

Scientific Panel on Plant Health (PLH)

Minutes of the 68th Plenary meeting

27 and 28 June 2017, Parma, (Italy)

(Agreed by written procedure on 14 July 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, Maria Navajas, Björn Niere, Stephen Parnell, Roel Potting, Trond Rafoss (participated by web), Vittorio Rossi, Gregor Urek, Wopke van der Werf, Stephan Winter

■ Hearing Experts

Gritta Schrader

■ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Pasquale Di Rubbo, Maria Mirazchiyska, Mylona Panagiota and Roman Vagner (DG SANTE) via video conference

■ EFSA:

ALPHA Unit: Giuseppe Stancanelli, Mitesha Aukhojee, Filippo Bergeretti, Ewelina Czwieczek Alice Delbianco, Ciro Gardi, Gabor Hollo, Virag Kertesz, Svetla Kozelska, Marco Pautasso, Woan-Ru Lee (EFSA visiting scientist)

AMU Unit: Olaf Mosbach-Schulz

SCER Unit: Bernard Bottex

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Ariena Van Bruggen and Jonathan West.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Report on the agreement in written procedure of the Plenary minutes of 67th Plenary meeting

The minutes of the 67th Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure by 6 June 2017 and published on EFSA web-page on 8 June 2017.

4. Declarations of Interest Scientific Panel Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest², 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.

5. New Mandates

5.1. Request for an urgent reaction from EFSA to comments to an accepted manuscript

The European Commission has been informed by EFSA of the availability on line of an accepted manuscript regarding the first report of *Phyllosticta* species from citrus in Europe. EFSA is requested, pursuant to Article 29 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, to prepare an urgent evaluation of this scientific paper, i.e. before the end of September 2017. In particular, EFSA is asked, in view of current scientific knowledge, to review the methodologies used in this paper, as the well as the analysis of the results and the related discussion. In addition, EFSA is requested to report and discuss how these findings fit the predictions of previous model simulations.

Mike Jeger was nominated as Chair of the Working group to deal with this request.

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

6.1. scientific opinion on risk assessment of *Diaporthe vaccinii* ([EFSA-Q-2015-00267](#))

As requested by the European Commission, the EFSA Plant Health Panel assessed the risk of *Diaporthe vaccinii* in the EU, focusing on entry, establishment, spread and impacts on cultivated and wild *Vaccinium* species, the principal hosts being American and European cranberry and blueberry. Several outbreaks occurred in the EU since 1956, but most were eradicated except in Latvia. The panel considered entry via fruits and plants for planting. The risk of establishment from discarded infected berries is much lower than from infected plants for planting, of which, potted plants and cuttings pose the greatest risk, while plug plants, derived from tissue culture and grown in pest free structures, pose a low risk. 9% of the EU is highly suitable for establishment of the pathogen, mostly in the SE and NE. Following establishment, the pathogen could spread naturally over short range and by human assistance over long range. Calculations with an integrated model for entry, establishment and spread, indicate that with current regulations, over a period of five years,

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independancepolicy.pdf>

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independancerules2014.pdf>

a few hundred cultivated *Vaccinium* plants and several thousand *Vaccinium* plants in natural ecosystems would contract the disease. The associated loss of commercial production is small, less than one ton of berries per year. On natural vegetation, the median impact after 5 years was estimated to be negligible affecting a negligible proportion of the natural *Vaccinium* population (2×10^{-8}). However, the uncertainty of this estimate was high, due to uncertainty about the rate of spread; in a worst case scenario (99th percentile) almost 1% of plants in natural areas would become infected. Complete deregulation (scenario A1) was predicted to increase the impact substantially, especially in natural areas, while additional measures (scenario A2) would effectively eliminate the entry of infected plants for planting, further reducing the impacts below the current situation.

The opinion was adopted by the Panel.

6.2. scientific opinion on pest categorisation of *Entoleuca mammata* ([EFSA-Q-2017-00328](#))

Following a request from the European Commission, the EFSA Plant Health Panel performed a pest categorisation of *Entoleuca mammata*, a well-defined and distinguishable fungus of the family Xylariaceae native to North America. The species was moved from the genus *Hypoxylon* to the genus *Entoleuca* following a revision of the genus. The former species name *H. mammatum* is used in the Council Directive 2000/29/EC. *E. mammata* is the causal agent of Hypoxylon canker of quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and other poplars (*Populus* spp.). The pathogen has been reported in 16 EU Member States (MS), without apparent limiting ecoclimatic factors, but mostly (with the exception of Sweden) with a restricted distribution. *E. mammata* is a Protected Zone (PZ) quarantine pest (Annex IIB) for Ireland and the UK (Northern Ireland). The main European hosts (*P. tremula*, *P. nigra* and hybrid poplars) are widespread throughout most of the risk assessment area, including the PZ. The main means of spread are wind-blown ascospores, plants for planting and wood with bark. *E. mammata* is not currently reported to be of significant economic importance in the EU MS where the pathogen is reported, but has been shown to cause significant damage in the USA. Risk reduction options include appropriate site selection for poplar plantations, avoiding wounds and debarking wood. The main uncertainties concern the distribution of the pathogen in the EU, the susceptibility of cultivated hybrid poplars to the pathogen and thus the potential damage to poplar plantations in the RA area. The criteria assessed by the Panel for consideration as potential PZ quarantine pest and those for consideration

as regulated non-quarantine pest were evaluated. The criterion of plants for planting being the main pathway for spread for regulated non-quarantine pests is not met: plants for planting are only one of the means of spread of the pathogen.

The opinion was adopted by the Panel

6.3. scientific opinion on pest categorisation of Little cherry pathogen (*non- EU isolates*) ([EFSA-Q-2017-00200](#))

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of non-EU isolates of the Little cherry pathogen (LCP) for the European Union (EU) territory. LCP is now known to be in fact two distinct, well characterized viruses, *Little cherry virus 1* (LChV1) and *Little cherry virus 2* (LChV2) collectively referred to here as LChV. Efficient molecular detection assays are available for both viruses but not to discriminate EU and non-EU isolates. LChV are transmitted by vegetative multiplication of infected hosts and, for LChV2, by mealybug vectors. LChV are reported from a range of countries, both outside and within the EU. Non-EU isolates are not known to occur in the EU and therefore do not meet one of the criteria for being a Union regulated non-quarantine pest. The host ranges of LChV are restricted to *Prunus* species, in particular cultivated and ornamental cherries. LChV non-EU isolates are listed for some, but not all hosts, in Annex IIAI of Directive 2000/29/EC. LChV isolates are expected to be able to enter and establish in the EU. They have the potential to subsequently spread through plants for planting and, for LChV2, through the action of the *Phenacoccus aceris* vector, which is present in many EU MS. LChV are able to cause severe symptoms in some cherry varieties while others are less affected. Overall, non-EU LChV isolates meet all the criteria evaluated by EFSA to qualify as Union quarantine pests. However, given the currently limited impact of EU LChV isolates, the impact of non-EU isolates, if introduced, could be similarly limited. The main knowledge gaps and uncertainties concern (1) whether EU and non-EU isolates of LChV might differ in their biology, epidemiology or symptomatology, (2) efficiency of natural spread by vectors under EU conditions and (3) extent of symptoms caused on many EU-grown varieties.

The opinion was adopted by the Panel.

6.4. scientific opinion on pest categorisation of Cadang-Cadang viroid ([EFSA-Q-2017-00201](#))

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of Cadang-Cadang viroid for the European Union (EU) territory. *Coconut Cadang-Cadang viroid* (CCCVd) is a well-known viroid for which efficient

molecular detection assays are available. It is transmitted by vegetative multiplication of infected hosts, by seed and pollen and, possibly, by the action of unknown vector(s). CCCVd is reported from a few countries in Asia and is not known to occur in the EU. It therefore does not meet one of the criteria for being a Union regulated non-quarantine pest. The host range of CCCVd is restricted to *Arecaceae* species (palms), in particular coconut and it is listed on all known hosts in Annex IIAI of Directive 2000/29/EC. CCCVd is expected to be able to enter in the EU and to be able to establish in the open in the southernmost regions of the EU and elsewhere under protected cultivation. It has the potential to subsequently spread via plants for planting and possibly other mechanisms. CCCVd is able to cause severe symptoms in some *Arecaceae* species while others seem less affected. The potential impact of CCCVd if introduced in the EU is very difficult to assess. Given that the spread potential is, as for other viroids, likely to be limited, the potential impact is estimated to be limited in extent but this judgement is affected by large uncertainties. Overall, CCCVd meets all the criteria evaluated by EFSA to qualify as Union quarantine pest. The main knowledge gaps concern (1) the relationships between CCCVd-related RNAs and CCCVd, (2) the origin and volume of the trade in palm seeds and plants for planting imported in the EU (3) the efficiency of natural spread under EU conditions and (4) host status and susceptibility of many palm species grown in the EU.

The opinion was adopted by the Panel.

6.5. scientific opinion on pest categorisation *Spodoptera frugiperda* ([EFSA-Q-2017-00425](#))

The European Commission requested EFSA to conduct a pest categorization of *Spodoptera frugiperda* (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) a pest with hosts in 27 plant families. Favoured hosts include maize, rice and sorghum (Poaceae). Other hosts include crops within the Brassicaceae, Cucurbitaceae, Solanaceae and Rutaceae. *Spodoptera frugiperda* is a taxonomic entity with reliable methods available for identification. It is regulated in the European Union (EU) as a harmful organism whose introduction into the EU is banned. It is native to tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas and migrates to temperate regions in North and South America during the summer, where outbreaks occur. Establishment in temperate areas is prevented by its inability to overwinter. *Spodoptera frugiperda* has been intercepted on plant produce entering the EU. Phytosanitary measures are available to inhibit entry via traded commodities. In 2016 *S. frugiperda* was reported as having reached Africa, where it damages maize. Subsequent reports indicate that it continues to spread severely, damaging maize and other crops. If *S. frugiperda* spreads into North Africa, the likelihood of adults migrating into the temperate EU increases. Within the scope and level of analysis

appropriate for pest categorisation, the EFSA Plant Health Panel concludes that *S. frugiperda* could establish in a small area of the southern EU from where it is likely to reach more northern regions, forming transient summer populations, particularly in maize growing regions where impacts on yield could occur. However, uncertainties regarding establishment remain. Considering the criteria within the remit of EFSA to assess as regards status as a potential Union quarantine pest (QP) or as a potential regulated non-quarantine pest (RNQP), *S. frugiperda* currently satisfies the criteria to be regarded a Union QP but does not meet the criteria of (i) occurring in the EU territory, and (ii) plants for planting being the principal means of spread required for RNQP status.

The opinion was adopted by the Panel.

6.6. scientific opinion on pest categorisation *Venturia nashicola* (non-EU isolates) ([EFSA-Q-2017-00299](#))

The Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of *Venturia nashicola*, the causal agent of Asian pear scab, for the European Union (EU). The pathogen is a well-defined, distinguishable fungal species affecting *Pyrus pyrifolia* var. *culta*, *P. ussuriensis* and *P. bretschneideri* in Asian countries. *P. communis* (European pear) is not a host of *V. nashicola*, but the host status of other *Pyrus* species is unclear. *V. nashicola* is not known to occur in the EU, although there is uncertainty with respect to the status of the pathogen in France. It is listed in Annex IIAI of Directive 2000/29/EC. The pathogen could potentially enter the EU on host plants for planting and fruit originated in infested countries. There are no climatic factors limiting the potential establishment and spread of the pathogen in the EU, as its epidemiology is similar to those of *V. inaequalis* (apple scab) and *V. pyrina* (European pear scab), which are well-established in the EU. The hosts are present in the EU, but no data were found on their abundance and distribution. In the infested areas, *V. nashicola* causes premature leaf and fruit drop and fruit distortion resulting in considerable yield/quality losses. The introduction of the pathogen into the EU could cause yield/quality losses and environmental consequences because of the additional fungicide sprays for disease control. Cultural practices and chemical measures applied in the infested areas reduce the inoculum sources but they cannot eliminate the pathogen. Phytosanitary measures are available to mitigate the risk of introduction and spread of the pathogen in the EU. All criteria assessed by EFSA for consideration as a potential Union quarantine pest are met.

The adoption of the draft opinion was postponed to allow clarification of the uncertainty with regard to the pest status in the pest risk assessment area.

6.7. scientific opinion on pest categorisation of *Ips sexdentatus* ([EFSA-Q-2017-00203](#)) (for discussion and possible written adoption)

The Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorization of the six-toothed bark beetle, *Ips sexdentatus*. The pest is a protected zone quarantine pest in Ireland, Cyprus and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland, Isle of Man), recognised mainly as a pest of pine and spruce.

The draft opinion will be finalised shortly by the working group and will be circulated for written adoption in September.

6.8. scientific opinion on pest categorisation of Beet curly top virus (non-EU) ([EFSA-Q-2017-00202](#)) (for discussion and possible written adoption)

The Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorization of Beet curly top virus (non-EU). An advanced version was presented to the Panel. The draft opinion will be finalised shortly by the working group and will be circulated for written adoption in September.

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

7.1. PLH Scientific Panel including its Working Groups

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

The adoption plan for 2017 has been presented for the entire mandate. Currently six working groups are operating and another two are under establishment. The plan is to adopt 40 opinions in total by the end of 2017. A proposal on modifying the impact section of the template was presented, discussed and agreed.

- PLH Panel Working Group on agricultural fungal pathogens pest categorisation

The finalisation of the *Venturia nashicola* draft opinion is put on hold until the French NPPO and EPPO is contacted to clarify the status of the pest in France. The opinion is planned to be adopted by written procedure in September 2017. The WG is going to work on another 4 pest categorisations (*Guignardia piricola*, *Puccinia pittieriana*, *Alternaria alternata* and *Elsinoe* spp.) until the end of 2017.

- PLH Panel Working Group on forest fungal pathogens pest categorisation

The WG chair presented an update on the progress of the WG on forest fungal pathogens. During the last WG meeting in June, the WG revised a draft of the opinion on *Gremmeniella abietina*, to be circulated to the PLH Panel Members for their feedback after the June PLH plenary meeting, so

as to revise the draft in the light of those comments during the July, 10-11 WG meeting. The WG also made a start on the draft opinion on *Pseudocercospora pini-densiflorae* (which is regulated as *Cercoseptoria pini-densiflorae*). Both opinions are planned to be discussed for possible adoption at the September PLH plenary meeting.

- PLH Panel Working Group on forestry insects pest categorisation

Following the finalisation of the *Ips sexdentatus* opinion, the WG will work on other three *Ips* species categorisations, *I. amitinus*, *I. cembrae* and *I. duplicatus*. There are further five species on the plan until the end of 2017.

- PLH Panel Working Group on agricultural insects pest categorisation

The WG informed the Panel that they plan to prioritise the categorisation of the pest *Hishimonus phycitis*, which is a known vector of the Witches' broom phytoplasma, currently addressed by the Bacteria WG. The WG will perform five more pest categorisations until the end of 2017.

- PLH Panel Working Group on plant viruses pest categorisation

Following the finalisation of the Beet curly top virus opinion, the WG will proceed with the categorisation of three citrus viruses. In preparation to the group categorisations of potato and small fruit tree viruses, the WG plans to work also on establishing the list of pests for these two groups in order to facilitate the data collection to be done before the categorisations.

- PLH Panel Working Group on plant on bacteria

The WG has been established in May. It started to work recently on the pest categorisation of Witches' broom phytoplasma. After the new additional expert officially joins the WG the work on Palm lethal yellowing phytoplasma will also start.

- PLH Panel Working Group on *Xylella* species pest categorisation

The WG is under establishment. The plan is to deliver one categorisation by the end of 2017 on *Xylella* spp., including the listed diseases Citrus variegated chlorosis and Peach phony rickettsia.

7.1.2. 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 analysis of the questionnaire to collect feedback for drafting the Guidance document on new quantitative framework to conduct pest risk assessments and evaluate risk reduction options. The feedback was based on case studies and aimed to evaluate and comment the main risk assessment procedures and elements of the template specified in 52 specific questions. In total 17 replies to the questionnaire were received from PLH Panel members, external WG members and PLH Team. The major issues raised by the respondents were (i) how to design the work plan, i.e. how to operationalize qualitative pest risk assessment, (ii) how to build the model, (iii) issues related to uncertainty estimation, graphical output and risk reduction options (RROs). Support from AMU and the new tool, flexibility, reliability and reproducibility of the results and construction and use of databases were commented as well.

In the second part of the presentation the chair and the WG Methods members focused on the future development of the guidance on new methodology and on proposed solutions for the issues raised during the feedback collection. Separate presentations were dedicated to:

- (i) designing the work plan – the proposed procedures were explained in detail;
- (ii) risk reduction options – it was proposed to focus on few relevant scenarios specifically for the entry such as pest freedom guarantees of exporting country and how to translate RRO scenario in legislative requirements for Entry part;
- (iii) building the model - the web-based risk model calculation tool currently under development and its main features were presented and stressed that new methodology guidance will include a recommendation on how the risk assessor interactively can use the guidance document, template document and the new web-based risk model calculation tool;
- (iv) graphical outputs – the characteristics of the recommended charts to be used in the opinions (probability density and descending cumulative probability) were explained, compared and proposal for annotations of the charts were given. The importance of using key terminology describing distributions and verbal terms and relevant numbers (rounding) to reflect uncertainty and to avoid misleading precision was stressed. The same emphasis should be given on median

and appropriate range and comparisons between different pathways / scenarios should be provided;

- (v) guidance document - draft List of content and development plan of the new guidance were presented.

In the follow-up discussion the participants clarified following topics:

- implementation of the RROs in an opinion: the RRO evaluation can be done as an standalone project at the beginning of the work and can be described in an Annex of the opinion. The comparison of scenarios can be done by estimating the multiplication factor or by estimating parameter and uncertainties distribution;
- expert knowledge elicitation: considered an important tool where first the evidence should be provided and discussed and the limitations identified and evaluated and after estimating the value the shape of the distribution should be justified (i.e. if the distribution is well justified, no justification of specific quantiles/values needed);
- need for some specific issues to be included in the guidance, e.g. a guidance/advice when to use in an opinion the quantitative and when the narrative approach (certain adaptability requested), how to proceed when no or only limited data are available, advice how to present the results and how to derive the conclusions from the model outputs (for these aspects the feedback from risk managers is essential);
- risk manager feedback on the new methodology: is considered important and foreseen to be provided in October 2017 and taken into account in the guidance.

The Panel chair stressed that the new guidance should take into account the current four PLH guidances (Evaluation of pest risk assessments and risk management options, 2009; Harmonised framework for PRA in the EU, 2010; Guidance on ERA, 2011; Guidance on evaluation of risk reduction options, 2012) and should replace the Harmonised framework for PRA in the EU (2010) and the relevant parts of Guidance on ERA (2011) and of the Guidance on evaluation of risk reduction options, (2012). It was proposed that the new guidance should contain several annexes, e.g. a work-flow how to perform a pest risk assessment, a template for pest categorisation, a self-sufficient template how to communicate the results. Nevertheless in the guidance should be a section explaining the respective sections in the template. The final deadline for adoption of the new guidance (after being subject for public consultation procedure) is June 2018.

7.2. Scientific Committee and its Working Groups

The Panel chair provided detailed feedback on the EFSA Internal workshop on the trial of the EFSA guidance document on uncertainty which was held on 22 -23 June 2017 in Parma. EFSA published a revised draft guidance document (GD) in March 2016 after public consultation. A technical report on the public consultation details how the feedback was systematically evaluated and used to strengthen the revised draft was also published. EFSA started the trial phase on their draft GD in April 2016 for one year. The GD is being tested by 10 different panels with 13 different case studies. The PLH Panel was represented at the workshop with two case studies. The overall objective of the workshop was to share the results of the trial across the different panels and to inform the WG Uncertainty on how to further tailor the draft guidance to make it fit for purpose for the panel's/unit's needs. The feedback on the PLH Panel case studies with regard to implementation of the Uncertainty guidance was very positive.

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 progress made in the Horizon Scanning project. The third pilot edition of the newsletter on media monitoring of plant pests, developed in collaboration with the JRC using the MediSys IT platform, was presented. For the future editions a dedicated folder will contain all the newsletters as soon as they are delivered.

7.3.2. Update on *Xylella* database and on *Xylella* conference

After delivery of the "EFSA statement on susceptibility of *Olea europaea* L. varieties to *Xylella fastidiosa* subsp. *pauca* ST53: systematic literature search up to 24 March 2017", EFSA PLH team has to complete the update of *Xylella* host plant database with focus on positive and negative findings in the literature and tolerance/resistance responses. This extensive literature search was started and Abstract screening was done in the Distiller software. The deadline of the delivery is the end of September 2017.

European conference on *Xylella fastidiosa* "Finding answers to a global problem" which will be held in Palma de Mallorca on 13-15 November 2017 is under preparation. Submission of the abstracts is closed and draft programme is being prepared.

8. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

There were no other scientific topics presented or discussed.

9. Any other business

9.1. Plenary dates for 2018

The Panel agreed on the PLH Panel plenary dates for 2018 as follows:

- 31 January -1 February 2018
- 21-22 March 2018
- 16-17 May 2018
- 20-21 June 2018
- 4-5 July 2018 (to be confirmed)
- 26-27 September 2018
- 21-22 November 2018