Scientific Panel on Plant Health (PLH)
Minutes of the 67th Plenary meeting

23 and 24 May 2017, Parma, (Italy)

(Agreed on 6 June 2017)

Participants

- Panel Members
  Claude Bragard, Thierry Candresse, David Caffier, Elisavet Chatzivassiliou, Katharina Dehnen-Schmutz, Gianni Gilioli, Jean-Claude Gregoire, Josep Jaques Miret, Michael Jeger, Alan MacLeod (participated by web), Maria Navajas, Björn Niere, Stephen Parnell, Roel Potting, Trond Rafoss, Vittorio Rossi, Gregor Urek, Ariena Van Bruggen, Wopke van der Werf, Jonathan West (participated by web), Stephan Winter.
- Hearing Experts
  Niklas Bjorklund (participated by web), Muriel Suffert
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:
  Maria Mirazchiyska, Mylona Panagiota, (DG SANTE)
- EFSA:
  ALPHA Unit: Nikolaus Križ, Giuseppe Stancanelli, Mitesha Aukhojee, Filippo Bergeretti, Ewelina Czwienczek Alice Delbianco, Ciro Gardi, Gabor Hollo, Virag Kertesz, Svetla Kozelska, Marielies Mayr, Marco Pautasso, Sybren Vos

  AMU Unit: Olaf Mosbach-Schulz

  RISKCOM Unit: Arthur Healy

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest Scientific Panel Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes[1] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest[2], EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI) and the Specific Declarations of Interest (SDoI) filled in by the Panel Members invited for the present meeting. No additional interest was declared.

[1] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf

[2] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 66th Plenary meeting held on 29-30 March, Parma Italy

The minutes of the 66th Plenary meeting held on 29-30 March 2017 were agreed.

5. New Mandates

No new mandates were presented.

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

6.1. scientific opinion on Assessment of *Citrus junos* as a host of citrus canker (EFSA-Q-2017-00039)

Following a request from the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Plant Health (PLH) Panel analysed a dossier submitted by the Japanese authorities in order to clarify the host status of *Citrus junos* with regards to *Xanthomonas citri* pv. *citri* and *Xanthomonas citri* pv. *aurantifolii*, causal agents of citrus bacterial canker, and to indicate whether *Citrus junos* fruit could represent a pathway for the introduction of citrus bacterial canker into the European Union. In a previous opinion in the year 2014, the EFSA PLH Panel concluded that commercial fresh citrus fruit is generally pathway and that no commercially important *Citrus* species or variety can be considered as immune to citrus bacterial canker. In the current assessment, the EFSA PLH Panel analysed the two scientific papers provided by the Japanese authorities, as well as 16 additional papers identified through a systematic literature review. The PLH Panel considered that the conclusions of its previous opinion remain valid and that convergent lines of evidence provide sufficient demonstration that *C. junos* is a host of *X. citri* pv. *citri* and *X. citri* pv. *aurantifolii*. Therefore there is no reason to consider the *C. junos* fruit differently from other citrus species. Consequently, the assessment of the general citrus fruit pathway from the 2014 opinion still applies. Uncertainties on these conclusions are a result of the scarce scientific evidence published on this subject in addition to the methodological and reporting limitations of the published papers.

The draft opinion was adopted.

6.2. scientific opinion on risk assessment of *Atropellis spp* (EFSA-Q-2016-00490)

Following a request from the European Commission, the EFSA Plant Health (PLH) Panel performed a risk assessment for *Atropellis* spp. in the EU focusing on the risk of entry, the host range and the potential impacts. *Atropellis* is a fungal pathogen of several *Pinus* spp. in North America. The pathogen has not been reported from Europe and is a quarantine pest listed in Annex IIAI of Council Directive 2000/29/EC on plants (other than fruit and seeds), isolated bark and wood of *Pinus*. The main pathways of

entry considered were *Pinus* plants, wood and isolated bark. Given the ban of importing *Pinus* plants from outside Europe into the EU and the lack of information on EU imports of isolated *Pinus* bark, only the wood pathway was assessed quantitatively. The conclusion of the assessment of entry for scenario A0 (current regulatory situation) is that the risk of entry of *Atropellis* spp. is close to zero. This conclusion is expected to apply also in the case of removing the specific *Atropellis* regulations, because of the remaining generic *Pinus* requirements, as well as in a scenario with additional RROs. The uncertainty associated with this assessment is relatively limited, given that all the quartiles of the estimated distribution of the number of potential founder populations are close to zero. For the North American *Pinus* spp. known to be susceptible and widely planted in the EU (mainly *P. contorta* and *P. strobus*), the damage observed in North America (loss of wood quality, stem deformations, mortality in young stands, environmental consequences) is expected in the EU to a similar (or higher) degree, should the pathogen be introduced. Similar impacts are expected on the European *Pinus* spp. known to be host of *Atropellis* spp. These include widespread and locally abundant species such as *P. nigra*, *P. sylvestris* and *P. pinaster*. There are, however, large uncertainties associated with this impact assessment due to the unknown susceptibility of several *Pinus* spp. present in Europe. There is a need for research on the susceptibility to *Atropellis* spp. of those European *Pinus* spp.

The draft opinion was adopted.

6.3. scientific opinion on risk assessment of *Diaporthe vaccinii* (EFSA-Q-2015-00267)

The chair of the *Diaporthe vaccinii* WG presented the status of the risk assessment for *Diaporthe vaccinii* in the EU focusing on the risk of entry and establishment, the spread from the established outbreak, considering the host range, and the potential impacts. The main pathways of entry considered were blueberry and cranberry fruits and plants for planting. Establishment from wasted infected berries is very unlikely to occur, while establishment from plants for planting is moderately likely. The WG chair invited the Panel members to suggest a shared solution for dealing with the pathways already analysed, but producing negligible probability of establishment (berries). Several proposals were made, but it was concluded that once considered and analysed in the model, these pathways and the related calculations, should be included anyhow in the PRA. This was considered to be a learning lesson in order to focus, in next coming PRA exercise, the scenario analysis to the most relevant pathways.

The adoption of draft opinion was postponed to the June plenary to allow the completion of the analysis and presentation of the results.

6.4. scientific opinion on risk assessment of *Eotetranychus lewisi* (EFSA-Q-2015-00270)

Following a 2014 pest categorisation of the spider *mite Eotetranychus lewisi*, the European Commission requested EFSA's Panel on Plant Health to continue work and perform a pest risk assessment and evaluate risk reduction options. A stochastic model was used to assess entry, establishment and spread and related uncertainties. In the EU, *E. lewisi* has only been reported to occur in Portugal (Madeira). Entry pathways assessed were poinsettia and raspberry plants for planting from third countries, strawberry plants for planting from the USA, and orange and lemon fruits from third countries. Entry is most likely via poinsettia. Under current EU phytosanitary requirements there is around a one in ten chance that *E. lewisi* will establish outdoors over the next ten years. Although unlikely, if establishment were to occur it would most likely occur in southern Europe where environmental conditions, temperature and host density, are most suitable. If *E. lewisi* did establish, pest spread is expected to be mainly human assisted, most likely the mite being transported long distances on plants for planting. Nevertheless, whilst remaining a regulated pest, spread would be slow and most likely confined to one NUTS2 area after 10 years. Under a scenario with enhanced measures (pest free place of production) at origin, the Panel's assessment indicate that it is extremely unlikely that *E. lewisi* would establish within 10 years hence spread is also extremely unlikely. The lack of trade of host plants from Madeira to other parts of the EU could explain why *E. lewisi* has not spread to other EU Member States. E. lewisi is reported as reducing yield and quality of peaches and poinsettia and is regarded as a growing concern for strawberry and raspberry growers in the Americas. The Panel concludes that should *E. lewisi* be introduced in the EU similar impacts are to be expected.

The draft opinion was adopted.

6.5. scientific opinion on risk assessment of *Radopholus similis* (EFSA-Q-2015-00269)

The Panel on Plant Health performed a pest risk assessment for the EU on *Radopholus similis*, the burrowing nematode. The quantitative assessment focused onf entry, establishment, spread and impact on tropical and sub-tropical ornamental host plants, the main pathways for entry of *R. similis* into the EU. Infested consignments are expected to enter the PRA area on ornamentals under all scenarios. For citrus, which is a closed pathway for entry, outdoor establishment was assessed. Establishment may only take place after successful transfer from ornamental plants to citrus production systems. This event is called "shift" in this assessment, to indicate that this is an unusual transfer. It has been estimated that establishment of this nematode in the open field in the EU citrus production areas under

current temperatures is possible in most part parts of the citrus production area in the EU. Temperature conditions will prevent the nematode from establishing only in the northernmost citrus areas and at higher altitudes in the South. Host plants for planting originating from infested places of production (greenhouses) within the PRA area are considered the main pathway for spread within the PRA area. Under current climatic conditions the population of *R. similis* is not expected to reach damaging population levels in the open field. In case of increased temperatures due to global warming, the nematode population may reach damaging levels in very few places outdoors. Currently main impact is considered for ornamental greenhouse production in the PRA area. Impact will be either caused by direct plant growth reductions or loss due to phytosanitary measures applied on regulated plants. Despite the fact that *R. similis* is globally considered as one of the most destructive plant parasitic nematodes, the overall impact in the PRA area is considered low.

The draft opinion was adopted.

6.6. scientific opinion on pest categorisation of *Dendroctonus micans* (EFSA-Q-2017-00194)

The Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of the great spruce bark beetle, *Dendroctonus micans* (Kugelann), (Coleoptera: Curculionidae, Scolytinae), for the European Union (EU). *D. micans* is a well-defined and distinguishable species, recognised mainly as a pest of spruce (*Picea* spp.) and pine (*Pinus* spp.) in Eurasia. Attacks on other conifers (*Abies* spp., *Larix decidua*, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*) are also reported. Supposedly originating from North-Eastern Eurasia, *D. micans* has spread westward and is now distributed throughout the EU (22 MSs). It is a Protected Zone quarantine pest listed in Annex IIB of Council Directive 2000/29/EC. Wood, wood products, bark and wood packaging material of the conifers genera listed as hosts are considered as the main pathways for the pest, which is also able to disperse several kilometres by flight. The sib-mating habits of the species allow each single female to start a new colony on her own. *D. micans* requires from one to more than two years for completing its life cycle. Its wide current geographic range suggests that it is able to establish anywhere in the EU where its hosts are present. The beetles attack living trees and usually complete their life cycle without killing their host, except under epidemic conditions at the limits of their distribution range, where hundreds of thousands of trees can be killed. Sitka spruce (*P. sitchensis*) is particularly susceptible. In addition to sanitary thinning or clearfelling, biological control using the very specific predatory beetle, *Rhizophagus grandis,* is a widespread and efficient option that has been implemented in all areas suffering from outbreaks. All criteria assessed by EFSA for consideration as potential protected zone quarantine pest were met. The criteria for considering *D.*

micans as a potential regulated non-quarantine pest are not met since plants for planting are viewed as a very minor pathway.

The draft opinion was adopted.

6.7. scientific opinion on pest categorisation of *Ips typographus* (EFSA-Q-2017-00195)

The Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle, *Ips typographus* L. (Coleoptera: Curculionidae, Scolytinae), for the European Union (EU). *I. typographus* is a well-defined and distinguishable species, recognised mainly as a pest of spruce (*Picea* spp.) in Eurasia. It also attacks other conifers (*Abies* spp., *Larix* spp., *Pinus* spp., *Pseudotsuga menziesii*). Native to Eurasia, *I. typographus* has spread from the native range of spruce to new areas in Eurasia where spruce has been planted, and is now distributed throughout the EU (22 MSs). It is a Protected Zone quarantine pest listed in Annex IIB of Council Directive 2000/29/EC. Wood, wood products, bark, wood packaging material, and plants for planting of the conifers genera listed as hosts are considered as pathways for the pest, which is also able to disperse by flight over tens of kilometres. The insects normally establish on fallen trees but can also mass-attack healthy trees, killing millions of spruces. The males produce pheromones that attract conspecifics of both sexes. Each male attracts one to four females; each female produces 2 to 80 offspring. The insects also inoculate pathogenic fungi to their hosts. There are one to three generations per year. The wide current geographic range of *Ips typographus* suggests that it is able to establish anywhere in the EU where its hosts are present. Sanitary thinning or clearfelling are the major control methods. Pheromone mass trapping is presently judged unreliable because of the large dispersal capacity of the pest. Quarantine measures are implemented to prevent entry in yet uncolonised areas. All criteria assessed by EFSA for consideration as potential protected zone quarantine pest were met. The criteria assessed by EFSA for considering *I. typographus* as a potential regulated non-quarantine pest are not met since plants for planting are viewed as a minor pathway.

The draft opinion was adopted.

6.8. scientific opinion on pest categorisation of *Anthonomus signatus* (EFSA-Q-2017-00197)

The Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of the strawberry bud weevil, *Anthonomus signatus* Say, (Coleoptera: Curculionidae), for the European Union (EU). *Anthonomus signatus* is a well-defined and distinguishable species, recognised as a pest of strawberry (*Fragaria*) fruit production in eastern North America where it is also a pest of *Rubus*. There are reports of *A. signatus* associated with non-rosaceous plants such as *Mentha*, *Nepeta*, *Rhododendron* and

Solidago although whether such plants are true hosts is uncertain. This pest categorisation focuses on *Fragaria* and *Rubus* as hosts. *Anthonomus signatus* is not known to occur in the EU. It is listed in Annex IIAI of Council Directive 2000/29/EC. The international trade in *Fragaria* and *Rubus* plants for planting provides a potential pathway to introduce *A. signatus* from North America. Considering climatic similarities between North America and the EU, the thermal biology of *A. signatus* and host distribution in the EU, *A. signatus* has the potential to establish within the EU. There would be one generation per year, as in North America. As a pest of field grown *Fragaria* and *Rubus*, *A. signatus* would not be expected to establish in EU glasshouses. In North America, adults clip developing buds, preventing fruit development and reducing yield. Losses are variable and depend on the cultivars attacked. Severe crop losses have been reported. However, some *Fragaria* cultivars can compensate the loss of buds e.g. by increasing the weight of fruits developing on remaining buds. Phytosanitary measures are available to reduce the likelihood of introduction of *A. signatus* from North America. All criteria assessed by EFSA for consideration as potential quarantine pest were met. The criteria on pest presence, to be considered as potential regulated non - quarantine pest, was not met.

The draft opinion was adopted.

6.9. scientific opinion on pest categorisation of *Cercospora angolensis* (EFSA-Q-2017-00298)

The European Commission requested the EFSA Panel on Plant Health perform a pest categorisation for *Cercospora angolensis*, the fungal pathogen responsible for Pseudocercospora fruit and leaf spot disease of citrus. *C. angolensis* is listed in Annex IIAI of Directive 2000/29/EC and is not known to be present in the EU. The pathogen, which has recently been reclassified as *Pseudocercospora angolensis*, is a single taxonomic entity and reliable methods are available for its detection and identification. All cultivated *Citrus* species and varieties and *Fortunella japonica* are hosts, with varying susceptibility. It is currently distributed in sub-Saharan Africa, between altitudes of 80-1800 m, and Yemen. Although the biology and epidemiology of *P. angolensis* are not well understood, infection is favoured by warm temperatures and humid conditions. The current distribution of the pathogen and climate matching suggest that it might not be well adapted to Mediterranean climates. However, the pathogen is also present in arid desert areas of Yemen and studies demonstrated that it can infect young fruit with short wetness durations. Moreover, uncertainty exists on whether and at which extent the irrigation applied to EU citrus-growing areas can make the microclimate in citrus orchards more favourable for *P. angolensis*. There are no ecological/climatic factors limiting the potential spread of the pathogen in the EU. Long-distance spread is likely to occur by wind-disseminated conidia and movement of infected/contaminated plants for

planting and fruit. Short-distance spread may occur via water splash and/or wind-driven rain. In the infested areas, the disease causes premature abscission of young leaves and fruit resulting in 50-100% yield losses. Cultural practices, sanitary and chemical measures applied in the infested areas reduce inoculum sources but they cannot eliminate the pathogen. *P. angolensis* meets all the criteria assessed by EFSA to qualify for an EU potential quarantine status, but not those of an EU potential regulated non-quarantine pest.

The draft opinion was adopted.

7. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/Scientific Panels, EFSA

7.1. PLH Scientific Panel including its Working Groups

7.1.1. Request from the European Commission to complete the Pest Risk Assessment (step 2) of 7 regulated pests: update by PLH Panel Working Groups on work progress

- PLH Panel Working Group "Directive 2000/29 Methods": development of fit for purpose risk assessment methodologies and process to update EU listing of regulated plant pests (EFSA-Q-2014-00351)

The WG chair presented first the proposed plan for gathering feedback on the new quantitative risk assessment methodology using a questionnaire and then explained in detail the draft questionnaire. The participants commented the draft questionnaire and agreed on an updated version which was then sent to PLH Panel members, to the external pilot WG members and to the PLH Team with request to provide feedback by 1 June 2017.

7.1.2. Request to provide a scientific opinion on the risk to plant health of 133 regulated harmful organisms, for the EU territory (**M-2017-0055**)

For the categorisation of the 133 pests, the existing template was recently updated. Further adjustments have been made when working on the first four draft opinions in order to make the template user friendly and fit for purpose. The most important changes, particularly on how the conclusions of the opinions should be communicated, was presented and discussed with the Panel and the observers from the European Commission, to ensure that the assessment is fit for purpose and reply to the needs of the risk managers.

- PLH Panel Working Group on agriculture fungal pathogens pest categorisation

The WG chair[3] gave update on the meetings planned and the progress made so far. The WG is currently working on the *Venturia naschicola* draft opinion that will be presented for adoption at the plenary meeting in June.

- PLH Panel Working Group on forestry pathogens pest categorisation

The chair of the WG on forest fungi presented the WG composition[4] and the planned activities for the pest categorizations planned for 2017, which will deal with *Entoleuca mammata* (an advanced draft has been reviewed during the first WG meeting on 22 May 2017, the opinion is foreseen for adoption in June 2017), *Gremmeniella abietina* and *Cercoseptoria pini-densiflorae* (foreseen for adoption in September 2017) and *Ceratocystis virescens* and *Stegophora ulmea* (foreseen for adoption in November 2017).

- PLH Panel Working Group on forestry insects pest categorisation

The WG chair[5] gave a brief update on the current status of the work: following the two adopted opinions, the WG is focusing on the categorisation of all other *Ips* species (*I. sexdentatus*, *I. duplicatus*, *I. amitinus*, *I. cembrae*). The identification of external experts is ongoing for all other forest insect pests that the WG will deal with following the Ips opinions.

- PLH Panel Working Group on agriculture insects pest categorisation

The WG chair[6] presented the planned activities for the next coming pest categorization adoptions (i) June Plenary adoption: *Spodoptera frugiperda* (one web meting already planned) and (ii) September Plenary adoption: *Anthonomus bisignifer, Anthonomus grandis* (two web meetings already planned).

- PLH Panel Working Group on plant viruses pest categorisation

The WG chair[7] briefly presented the current status of the work. The WG is currently focusing on the categorisation of the Little cherry pathogen, the Cadang-Cadang viroid and the Beet curly top virus. These opinions are foreseen for adoption in June 2017. A hearing expert in relation to the Blackberry Latent Virus has joined the WG and the selection of further external experts and hearing experts on citrus viruses is ongoing. The planned activities for the coming pest categorization were also concisely explained.

[3] https://ess.efsa.europa.eu/doi/doiweb/wg/683470
[4] https://ess.efsa.europa.eu/doi/doiweb/wg/683452
[5] https://ess.efsa.europa.eu/doi/doiweb/wg/683451
[6] https://ess.efsa.europa.eu/doi/doiweb/wg/683453
[7] https://ess.efsa.europa.eu/doi/doiweb/wg/683450

7.2. Scientific Committee and its Working Groups

Updated information was provided with regard to:

- the uncertainty workshop organised by the Uncertainty WG in Parma on 22 and 23 June 2017,

- best practice of the Scientific Committee in receiving feedback from EFSA Panels: full presentation on PLH Panel was given recently,

- the guidance prepared by WG on Biological relevance, which was subject to public consultation: received comments are currently evaluated and addressed by the WG.

7.3. EFSA including its Working Groups/Task Forces

7.3.1. Update on the request from the European Commission to provide scientific and technical assistance on a horizon scanning exercise in view to crisis preparedness on plant health for the EU territory (EFSA-Q-2017-00037)

EFSA provided an update on the progresses made in the Horizon Scanning project. The second pilot edition of the newsletter on media monitoring of plant pest, developed in collaboration with the JRC using the Medysis IT platform, was presented. Following the request of the PLH Panel, the newsletters will be made available on the DMS as soon as they will be delivered to the EC and Member State representatives in the PAFF Committee on Plant Health. It is planned that after completion of the pilot phase the newsletters will be made available on website.

8. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

9. Any other business

EFSA provided information on upcoming PLH events/calls as follows:

- The Call for PLH Panel renewal 2018-2021 will **open on 1 June 2017**. For more info please see http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/careers/experts
- EFSA has launched an Art 36 Thematic Grant on "Smart monitoring of airborne plant pathogens: advances in aerobiology, and molecular diagnostics and remote sensing to support risk based plant health surveillance in the EU". Deadline for proposals is 25 October 2017. For more info please see http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/art36grants/article36/170502-0

- Submission of abstracts for the "European conference on *Xylella fastidiosa*: finding answers to a global problem: Palma de Mallorca, 13-15 November 2017" is still possible **until 31 May 2017**. For more info please see http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/171113

Further conferences were announced by the participants:

- The Plant Biosecurity CRC and the Australasian Plant Pathology Society invite you to Science Protecting Plant Health 2017 (SciPlant17) - an international plant health and plant biosecurity conference to be held in Brisbane, 26-28 September 2017, for more information see link: www.sciplant17.com.au
- "Progress and challenges in modelling forest pests and diseases" held at the Royal Society of Edinburgh, 4-5 September 2017, the conference is associated with the outputs of the UK project forestresilience.net
- 11-15 September 2017, Thessaloniki (Greece) International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO). Joint meeting of Working Parties 7.03.05 "Ecology and Management of Bark and Wood Boring Insects" and 7.03.10 "Methodology of forest insect and disease survey". http://www.iufrogreece2017.com/
- 18-22 September 2017, Freiburg (Germany) IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress http://iufro2017.com/congress-aim/
- IPRRG meeting in Ottawa 29/8-1/9 2017, see http://www.pestrisk.org/iprrg-2017/
- 3rd International Congress on Biological Invasions (ICBI), 19-23 November, 2017, Fuzhou, China, see https://www.pestrisk.org/3rd-international-congress-on-biological-invasions/

The next PLH PLENARY will take place in Parma on

- 27 June 2017, 9.00-18.00
- 28 June 2017, 8.00 – 15.00

The first day of the 68th PLH plenary will be devoted to discussion of draft opinions on pest categorisation for possible adoption, whereas the second day will be mostly dedicated to the discussion of the quantitative pest risk assessment methodology. Based on a general discussion on the opinions submitted for adoption at 67th PLH plenary, the Panel agreed that for the June 2017 PLH Panel plenary meeting only completed draft opinions submitted by 16 June 2017 at the latest will be considered for possible adoption.