas Bjorklund, Johanna Boberg
Iceland	Apologies
Liechtenstein	Apologies
Norway	Micael Wendell

- **Representatives of accession countries**

Country	Name
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Katica Arar
Montenegro	Zorka Prljević
Republic of North Macedonia	Ivica Angelovski
Republic of Kosovo	Naim Delijaj
Serbia	Ana Vucurovi
Turkey	Hasenem Ertaş

- **Observers**

Swiss Federal Plant Protection Service SPPS-Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG	Barbara Colucci
European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization	Nico Horn
European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization	Françoise Petter

- **Hearing Experts and external speakers**

Claude Bragard, Elena Lazaro, Juan Navas-Cortes, Stephen Parnell, Antonio Vicent Civera

- **European Commission:**

Panagiota Mylona, Maria Belen Marquez Garcia, Maria Mirazchiyska (DG SANTE)

- **EFSA:**

ALPHA Unit: Caterina Campese, Martina Capelli, Ewelina Czwienczek, Alice Delbianco, Ciro Gardi, Ignazio Graziosi, Virag Kertesz, Svetla Kozelska, Nik Kriz, Andrea Maiorano, Luka Mustapic, Patricia Nascimento, Marco Pautasso, Evgenia Sarakatsani, Giuseppe Stancanelli, Emanuela Tacci, Sara Tramontini And Sybren Vos

AMU Unit: José Cortinas Abrahantes

GMO Unit: Franz Streissl

SCER Unit: Tobin Robinson (Head of Unit), agenda point 3

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes**.**

3. Update on new EFSA organisational development programme, new organigramme and changes for PLH

Tobin Robinson presented to the Member States representatives the outcomes of EFSA's reorganisation project. The Plant Health (PLH) team will be combined with the Pesticide Residues (PRES) starting from January 2022, forming a new unit called PLANTS, which will be led by Tobin Robinson. Within the PLANTS Unit, there will be two teams operating in plant health: the Plant health risk assessment team led by Giuseppe Stancanelli and the Plant health monitoring team led by Sybren Vos.

4. New Term of reference of PLH Network 2021-2024 and plan for 2022 activities

Giuseppe Stancanelli presented the new Terms of reference for the PLH Network 2021-2024, and the EFSA plant health activities for 2022.

5. Challenges and perspectives for Plant Health risk assessment: an update of PLH Panel activities

Claude Bragard gave an overview on the PLH Panel activities and challenges, presenting its members and their field of expertise and the EFSA's risk assessment process and phases.

6. From risk assessment to plant quarantine: an update on Plant Health Law implementation

Panagiota Mylona from DG SANTE provided an update on the EU Plant Health Law implementation.
The focus is to protect EU agriculture, horticulture and the environment from plant pests. Current challenges are the increased international movement of plants from global trade and travellers, combined with climate change pose.
The consideration of climate change scenarios in the quantitative pest risk assessment has been included in the new mandate sent to EFSA in March 2021.
In terms of prevention, a three-tiered system is now in place:

1. Media and literature horizon scanning are conducted,
2. New/emerging pests are screened by the PeMoScoring when they are not regulated pests in the EU. The outcome of this analysis is discussed with EU Member States
3. EFSA then receives a mandate for pest categorisations, which form the basis to decisions on possible regulations.

Further in-depth information on legislative acts concerning EU regulated pests was presented.
Procedures related to the submission of technical dossiers by trading partners for High Risk Plants (HRP), which include commodities temporarily prohibited from all trading partners, and their assessment together with the legislative follow-up were detailed, including amendments to HRP lists.
On quarantine pests EFSA is supporting early detection and surveillance by Pest survey cards and Guidelines.

7. Horizon Scanning and identification of new and emerging plant pests: a brief update

EFSA presented an overview of the activities of the Horizon Scanning Project, focusing on i) most recent improvements and future ones connected to the articles selection and the newsletters publication, ii) PeMoScoring activity and last results, iii) current and potential collaborations.
Clarifications were provided on the selection process of pests assessed with the PeMoScoring methodology. It was also remarked that pests not suitable for the PeMoScoring (due, e.g., to the limited available information or to targeted phytosanitary measures already in place) are kept in the pest-ontology and, therefore, remain constantly monitored. A proposal was presented to create an index of all the pests identified through article screening, considered and eventually ranked through the PeMoScoring exercises. Further interest was also expressed on the possibility to access individual criteria decisions and supporting documents compiling each pest scoring. The creation of dedicated tools in order to enhance structure and transparency along the whole horizon scanning process is in EFSA's plans for 2022-2023. The possibility to get Member States directly involved in the project (as SNEs, guest scientists or observers) was presented.

8. Commodity risk Assessment for High Risk plants and derogations

An overview of the High Risk Plants (HRP) commodity risk assessment was presented, starting from the legislative background and then describing the information that the NPPOs of the applicant countries should provide with the dossier. It was illustrated also that often there is a gap between the information needed for conducting the risk assessment and the information provided in the initial dossier. This gap can cause requests of integration of information to the applicant countries. An overview of the status of HRP dossiers was presented, indicating the assessments concluded, those ongoing and those in clock-stop. The presentation raised interest among the Network; a question was posed concerning the follow-up of the identification of the non-regulated "actionable pests" identified during the commodity risk assessments. It was indicated these pests are the subjected to a pest categorisation and that further details would have been provided in the following presentation.

9. Pest categorisation for new and emerging plant pests

A presentation was given on pest categorisation for new and emerging plant pests.
The new Plant pests mandate (2021-2026), was received from EC and accepted by EFSA in March 2021.

Focus is on new threats to EU Plant Health:

- New pests identified by EC, MS, EPPO, EU research projects
- New pests identified by EFSA Horizon scanning
- New actionable pests identified by EFSA commodity risk assessment

10. Climate suitability for new and emerging plant pests and EFSA Project on Spatially explicit environmental data (SEED)

The Network Members were updated about the activities related to climate suitability analysis in EFSA risk assessment and pest categorisation. An overview of the different climate suitability approaches was given. The presentation was particularly focused on the methodology for literature review and data extraction for the collection of data and information about pest ecophysiology and world

observed distribution. The second part of the presentation was dedicated to the EFSA SEED project (started in November 2021). Background and objectives of the project were presented with a particular focus on the possible involvement of external stakeholders like Member States risk assessment bodies and international plant health organisations such as EPPO for the sharing and exchange of ideas, needs, and information also about ongoing projects.

11. Presentation and demonstration of EFSA Scanclim tool

The EFSA SCAN-Clim tool, a tool for supporting climate suitability assessment based on climate classification was presented to the Network Members. The tool is currently used in EFSA to support climate suitability based on the Köppen-Geiger climate classification and can be configured to use information on pest distribution at different resolution (information from the country level to the single location level). The tool was developed in R using GIS techniques; however, the tool does not require skills in R and GIS to be used. An EFSA Scientific Report including a user manual will be soon published in the EFSA Journal and the tool will be available in the ZENODO platform.

12. Items proposed by Member States

12.1 PeMoScoring Sharing the information collected on candidates for pest categorisation

Member states expressed the needs to have access to information collected by EFSA on new pests.

Participants welcomed EFSA proposal of creating an index of all the pests identified through article screening, considered and eventually ranked through the PeMoScoring exercises. Further interest was also expressed on the possibility to access individual criteria decisions and supporting documents compiling each pest scoring. The creation of dedicated tools in order to enhance structure and transparency along the whole horizon scanning process is already in EFSA's plans for the coming years. The possibility to get Member States directly involved in the project (as SNEs, guest scientists or observers) would also facilitate and support this end-user-oriented approach. Possibilities for a closer collaboration on new pests with EPPO Global database were also discussed.

12.2 EFSA Partnering Grant project "Assessing the confidence in pest freedom gained in the past pine wood nematode surveys"

The project, which is funded by EFSA through Art.36 Partnering Grants was presented and discussed. This project is implemented in cooperation with EFSA pest surveillance activities.

12.3 Cooperation EFSA and EURLs

The issue of collaboration between EFSA and EURL was also raised by MS. Two steps of EFSA work were mainly identified as areas for potential exchanges and cooperation with EURLs, to be further explored in liaison with SANTE G1:
1) pest categorisation of new and emerging plant pests, where EURLs could potentially contribute and benefit of advance information on upcoming / new pests; 2) pest survey cards for EU quarantine plant pests, where the diagnostics is a key point

EFSA will explore with EC SANTE G1 on next steps for cooperation with EURL.

13. Quantitative pest risk assessment for new and emerging plant pests: a brief update

The Network Members were updated about the pest risk assessment mandate received from the European Commission (2021-2024). An overview (scientific and common names, taxonomic group, main hosts, distribution) of the pests to be assessed was presented. The composition of the two WGs (section 1 mainly focusing on arthropods, section 2 mainly focusing on pathogens) was shown. Some key information on the progress of the two WGs (section 1 on *Amyelois transitella*, section 2 on *Xanthomonas citri* pv. *viticola*) was presented.

14. EU Hotspots for plant pests introductions: an integrated analysis to better prepare for pests' invasion (HoPPI) – Presentation of an EFSA Art. 36 Grant project

Following a discussion at the plant health (PLH) panel plenary meeting in September 2019 on the update of EFSA scientific strategy for risk assessment for food safety, animal and plant health, the panel discussed what should be considered the main achievement in plant health to date and what should be the main targets and priorities for EFSA plant health risk assessment up to 2027, including the identification and characterisation of the EU hot spots for plant pests introduction.
An EFSA Art. 36 call for proposals was launched in 2020 and awarded to a consortium from two EU MSs (Italy and Spain): Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (IT), Università degli studi di Padova (IT) and Instituto Valenciano de Investigaciones Agrarias (ES). The project co-funded by EFSA via this Art. 36 Grant on Hotspots for Plant Pests Introduction (HoPPI) was presented to the Network.
The objectives of the HoPPI project are: to make an inventory of the hotspots for plant pests introduction in the EU; to develop a method for the identification and characterisation of hotspots; to analyse and identify the factors determining their occurrence; to develop spatial-explicit methods for mapping hotspots under current situation and under different scenarios under different approaches; to develop a tool for integration of hotspots analysis in quantitative pest risk assessment carried out by EFSA. The HoPPI project started in 2021 and will be completed in 2024. The Network will be kept informed on the project progresses and deliverables.

15. EFSA Pest survey toolkit: achievements + work in progress

The EFSA Pest Survey toolkit project designed to aid Member States in the surveillance of the quarantine pests of EU was presented to the Network Members, focusing on the accomplished work of the mandate as well as the outputs in development. An essential part of the toolkit, the Pest survey cards, and the Index of the toolkit were briefed to the participants. Pest survey cards describe 80 pests so far, with more than 200 pests to be scrutinized in the future, which should allow more quality risk-based statistical surveys of the Member States. Furthermore, the new expert system for the pest survey design was simulated to the participants, which raised interest and positive comments of the Network Members. In particular, Network Members expressed their willingness in using the tool in development as well as piloting the first version in order to give feedback

to EFSA WG Pest Survey Methods members. The aforementioned is in line with the European Commission's mandate to better optimize the surveillance of the regulated pests of the EU in future, which will be the main object of the EFSA Multi-pest survey application. This key part of the toolkit will allow Member States to include multiple pests in the surveillance according to the specific crop (e.g. Citrus), thus allowing for the better use of survey resources while still achieving a satisfactory confidence level of the survey, which was welcomed by the participants. All the applications of the toolkit in progress will be accompanied by the relational Database, a background system which will help future users by prefilling the key information of the pests when designing the surveys.

16. Any Other Business

For the PLH Network meeting calendar, Giuseppe Stancanelli proposed that when physical meetings would be resumed, the PLH network meeting could be moved forward from December to October. In addition, shorter web meetings to update the Network on particular topics could be organised earlier during the year. As the Network agreed with this proposal, a doodle will be sent out for the dates.

The possibility of organising in the future also a dedicated Network on plant health surveillance topics was also discussed with positive feedback.

17. Meeting closure and wrap up

The chair thanked the speakers and the participants for the presentations and fruitful discussions.

Nik Križ Head of EFSA ALPHA unit greeted and thanked the Member States for their participation and contribution.