22nd Scientific Network for Risk Assessment in Plant Health (PLH Risk Assessment) meeting

23 June 205
09:00-13:00
Minutes agreed on 30 October2025

Location: Webconference

Chair: Ciro Gardi

Attendees:

- Network Participants:

Country	Member State Organisation
Belgium	Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain FPS HFSCE - DG APF
Croatia	Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food
Czech Republic	Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture
Denmark	The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency
Finland	Finnish Food Authority (Ruokavirasto)
France	Anses
Germany	Julius Kühn Institut
Greece	NPPO-Directorate of Plant Protection Production - Ministry of Rural Develompent and Food
Hungary	National Food Chain Safety Office
Ireland	DAFM
Latvia	State Plant Protection Service of Latvia
Netherlands	Netherlands Food & Product Safety Authority (NVWA)
Norway	The Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment
Portugal	General for Food and Veternary (Portugal NPPO)
Romania	National Phytosanitary Authority
Slovak Republic	National Agricultural and Food Center Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Slovenia	Administration of the RS for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection
Spain	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
Sweden	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences Jordbruksverket/Swedish Board of Agriculture

- Observers:
  National Authority of Veterinary and Plant Protection (Albania); Agricultural University of Tirana (Albania); Food Safety Agency (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Faculty of Agriculture - University of Belgrade (Serbia); Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Department of Plant Health and Quarantine (Turkey)

- Hearing Experts:
  Evangelos Karanasios (Benaki Phytopatological Institute);

- European Commission
  Paul Roquiny - DG SANTE, unit G1

- EFSA PLANTS Unit: Matteo Crotta, Ewelina Czwienczek, Ciro Gardi, Gemma Germoglio, Alex Gobbi, Agata Kaczmarek, Virag Kertesz, Monia Lombardo, Andrea Maiorano, Matic Louise, Mikulova Alzbeta, Marco Pautasso, Franz Streissl, Giuseppe Stancanelli, Emanuela Tacci, Anastasia Terzidou.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Giuseppe Stancanelli and the Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Session on protocols for emergency authorizations of pesticides

Franz Streissl (EFSA PLANTS Unit) provided an overview on the mandate, the background, workplan and the work progress. The mandate requires EFSA to develop fit for purpose protocols for the assessment of emergency authorisations under article 53 of the pesticide regulation (Regulation (EU) 1107/2009) which allows Member States (MSs) to authorise for a period of 120 days a plant protection product for a danger which cannot be controlled by any other reasonable means. The mandate requires EFSA to take into consideration the objectives of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies of the EU. This implies that a special focus should be on non-chemical pest control methods and their combinations, avoidance of repeated authorisations for the same pest-crop combination, justifications for the absence of alternative control methods and harmonisation with measures applied in other MSs. The development of the protocols was outsourced to a consortium under the lead of Evangelos Karanasios (Benaki Phytophathological Institute). The project comprises preparatory work such as analysis of existing emergency authorisations, data collection on alternatives to pesticides, development of evaluation criteria for alternative control methods and the development of the protocols. This process also involves workshops, public consultations on the draft protocols and provision of training once the final protocols are available. The finalised protocol for insecticides and acaricides is expected to be available in December 2025, with a public consultation on the draft protocols scheduled for September 2025. The fungicide protocol and the protocol for the remaining functions such as herbicides, nematicides, molluscicides will become available in March 2026 and January 2027, respectively.

Evangelos Karanasios (Benaki Phytopathological Institute) presented the results of the analysis of past emergency authorisations, the ongoing literature search for the development of an inventory of alternative control methods, and the principles applied in the protocols with a special focus on emergency authorisations for quarantine pests. The analysis of past emergency authorisations indicates that each authorisation may correspond to multiple emergency situations. Recurrent

authorisation is frequent, accounting for 77 % of cases, some of which for up to 8 consecutive years (2.1 %). Emergency authorisations were granted to more than one Plant protection product and active substance to address the same emergency situation. Most emergency authorisations targeted insects followed by fungi and weeds.

The search strategy applied for the development of the repository of alternative control methods e.g. screening of references, detailed assessment and inclusion in a database was described. As an illustration, the results of the literature search concerning alternative control methods for *Cydia pomonella* were presented. In total, more than 500 sources of relevant information were identified, 70 of which fulfilled the relevance criteria and were considered in the development of the repository.

The criteria for evaluating the effectiveness and feasibility are built on the principles of effectiveness, feasibility and the adaptation to the local agro-environmental conditions.

The protocols for evaluation of emergency authorisation follow the principles of transparency, consistency and efficiency in the evaluation, ensuring outcomes than are both scientific robust and reliable. The assessment process is straightforward and time-efficient. Agronomic, regulatory, economic, scientific and technical aspects are considered to assess the feasibility of the alternative control methods. The flowcharts follow defined steps with increase in complexity and strictness progressing from low risk to high risk/non-approved substances and from regulated quarantine pests to common pests. A separate flow chart was developed for quarantine pests to ensure that methods for control and/or eradication will be readily available. For example, some steps which are foreseen for evaluation of emergency authorisations for common pests are not included in the flowchart designed for quarantine pests.

The representative of Portugal showed concerns regarding the administrative burden and time consumingforesee in the draft protocol, given that the procedure under Article 53 is intended to deal with phytosanitary emergencies. It also pointed out that limiting the number of authorisations is not compatible with that principle, in particular with the need to control quarantine pests.

4. Presentation of the results of the PLH RA Network Survey

Ciro Gardi and Monia Lombardo (EFSA PLANTS Unit) presented the results of the survey circulated to the Network members at the beginning of 2025. Fourteen countries responded to the questionnaire, providing an interesting analysis of the activities related to plant health risk assessment carried out by the various organisations. Most of the analysed organisations conduct pest categorisation or express PRA, while only few organisations carryout quantitative PRA . Climate factors were considered in approximately half of the cases analysed, but often limited to assessing climate suitability for different pests, without considering multiple climate change scenarios. Half of the respondent organisations use citizen science for various purposes, mainly for pest monitoring , while the use of artificial intelligence in PRA activities remains limited.
The import of plants for planting is indicated as the main source for the introduction of new pests, or at least this is the perception of the respondents.
Regarding the question on recent outrbreaks in the respective countries, we collected informations on more than twenty pests. Several PRAs/Express PRAs will also be conducted in the near future by the various national organizations, mainly focusing on EU priority pests or EPPO A1/A2 pests, but also assessing emerging pests (e.g., *Diplodia bulgarica, Ips accuminatus, Davidsoniella virescens, Graphium euwallaceae*, etc.)

5. Updates from EFSA

a. EFSA Calls: grants and procurement

Ewelina Czwienczek (EFSA PLANTS Unit) presented an overview on the calls published by EFSA to support the plant health risk assessment and in particular, the "Call for proposals on research to reduce entomological knowledge gaps for plant health risk assessment. This call is composed by three different Lots:

- Lot 1: Ecology of insect vectors of Xylella fastidiosa in EU table grapes outbreaks.
- Lot 2: Thermal ecology and biology of Thaumatotibia leucotreta (false codling moth) in East Africa.
- Lot 3: Taxonomy and biology of Leucinodes species (grass moths) from Africa.

b. Updates on *Xylella fastidiosa*

Matteo Crotta (EFSA PLANTS Unit) presented the progress of the Working Group on the update of the *Xylella fastidiosa* risk assessment for the European Union, including the EFSA call for data initiative launched to collect information necessary to characterise the incubation periods of the different subspecies.

c. PlantHealth4Life campaign

Agata Kaczmarek (EFSA PLANTS Unit) presented a brief update on PlantHealth4Life campaign.

6. Points from MSs

7. Anticipation on the November Nertwork meeting

The Network was informed by Giuseppe Stancanelli (EFSA PLANTS Unit) on the dates of the next PLH RA Network meeting, that will take place in Parma from the 4th to the 6th of November 2025; this meeting will be on a hybrid format but participation in person of Network members or their alternates is welcome and recommended.

8. Any Other Business

There were no additional topics discussed.

9. Conclusions

This Network meeting was primarily intended to update members and observer countries on EFSA's activities relating to plant health risk assessment, as well as the protocols for the emergency authorisation of pesticides. Nevertheless, the meeting provided an opportunity for discussion and debate. Although the survey had a response rate of around 50%, it provided an opportunity for interaction and allowed useful information to be collected and exchanged. The goal

for the future is to achieve a greater degree of collaborative interaction. The dates and provisional agenda for the November Network meeting were then announced.

10. Closure of the meeting