



**MINUTES OF THE 2ND PLENARY MEETING
OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH
HELD IN PARMA ON 11-12 OCTOBER 2006
(ADOPTED ON 14 DECEMBER 2006)**

#	AGENDA	PAGE
1.	Welcome speech by the Executive Director	2
2.	Adoption of the draft agenda, apologies for absence, declaration of interests	2
3.	Adoption of the minutes of 1 st Plenary Meeting	3
4.	Introduction of the new Panel members	3
5.	Election of vice-chairs	3
6.	Cooperation with the Community Member States	
7.	<p>Presentation and discussion of draft opinions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pest risk assessment made by Lithuania and Poland as regards <i>Ambrosia</i> spp.;- Two PRAs made by the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) for invasive alien species (IAS) that pose a threat to plant health, environment and biodiversity in the EPPO region, i.e. <i>Lysichiton americanus</i> and <i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>;- A PRA made by Spain on <i>Bactrocera zonata</i>, a fruit fly listed in the quarantine list of the Community plant health legislation;- An evaluation made by the US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) on asymptomatic citrus fruit as a pathway for the introduction of citrus canker disease (<i>Xanthomonas axonopodis</i> pv. <i>citri</i>)	3
8.	Discussion on PLH protocol for peer-review of PRA	4
9.	Building-up the PLH Panel reputation in Risk Assessment	4
10.	New questions on 30 PRAs made by France for DOMs	6
11.	Relationship between EFSA PLH Panel and EPPO	6
12.	New EFSAnet	6

13.	Any other business	6
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PARTICIPANTS

Members of the PLH Panel

Dr. Richard BAKER, Mr. David CAFFIER, Dr. James William CHOISEUL, Prof. Patrick DE CLERCQ, Mrs. Erzsébet DORMANNSNÉ SIMON, Prof. Bärbel GEROWITT, Dr. Olia Evtimova KARADJOVA, Dr. Gábor LÖVEI, Dr. David MAKOWSKI, Dr. Charles MANCEAU, Dr. Luisa MANICI, Dr. Dionyssios PERDIKIS, Dr. Angelo PORTA PUGLIA, Dr. Jan SCHANS, Dr. Gritta SCHRADER, Mr. Robert STEFFEK, Assoc. Prof. Anita STRÖMBERG, Prof. Kari TIILIKKALA, Prof. Dr. Johan Coert VAN LENTEREN, Dr. Irene VLOUTOGLOU

Apologies

Prof. Alfons OUDE LANSINK

European Commission (DG SANCO)

Michael WALSH, Marc VEREECKE

EFSA

Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (Executive Director), Herman KOËTER (Science Director), Dirk DETKEN (Legal Affairs), Elzbieta CEGLARSKA (Scientific Coordinator, Panel on PLH), Ann DE BLOCK, Anna CAMPANINI (administrative support to the PLH Scientific Secretariat)

1. WELCOME SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, EFSA's new Executive Director, welcomed the participants and congratulated them on their appointment to the new EFSA Panel on Plant Health. She shared with the Panel her vision of EFSA as the European reference body on risk assessment on food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, nutrition and plant health. She stressed that risk assessment is EFSA's core activity. This task can be achieved with support from the EU institutions and MS¹ in close involvement and collaboration with the national food authorities and stakeholders. Networking and building strong cooperation with MS is of paramount importance in terms of sharing information and pooling resources. Legal tools and financial resources are available at EFSA for this purpose.

In relation to the PLH Panel remit, the Executive Director confirmed that the Panel can also carry out pest risk assessments.

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The agenda was adopted without any changes.

¹ EU member states

Conflict of interest was reported from two Panel members with regard to the question on EPPO PRAs.

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF 1ST PLENARY MEETING

The minutes were adopted with minor editorial changes.

4. INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW PANEL MEMBERS

Two new members of the panel Maria Manici (mycologist, ISCI Research Institute for Industrial Crops, Bologna) and Dionyssios Perdikis (entomologist, Agricultural University of Athens) introduced themselves describing briefly their scientific backgrounds in relation to the PLH Panel remit.

5. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRS

R. BAKER and G. LOVEI were elected as vice chairs according to the Rules of Procedures.

6. COOPERATION WITH THE COMMUNITY MEMBER STATES

D. Detken provided a presentation on legal tools for cooperation with MS, i.e. the Art. 36 (Comm. Reg. 2002/178).

Art. 36 provides a legal basis for networking organisations operating in the fields covered by the EFSA mission. The aim is to facilitate scientific cooperation by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects, the exchange of expertise and best practices falling within the remit of EFSA.

7. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DRAFT OPINIONS ON:

- Pest risk assessment made by Lithuania and Poland as regards *Ambrosia* spp.

The question concerns the Lithuanian and Polish PRAs on invasive alien plant *Ambrosia* spp., in particular *A. artemisiifolia*, *A. trifida*, and *A. polystachya*. The rapporteurs presented the results obtained so far from the detailed analysis undertaken by the WG. The Commission requested a more in depth analysis of entry pathways and official control in Poland and Lithuania. However, assessing the existence of official control is not considered a scientific task that can be undertaken by the Panel.

- Two PRAs made by the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) for Invasive Alien Species (IAS) that pose a threat to plant health, environment and biodiversity in the EPPO region: *Lysichiton americanus* and *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*

Draft opinions were presented by the rapporteurs.

The PRAs under investigation relate to two aquatic plant species *Lysichiton americanus* (American skunk cabbage) and *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* (floating marsh pennywort) that pose a

threat to plant health, environment and biodiversity in the EPPO area. The PRAs were prepared by EPPO and two of the present Panel members took part in this work. They declared a conflict of interest and are excluded from the discussions and will also refrain from voting on their adoption. The preliminary recommendation from the WG was that, due to lack of information, the quarantine status of the pests could only be justified by using the precautionary principle. The Commission expressed their concerns about this point of view.

- **A PRA made by Spain on *Bactrocera zonata*, a fruit fly listed in the quarantine list of the Community plant health legislation**

This question relates to the fruit fly *Bactrocera zonata* listed in Annex I of Directive 2000/29 as *Dacus zonatus*. The draft opinion was presented by the rapporteur. It was concluded that the pest risk assessment carried out by Spain was suitable to justify IAI listing and that it provided sufficient evidence to justify an analysis of the risk management options. Passenger and mail pathways for fresh fruit need more detailed consideration.

- **An evaluation made by the US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) on asymptomatic citrus fruit as a pathway for the introduction of citrus canker disease (*Xanthomonas axonopodis* pv. *citri*)**

The rapporteur presented the draft of the evaluation of a USDA proposal to allow movement of asymptomatic citrus fruit from areas where citrus canker is present. The WG had undertaken a thorough review of the scientific evidence provided (including references) and the preliminary opinion was that the Document does not justify safe movement of citrus from infected areas. The WG identified many issues which put the scientific accuracy of the document into question. The WG will continue with their detailed analysis to finalise the opinion as scheduled.

It is hoped that the opinions can be adopted at the next plenary meeting of the PLH Panel on 14th-15th December.

8. DISCUSSION ON PLH PROTOCOL FOR PEER-REVIEW OF PRAS

The Panel discussed the necessity for a common approach when dealing with the peer-review PRAs. The PRAs currently under evaluation and those to be reviewed in future are most likely to have been prepared in accordance with the EPPO PRA scheme (different versions). It was agreed that it would be desirable to provide feedback to EPPO to help improve the scheme.

9. BUILDING-UP THE PLH PANEL REPUTATION IN RISK ASSESSMENT

Until this meeting it had been considered that there was a consensus that the Panel could:

- Definitely undertake the following activities:
 - Peer review PRAs and other documents, identifying problems.
 - Identify problems and suggest solutions, e.g. use of new or different datasets, techniques etc.

- Where all the questions asked by the Commission have not been addressed in the documents, indicate how these questions can be answered in full
- Possibly undertake the following activities:
 - Identify problems, suggest solutions and indicate how the Commission's questions can be answered in full. This could involve contracting out work to resolve difficulties and answer the questions posed.
 - Produce guidance documents where a technique common to many PRAs is misused, where a technique could be enhanced, e.g. climatic mapping or economic impact assessment, or where general problems are identified, e.g. how to ensure PRAs are relevant to the whole of the EU, provide a guidance document.
 - Provide comments and recommendations to the Commission where a specific PRA contains elements of wider relevance..
 - Identify priorities for research and data collection to assist PRA production in the EU.
- Definitely not undertake the following activities:
 - Conduct work, including PRAs, to resolve difficulties and answer the questions posed.

The Commission position was that the opinions should provide the policy-maker with as much information as possible. However, the implications of the EFSA PLH Panel conducting its own PRAs include:

- The review EFSA PLH Panel PRAs
- Reaction from the Commission, member states and stakeholders
- Funding.
- The willingness of PHP Panel members to undertake additional duties.
- Other Plant Health Panel activities may be a higher priority?
- Possible negative effects on national PRA capacity

The Science Director very firmly stated that PLH Panel cannot do any form of economic impact assessment. The risk assessment should be restricted to consideration of whether the pests may cause harm to plants. This was robustly contested, key arguments being that:

- There is no choice but to follow ISPM11 which requires an assessment of economic impacts
- This issue had been discussed and agreed at the first plenary meeting
- Large parts of the draft opinions already written cover this issue
- Economics is an academic science
- The PLH Panel has recruited an academic economist (unfortunately not present at the meeting) and
- Plant health is different from other EFSA panels being primarily concerned with agriculture/horticulture/forestry which are economic activities (and which also effect cultural landscapes and their biodiversity) have to be assessed economically

whereas human and animal health are the primary focus of other panels and economic assessments are not needed to assess risk.

The Science Director stressed the need for the Panel to define their paradigm in relation to organisms harmful to plants and plant products in compliance with the EFSA RA paradigm. It was agreed that this issue requires careful consideration. However it needs to be solved very quickly because economic impact assessment forms a very substantial component of the opinions currently being written and due to be completed in December. The discussion will be continued at the next plenary meeting.

10. NEW QUESTIONS ON 30 PRAS MADE BY FRANCE FOR DOMS

The PLH Panel adopted 30 PRAs from the French DOMs (Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique & Reunion). As the documents are in French and EFSA has made arrangements for their translation into English. Only three PRAs have been translated to date with the remainder expected to be ready by December 2006 – January 2007. The Panel has been given 18 months to provide the opinions. *Ad hoc* working groups will be initiated when the translations are completed.

11. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFSA PLH PANEL AND EPPO

The Panel expressed their concerns regarding possible duplication with the work done by EPPO. The Commission stressed that EPPO's geographical area is much larger than the EU and has a different remit to EFSA. The Commission opinion was that the Panel should carefully consider how best to cooperate in order to maintain its independence. The Panel agreed that a meeting with EPPO should be held as soon as possible to clarify the issues of concern.

12. NEW EFSANET

Due to unavailability of the new application the item was postponed to the next plenary meeting.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Next PLH Plenary meeting - Parma 14-15 December 2006