

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

135th Panel Plenary meeting



17 & 18 September 2025

9:00-15:30 / 9:00-11:30

MINUTES - Agreed on 10 October 2025

Location: EFSA On Site and Online

Attendees:

- Panel Members:

Paula BAPTISTA, Anna BERLIN, Elisavet CHATZIVASSILIOU, Antonio Vicent CIVERA, Jaime CUBERO, Nik CUNNIFFE, Eduardo DE LA PEÑA, Nicolas DESNEUX, Francesco DI SERIO, Anna FILIPIAK, Paolo GONTHIER, Beata Anna HASIÓW-JAROSZEWSKA, Hervé JACTEL, Blanca LANDA, Lara MAISTRELLO, David MAKOWSKI, Panagiotis MILONAS, Nikolaos PAPADOPOULOS, Roel POTTING, Hanna Sinikka SUSI, Dirk Jan VAN DER GAAG

- European Commission DG SANTE: Belen MARQUEZ GARCIA, Maria MIRAZCHIYSKA, Françoise MUNAUT, Karin NIENSTEDT, Wolfgang REINERT, Paul ROQUINY
- DG JRC: Jesus BARREIRO HURLE, Viola DI CORI, Emilio RODRIGUEZ CEREZO
- EFSA:

PLANTS: Laura CAROTTI, Matteo CROTTA, Ewelina CZWIENCZEK, Naliny FELIU, Ciro GARDI, Gemma GERMOGLIO, Agata KACZMAREK, Virág KERTÉSZ, Monia LOMBARDO, Andrea MAIORANO, Louise MATIC, Tarla MURPHY, Alexandre NOUGADÈRE, Marco PAUTASSO, Elena PEREZ, Dorothea POCHLAUER, Daria RZEPECKA, Marica SCALA, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Franz STREISSL, Emanuela TACCI, Anastasia TERZIDOU, Sara TRAMONTINI, Sybren VOS

MESE: Olaf MOSBACH-SCHULZ

COM: Filippo POSITANO

- EFSA Art. 36 Tasking Grants:

Alex GOBBI (CREA), Alzbeta MIKULOVA (University of Padova, Italy), Chiara MORENA (CREA), Oresteia SFYRA (Benaki Phytopathological Institute, Greece)

- Hearing experts: Massimo FACCOLI, Hannah FIELDER (CABI), Richard GOTTSBERGER, Marie GROSJEAN (GBIF), Gary LEICESTER (CABI), Matteo MARCHIORO, Raphaëlle MOUTTET, Camille PICARD (EPPO), Helga REISENZEIN, Pascal ROUSSE, Dmitry SCHIGEL (GBIF)
- Observer : Javier MARTINEZ (EPPO)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Panel Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.



3. Declarations of Interest of Panel members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management,² 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, and no interests were declared orally by the members at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Report on the written approval procedure of the 134th PLH Panel plenary meeting

The Panel was informed that the minutes were published in time.

5. European Reference Laboratory (EURL) activities and update on Scolytinae database

5.1 Activities of the EURL Insects & Mites

The activities of the consortium between AGES and ANSES (serving as the European Union Reference Laboratory for Insects and Mites) were presented. Their work covers multiple areas related to invasive insects, which pose potential threats to EU agriculture and forestry. Activities are organized into four Work Packages: (1) availability and use of high-quality methods, (2) scientific and technical assistance to National Reference Laboratories (NRLs), (3) scientific and technical assistance to the European Commission and other organizations, and (4) development of reagents and reference collections. The challenges of insect identification, collaboration with National Reference Laboratories, and the legal framework were also discussed. In addition, a demonstration of the bark beetle genus identification tool KiBAB was given as an example of the projects carried out by the EURL for Insects and Mites. Current and future collaborations between the EURL Insects and Mites and EFSA were discussed.

5.2 Updates on the Scolytinae Database

An update was presented on the Scolytinae database (<https://www.scolytinaehostsdatabase.eu/site/it/home/>), a global database on Scolytinae insects developed by University of Padova in cooperation with EFSA and the EURL for Insects and Mites. This database includes information and data on the bio-ecology and distribution of the Scolytinae species (bark and ambrosia beetles) of both coniferous and broadleaved trees. It was initially developed to support EFSA categorisations of Scolytinae and it is now being updated with data on diagnostic, plant diseases transmitted by Scolytinae and impact.

6. Feedback from EFSA, Scientific Committee and European Commission

6.1 Update on the written approval of the addendum to Commodity risk assessment of *Petunia* spp. and *Calibrachoa* spp. unrooted cuttings from Costa Rica and Guatemala, and on the assessment of the dossier on *Petunia* spp. and *Calibrachoa* spp. unrooted cuttings from Uganda

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



The Panel was updated on the two addenda to the CRA of *Petunia* spp. and *Calibrachoa* spp. unrooted cuttings from Costa Rica and Guatemala, which were circulated for comments on the 22nd July 2025 and for written approval on the 2nd September 2025.

The Panel was also informed on the status of the assessment of *Petunia* spp. and *Calibrachoa* spp. unrooted cuttings from Uganda, for which the EKE it is planned for October and the possible adoption at the November Plenary.

6.2 Update from HRP Agricultural WG (*Vitis* Moldova, *Malus* Canada, *Castanea* UK)

The Panel was updated on the current status of the three dossiers being revised by Agricultural High Risk Working Group.

6.3 Update from HRP Forestry WG (oak and walnut logs from US, *Salix* cuttings from UK)

The panel was updated on the development of the scientific opinion on a derogation request from the US to export to the EU vacuum-steam-heat treated oak and walnut logs. The assessment methodology and first results were presented and the panel was informed that the working group will send the draft opinion for review to the panel in October and that it will be proposed for possible adoption in the November plenary. The panel was also updated on the progress on the CRA of *Salix* spp. and hybrids unrooted cuttings from the UK.

6.4 Update from WG PRA: ongoing methodological developments and preparatory work

The Panel was updated on the ongoing methodological development of the pest risk assessment (PRA) protocol. With the new methodology, the EFSA pest risk assessment is moving towards one single protocol covering both the pest categorisation and the quantitative pest risk assessment (qPRA) phases, applying a tiered approach and with a special attention to the estimation of pest impact. The developments also aim towards automation of phases of the qPRA, e.g. the automation of modelling the probability of entry in cooperation with the Text and Data Mining Unit of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission: this will be done primarily by the implementation of the entry model into the JRC Trade Intelligence Platform. For the diagnostic aspects of the protocol, exchanges are foreseen with the European Union Reference Laboratories. Once developed, this protocol will be applied initially to a list of 26 plant pests, for which work on systematic literature search and climate suitability is already ongoing.

6.5 Update on PRA for *Xylella fastidiosa*

The Panel was updated on the current state of the work carried out by the Working Group preparing the updated risk assessment on *Xylella fastidiosa*. The update highlighted that some work packages are at a very advanced stage and close to completion, while slight delays due to data gathering have occurred in others; however, these are not expected to affect the overall deadline.

6.6 Update on Köppen-Geiger climate classification, mapping administrative units, and pest risk assessment dashboard

The Panel was updated about work ongoing on the implementation of a new Köppen-Geiger climate classification (based on more recent climate data) for the pest risk assessment, and on the development of a dashboard to support the Panel and the Working Group experts to explore data from the literature search. In addition, the Panel was informed about the technical and potential political issues related to the use of maps of administrative units and published in scientific opinions.



6.7 Development of protocols for evaluating emergency authorisations of pesticides and related public consultation – an update

The background to the mandate, the timelines for the deliverables and some results of the analysis of previous emergency authorisations were briefly presented. More on the draft protocol for the evaluation of emergency authorisations for insecticides and acaricides. The panel was informed on the principles applied in the evaluation of emergency authorisations and about the different evaluation flowcharts targeted to the hazard profile of the active substances and the risk status of the pest. A specific flow chart was developed for quarantine pests to allow a fast track evaluation with less assessment steps. The evaluation of the applicability of alternative solutions was presented together with the future repository of alternative methods to control pests for which emergency authorisations were granted in the past. The panel was informed about the public consultation on the draft protocol and the documents (i.e. case studies and examples of the repository of alternative methods) which are made available to illustrate how the protocol should be applied (<https://connect.efsa.europa.eu/RM/s/consultations/publicconsultation2/a0ITk000005bqnx/pc1619>).

6.8 Introduction to new mandates from the European Commission DG SANTE

The new mandate with the request to provide technical assistance and scientific opinion on the risks to plant health in the EU territory posed by *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus* Pine wood nematode (PWN) (M-2025-00073) was presented to the Panel. The tasks and deadlines of this mandate were discussed together with the proposed composition of the Working Group. The background to the expected mandate on the derogation request for the export of birchwood from Canada to the EU was presented.

6.9 EU Priority Pests – impact assessment and final ranking I2P2

Following EFSA's presentation of the Priority Pests project at the PLH Plenary Meeting on 27 March 2025, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) presented its final impact assessment and ranking using the updated Impact Indicator for Priority Pests (I2P2). Compared to the 2019 assessment, the indicator is updated to take into account the latest available data, incorporate the fact that the UK is no longer a member of the EU, and include the new environmental indicators developed by EFSA. The indicators also take into account the updated biological and ecological data provided by EFSA in 2024, such as as the result of new EKEs for the pests not previously assessed and the update of the EKEs for the pests previously assessed. These results had previously been presented to the PAFF Committee in January 2025. DG SANTE indicated that these results are now under analysis by the European Commission and Member States, to support the future revision of the current EU priority pests list. Additionally, the JRC introduced an interactive dashboard on priority pests designed to explore economic, social and environmental impact results and ranking per domain for each assessed candidate priority pest. This dashboard and the report describing the whole exercise is expected to become publicly accessible in the coming months in the website of the JRC ([Science for policy - The Joint Research Centre: EU Science Hub](#)). EFSA also announced the recent publication of a new topic page on priority pests, featuring a list with direct links to all EFSA pest and methodology reports: [EFSA Priority Pests Topic Page](#).

6.10 Feedback from Scientific Committee, Feedback from European Commission, Feedback from EFSA

FEEDBACK FROM THE SC:

The Panel Chair presented the update on the last scientific committee meeting held on 2-3 of July. There was a change in the composition of the scientific committee with the election of a new second vice chair. Additionally, the Panel Chair has provided to the EFSA Management Board and Scientific Committee in July 2025 an update on the work program



of Plant Health. Other points discussed were the actions to reduce the length of scientific opinions and improve readability (a topic that has already been addressed in the previous PLH Panel plenaries). The PLH Panel Chair will host the September SC plenary in Valencia (ES).

FEEDBACK FROM EC:

DG SANTE representative provided positive feedback on PLH Panel work and, in relation to the emergency authorization protocols development, presented earlier in the agenda, informed the Panel about ongoing discussion with MS on topics linking plant health needs and pesticides legislation.

FEEDBACK FROM EFSA:

EFSA Panel coordinator Giuseppe Stancanelli informed the Panel about EFSA organisational changes, including the nomination of the new EFSA Executive Director

Moreover, he informed the Panel about the next PLH RA Network that will be held in November, onsite, where the activities done by the panel and the PLH RA team would be presented, collecting feedback from Member States.

Giuseppe Stancanelli also informed the Panel about new expected mandates. With these new activities all Panel members will be involved in the working groups.

7. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption

7.1 HRP commodity risk assessment protocol • The rationale behind the changes; • Harmonizing, leaning and updating the protocol and methodology; • Overview of the updated sections

The updated version of the protocol for assessing the commodity risk of High Risk Plants was presented to the Panel.

Ciro Gardi presented the 'history' of the commodity risk assessment of high-risk plants and summarised the data on the number of dossiers evaluated, opinions published and pests evaluated or listed on the watch list. During the last year, an in-depth analysis was conducted by an ad hoc working group (WG) to identify critical points, areas for improvement, and the need for further harmonisation. Valuable contributions to support this analysis were provided by the comments received from the Panel on the HRP opinions adopted during the last year.

Roel Potting presented the rationale behind the most relevant changes proposed for updating the protocol, particularly the decision to avoid performing the EKE and the quantitative evaluation of the likelihood of pest freedom for pests already regulated in the EU.

Monia Lombardo presented the sections of the protocol affected by the changes, providing a detailed description of the overall process.

The new protocol for commodity risk assessment was agreed by the Panel.

7.2 Commodity risk assessment of *Lonicera* spp. plants from UK (EFSA-Q-2023-00881; EFSA-Q-2023-00882; EFSA-Q-2023-00883)

The discussion and the possible adoption of this Opinion was postponed.

8. Other scientific topics for information/discussion

8.1 Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF): data discovery and key facts



Dmitry Schigel, Lead scientific officer and Marie Grosjean, Data administrator, both working in the GBIF Secretariat in Copenhagen gave a presentation about GBIF including its thematic areas of relevance and will include a demo of a forthcoming new portal of GBIF, focusing on use needs. It was reminded that GBIF is implementing specific sections of the platform dedicated to the agro-biodiversity.

8.2 Harnessing CABI data for Plant Health

Hanna Fielderer introduced CABI Compendium, its scope, coverage and how it is maintained. Some case studies showing how Compendium data can be used in plant health have been presented. Gary Leichester presented some recent developments to CABI Thesaurus, showing how it has improved the management of Compendium data, and the additional opportunities that this presents.

9. AOB

Emanuela Tacci presented the Social Activities for the evening as well as the updated 2025-2026 PLH Plenary Calendar.