

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
PLANT HEALTH
109th Plenary meeting



25 & 26 January 2023
09:00-18:00 / 09:00-13:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 27 February 2023

Location: Webconference

Attendees:

- PLH Panel Members:

Claude BRAGARD (Chair), Paula BAPTISTA, Elisavet CHATZIVASSILIOU, Francesco DI SERIO, Paolo GONTHIER, Josep JAQUES, Alan MACLEOD, Christer MAGNUSSON, Panagiotis MILONAS, Juan NAVAS-CORTES, Stephen PARNELL, Roel POTTING, Philippe REIGNAULT, Emilio STEFANI, Hans-Hermann THULKE, Antonio VICENT CIVERA, Wopke VAN DER WERF, Jonathan YUEN, Lucia ZAPPALÀ

- Hearing Experts¹: Lorenzo MARINI, Maria Chiara ROSACE, Rob Tanner (EPPO)

- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

EC: Leonard SHUMBE (EC DG SANTE), Maria Belen MARQUEZ GARCIA (SANTE), Wolfgang REINERT (SANTE), Filippa DI MARIA (SANTE), Maria MIRAZCHIYSKA (SANTE)

- **EFSA PLANTS Unit:**

Alexia ANTONIOU, Melanie CAMILLERI, Matteo CROTTA, Ewelina CZWIENCZEK, Alice DELBIANCO, Spyridoula DIMITROPOULOU, Ciro GARDI, Alex GOBBI, Ignazio GRAZIOSI, Agata KACZMAREK, Tomasz KALUSKI, Paraskevi KARIAMPA, Virag KERTESZ, Roumiana KRUSTEVA, Marina MARTINO, Julia LOPEZ MERCADAL, Andrea MAIORANO, Marco PAUTASSO, Eugenio ROSSI, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Franz STREISSL, Emanuela TACCI, Sara TRAMONTINI, Sybren VOS

- Others:

MESE Unit: José CORTIÑAS ABRAHANTES, Olaf MOSBACH-SCHULZ

NIF Unit: Ana Luisa AFONSO

TS: Alexandre Michel François NOUGADERE, Filippo CONTE

Silvia BONANNO

EFSA Art. 36 Grants

Alzbeta MIKULOVA (Università di Padova, Italy)

EFSA Procurement

Oresteia SFYRA (Greece)

I. Welcome and apologies for absence

¹ As defined in Article 17 of the Decision of the Executive Director concerning the selection of members of the Scientific Committee, the Scientific Panels, and the selection of external experts to assist EFSA with its scientific work: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/expertselection.pdf>



The Chair welcomed the participants.
Apologies were received from Annemarie JUSTESEN.

II. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

III. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence² and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management,³ EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Working Group 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 of Interest made at the beginning of the meeting, please refer to the Annex I.

IV. Report on written procedures

Nothing to report

V. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

5.1. Draft opinion on *Citripestis sagittiferella*. ([EFSA-Q-2021-00750](#))

Following a request from the European Commission, the EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a risk assessment of *Citripestis sagittiferella* (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae), the citrus pulp borer, an oligophagous pest reported from South-East Asia and restricted to *Citrus* spp. The entry risk assessment focused on the citrus fruit pathway. Two scenarios were considered: scenario A0 (current practice) and A2 (additional postharvest cold treatment). Based on the outputs of the entry model obtained in scenario A0, the median number of founder populations in the EU citrus growing area is estimated to be slightly less than 10 per year (90%-uncertainty interval between about one entry per 180 years and 1,300 entries per year). The risk of entry and the simulated numbers of founder populations are orders of magnitude lower for scenario A2 compared to scenario A0. The key uncertainties in the entry model include transfer, the cold treatment effectiveness, the disaggregation factor, and sorting. The simulated numbers of established populations are only slightly lower than the numbers of founder populations. As the probability of establishment has little impact on the number of established populations, it is not a major source of uncertainty, despite the lack of data on the thermal biology of the pest. The median lag period between establishment and spread is estimated to be slightly more than one year (90%-uncertainty interval between about 2 months and 33 months). After the lag period, the median spread rate by natural means (flying) and due to transport of harvested citrus fruit from orchards to packinghouses is estimated at about 100 km/yr (90%- uncertainty interval between about 40 and 500 km/yr). The main sources of uncertainties affecting the spread rate include the extent to which environmental factors could hamper the build-up of the populations and the lack of data on the spread rate at the origin. The median impact of *C.*

² http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

³ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf



sagittiferella in the EU citrus growing area is estimated at about 10% of infested fruits among the harvested citrus fruits (90%-uncertainty interval between about 2% and 25%). Uncertainties affecting the impact assessment include the susceptibility of different *Citrus* species and cultivars.

The opinion was adopted on 26 Jan 2023.

5.2. Draft opinion on Pest categorisation on *Milvisticulus mangiferae*. ([EFSA-Q-2022-00763](#))

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of *Milvisticulus mangiferae* (Hemiptera: Sternorrhyncha: Coccidae), the mango shield scale, for the EU. The native range of *M. mangiferae* is uncertain. This species occurs widely in tropical and warmer subtropical regions throughout the world. Within the EU, the pest has been recorded in Italy in a greenhouse at the Botanical Garden of Padua on mango trees imported from Florida (USA), however, its establishment remains uncertain. It is not listed in Annex II of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. It is polyphagous, feeding on plant species belonging to more than 86 genera in more than 43 families including many crop and ornamental plants. It can be a serious pest of mango (*Mangifera indica*) and an occasional pest of a range of ornamental plants. Economically important crops in the EU such as citrus (*Citrus* spp.), avocado (*Persea americana*) and ornamentals such as hibiscus (*Hibiscus* spp.) and myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), are included in the host list of *M. mangiferae*. Reproduction of *M. mangiferae* is generally parthenogenetic and it completes two to three generations annually. Plants for planting, cut flowers and fruits provide potential pathways for entry into the EU. Climatic conditions in southern EU countries and host plant availability in those areas are conducive for establishment and spread. Establishment could also occur in heated greenhouses in cooler areas of the EU. The introduction of the mango shield scale is expected to have an economic impact in the EU through the reduction in yield, quality and commercial value of fruits and ornamental plants. Phytosanitary measures are available to reduce the likelihood of entry and further spread. *M. mangiferae* meets the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for it to be regarded as a potential Union quarantine pest.

The opinion was adopted on 26 Jan 2023.

5.3. Draft opinion on Pest categorisation on *Urocerus albicornis*. ([EFSA-Q-2022-00762](#))

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of *Urocerus albicornis* (Hymenoptera: Siricidae), the black horntail sawfly, for the territory of the EU. *U. albicornis* is not listed in Annex II of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. *U. albicornis* occurs throughout Canada and continental USA and has established in northern Spain, and probably in southern France (based on two specimens caught in two sites) and Japan (based on one individual caught in one site). It attacks mostly stumps or fallen or weakened trees of at least twenty species of Pinaceae (*Abies* spp., *Larix* spp., *Picea* spp., *Pinus* spp., *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, *Tsuga* spp.) and of Cupressaceae (*Thuja plicata*). In Spain, the females fly between May and September with a peak in August and September. The eggs are deposited into the sapwood, together with mucus containing a venom and a white-rot wood-decay basidiomycete, either *Amylostereum chailletii* or *A. areolatum*. Each fungus is symbiotic with the insect. The larvae feed on wood infected by the fungus. All immature stages live in the host sapwood. In British Columbia, the lifecycle of the pest lasts two years but has not been fully characterised elsewhere. The wood of the host trees is impacted by decay due to the fungus, and structurally impaired by the larval galleries. *U. albicornis* can be carried in conifer wood, solid wood packaging material (SWPM) or plants for planting. Wood from North America is regulated by 2019/2072 (Annex VII) whilst SWPM is managed according to ISPM 15. The pathway plants for



planting is largely closed by prohibition, with the exception of *Thuja* spp. Climatic conditions in several EU member states are conducive for establishment and the main host plants are widespread in those areas. Further spread and introduction of *U. albicornis* is likely to decrease the quality of host wood and may influence forest diversity by selectively affecting conifers. Phytosanitary measures are available to reduce the likelihood of additional entry and further spread, and there is a potential for biological control. Despite uncertainty regarding potential damage, *U. albicornis* satisfies 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 was adopted on 26 Jan 2023.

5.4. Draft opinion on Pest categorisation on Cowpea mosaic virus. ([EFSA-Q-2022-00392](#))

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health conducted a pest categorisation of cowpea mosaic virus (CPMV) for the EU territory. The identity of CPMV, a member of the genus Comovirus (family Secoviridae), is established and detection and identification methods are available. The pathogen is not included in the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. In nature, it has been reported from the Americas, and several countries in Africa and Asia and it is not known to be present in the EU. CPMV is considered a major pathogen of cowpea on which it causes symptoms ranging from mild to severe mosaic, chlorosis and necrosis. The virus has been reported sporadically on some other cultivated species of the family Fabaceae, including soybean and some common bean varieties. CPMV is transmitted by cowpea seeds, with uncertainty on the transmission rate. There is uncertainty on seed transmission by other Fabaceae host species due to lack of information. CPMV is also transmitted by several beetle species, one of which, *Diabrotica virgifera virgifera*, is present in the EU. Seeds for sowing of cowpea are identified as the major entry pathway. The cultivated area and production of cowpea in the EU territory are limited to local varieties cultivated at a small scale in Mediterranean EU Member States. Should the pest establish in the EU, an impact is expected on cowpea crops at local scale. There is high uncertainty on the potential impact that CPMV would cause on other natural hosts cultivated in the EU due to the lack of information from the areas of CPMV's current distribution. Except for the uncertainty concerning the potential impact on bean and soybean crops in the EU CPMV 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 was adopted on 26 Jan 2023.

5.5. Draft opinion on Pest categorisation on *Coniella granati*. ([EFSA-Q-2022-00396](#))

The EFSA Plant Health Panel performed a pest categorisation of *Coniella granati*, a clearly defined fungus of the Order Diaporthales and the family Schizoparmaceae, described for the first time in 1876 as *Phoma granatii* and later named as *Pilidiella granati*. The pathogen mainly affects *Punica granatum* (pomegranate) and *Rosa* spp. (rose), causing fruit rot, shoot blight and cankers on crown and branches. The pathogen is present in North America, South America, as well as in Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Eastern Europe and has also been reported in the EU (Greece, Hungary, Italy, and Spain), where it is widespread in the major pomegranate growing areas. *Coniella granati* is not included in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 and there are no interceptions in the EU. This pest categorisation focused on those hosts for which the pathogen was detected and formally identified in natural conditions. Plants for planting, fresh fruits and as well as soil and other plant growing media are the main pathways for the further entry of the pathogen into the EU. Host availability and climate suitability factors occurring in parts of the EU are favorable for the further establishment of the pathogen. In the area of its present distribution, including Italy and Spain, the pathogen has a direct impact in pomegranate orchards as well as during post-harvest storage. Phytosanitary measures are available to prevent the further introduction and spread of the pathogen into the EU. *Coniella granati* does not satisfy the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for this species to be regarded as potential Union quarantine pest as it is present in several EU MSs.



The opinion was adopted on 26 Jan 2023.

5.6. Draft opinion on Commodity risk assessment of ash logs from the US treated with sulfuryl fluoride to prevent the entry of the emerald ash borer *Agrilus planipennis*. (EFSA-Q-2022-00214)

The European Commission submitted to the EFSA Panel on Plant Health a dossier by USDA proposing to use sulfuryl fluoride on ash log shipments to treat *Agrilus planipennis* for phytosanitary certification. After collecting additional evidence from USDA APHIS, external experts and literature, the Panel performed a quantitative assessment on the likelihood of pest freedom from *A. planipennis*, at the point of entry in the EU, of two different commodities fumigated with sulfuryl fluoride: a) ash logs with bark; and b) debarked ash logs. An expert judgement is given on the likelihood of pest freedom taking into consideration the measures acting on the pest, including uncertainties associated with the assessment. The likelihood of pest freedom from *A. planipennis* is lower for ash logs with bark compared with debarked ash logs. With 95% certainty, the Panel concludes that between 9,740 and 10,000 containers of ash logs with bark per 10,000 and between 9,989 and 10,000 containers of debarked ash logs per 10,000 will be free from *A. planipennis*, when fumigated with sulfuryl fluoride at the specific treatment regime proposed by the USDA.

5.7. Draft opinion on Pest categorisation on *Pantoea ananatis*. (EFSA-Q-2022-00397)

The EFSA Plant Health Panel performed a pest categorisation of *Pantoea ananatis* (Serrano Mergaert, Verdonck & Kersters, a Gram-negative bacterium belonging to the Erwiniaceae family. *Pantoea ananatis* is a well-defined taxonomic unit; nonetheless, its pathogenic nature is not well defined and non-pathogenic populations are known to occupy several, very different environmental niches as saprophytes, or as plant growth promoting bacteria or biocontrol agents. It is also described as a clinical pathogen causing bacteremia and sepsis or as a member of the gut microbiota of several insects. *Pantoea ananatis* is the causal agent of different diseases affecting numerous crops: in particular, center rot of onion, bacterial leaf blight and grain discoloration of rice, leaf spot disease of maize and eucalyptus blight/dieback. A few insect species have been described as vectors of *P. ananatis*, among them, *Frankliniella fusca* and *Diabrotica virgifera virgifera*. This bacterium is present in several countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America, and Oceania from tropical and subtropical regions to temperate areas worldwide. *Pantoea ananatis* has been reported from the EU territory, both as pathogen on rice and maize and as an environmental, non-pathogenic bacterium in rice marshes and poplar rhizosoil. It is not included in EU Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/2072. The pathogen can be detected on its host plants using direct isolation, or PCR-based methods. The main pathway for the entry of the pathogen into the EU territory is host plants for planting, including seeds. In the EU, there is a large availability of host plants, with onion, maize, rice and strawberry being the most important ones. Therefore, disease outbreaks are possible almost at any latitude, except in the most northern regions. *Pantoea ananatis* is not expected to have frequent or consistent impact on crop production and is not expected to have any environmental impact. Phytosanitary measures are available to mitigate the further introduction and spread of the pathogen into the EU on some hosts. The pest does not satisfy the criteria, which are within the remit for EFSA to evaluate whether the pest meets the definition of a Union quarantine pest. *Pantoea ananatis* is probably widely distributed in different ecosystems in the EU. It may impact some specific hosts such as onions while its presence on other hosts such as rice it has been reported as a seed microbiota without causing any impact and can even be beneficial to plant growth. Hence, the pathogenic nature of *P. ananatis* is not fully established.

The opinion was adopted on 26 Jan 2023.

VI. Feedback from the EFSA

6.1. Presentation on EFSA DOI tool: DOI builder



EFSA presented the new DOI tool with a practical demonstration of it.

6.2. Update on EFSA art 36: Hotspot analysis project (HOPPI)

The HoPPI Consortium presented the progress of the project on the hotspot analysis-to identify the priority areas to prevent new plant pest invasions. Data on the first findings of the pests in the EU was compiled and presented on the NUTS0 and NUTS 2 level. The Panel discussed on the data availability and accessibility regarding the interceptions and outbreaks and commodity movement intra-EU. The questions like if the consignment size and number is linked to the difference of the Eurostat data in air and sea transport can bias the analysis was asked. The possibility to compare different commodities (internal pathways) and their limitations ('bananas or cut flowers?') were stressed. The HoPPI Consortium explained that the analysis of the hotspots will be done without grouping and combining all data about pests together, but on the individual species level. The first findings data shall not be used in the spatial analysis of hotspots due to the high level of bias.

6.3. Update on EFSA Pest Surveillance Activities

The progress on EFSA activities on pest surveillance, mandated by the EC and coordinated by the PLH monitoring team, was presented to the Panel. The pest survey toolkit was briefly presented with a focus on the interconnection of the different tools showing how the tools for preparation of the surveys (i.e. Pest survey cards and Database) feed both i) the tool for survey design (Risk based Pest Survey Tool - RiPEST) and, ii) the multi-pest survey tool for optimising pest surveys at crop level. The progress on the Pest survey cards was presented with the objective to deliver cards for all the Union Quarantine Pests, highlighting the partnerships established for supporting EFSA in this activity. A new model of survey cards was presented showing how the 75 non-EU Tephritidae quarantine pests can be grouped in 8 crop survey cards to facilitate the MS survey preparation. The progress on the Relational database for pest surveys that is pivotal in the toolkit was presented, showing its importance for prefilling the survey design and optimisation tools as well as showing how the database can be used directly as a query tool. Then a live demonstration of the Beta version of the RiPEST tool for survey design was provided for the design of a detection survey for substantiation of pest freedom. Following, the concepts of the multi-pest survey tool under development were presented indicating how the survey efforts can be optimised when applied at crop level. Next, the EFSA calls currently open for proposal by Art.36 organisations were presented explaining how EFSA proposes to support the MS in the estimation of the Pest survey parameters: i.e. Method Sensitivity, Relative risk, Design prevalence. In the final presentation, the Panel was informed about i) the ongoing revision of the General guidelines for statistically sound and risk-based surveillance, as well as ii) the start of the training activities of the newly established Scientific Network on Plant Pest Surveillance.

6.4. Feedback from Scientific Committee

PLH Panel chair updated the Panel on the Scientific Committee activities, Scientific Committee plenary in February.

VII. Feedback from the European Commission

DG SANTE provided an update on High Risk Plants regarding a new legislation on *Prunus domestica* grafted on *Prunus cerasifera* imported from Ukraine, the Scientific Opinion of which was adopted in May 2022.

VIII. Any Other Business

- The Panel was briefly informed about the difficulties on EUROPHYT Interceptions system.
 - A meeting between the chair of the WG and HOPPI project to be organized.
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- Update on the 12th International Congress on Plant Pathology, on the dates, the registration and abstract submission. Details, despite not final, were provided on the Plant Health thematic sessions, indicating the confirmed speakers.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 24 February 2023, via web conference.



Annex I

Interests and actions resulting from the screening of Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI)

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

- Pest categorisation on Cowpea mosaic virus (item 5.4.)

He informed the Panel that he participates to the work on these opinions as coordinator of EFSA Art. 36 Tasking Grant Specific Contracts. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence⁴ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management⁵, 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 items 6.d, 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.

⁴ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

⁵

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