

**MINUTES OF THE 5th PLENARY MEETING
OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH
HELD IN PARMA ON 23-24 MAY 2007**

(ADOPTED ON 11 JULY 2007)

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PARTICIPANTS

Members of the PLH Panel

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Apologies

Patrick DE CLERCQ, Erzsébet DORMANNSNÉ SIMON, Bärbel GEROWITT, David MAKOWSKI

European Commission (DG SANCO)

Marc VEREECKE, Michael WALSH

EFSA

Elzbieta CEGLARSKA, Sharon CHEEK, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Ann DE BLOCK, Anna CAMPANINI

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Panel's Chair welcomed the panel members, the Commission observers and the new scientific officers appointed to the EFSA Secretariat of the Panel Sharon CHEEK and Giuseppe STANCANELLI, who introduced themselves.

Apologies were received from Mrs. Erzsébet DORMANNSNÉ SIMON and Mr. Patrick DE CLERCQ (entire meeting), Mrs. Bärbel GEROWITT (1st day morning session) and Mr. David MAKOWSKI (2nd day).

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No conflict of interests was reported.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF 4TH PLENARY MEETING

The minutes were adopted with minor amendments.

5. REVIEW OF ISSUES ARISING FROM JOINT WG MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL

EFSA PLH Panel Secretariat presented the results of discussion of issues related to the production of draft opinions on pest risk assessments made by France for DOMs.

The mandate for the Panel is two-fold: (1) to provide a scientific opinion on 30 pest risk assessments made by France on organisms which are considered harmful in 4 French overseas departments, i.e. Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique and Réunion, and (2) in particular whether these organisms can be considered harmful for the endangered area of the above departments in the meaning of the definition mentioned in Article 2.1.(e) of Directive 2000/29/EC and thus potentially eligible for addition to the list of harmful organisms in Directive 2000/29/EC.

Two types of risk assessments were prepared by France: (1) “full” for organisms for which the probability of introduction is high with economically important crops; following the EPPO scheme (EPPO Guidelines PM 5/3 and 5/1); (2) “simplified” for organisms for which the probability of introduction is extremely low.

The list of shortcomings identified by the Panel include problems related to the identification of the pest under question, the PRA area and potential pathways, the cropping practices in the DOMs, the quality of information given and the quality of the documents. Lack of references makes verification of the information and thus evaluation of the risk assessments very difficult and time consuming. In the future explicit requirement for documenting the PRAs should be introduced.

Responding to the Panel’s concerns, the Commission services explained that to assist the risk management process, the Commission needs advice if the organisms in question are harmful in the meaning of the Directive 2000/29. The risk management measures are included in the annexes to the plant health directive. The Panel is not requested to redo the risk assessment or provide risk management options. As the risk assessment process is to be separated from the risk management the Panel is not asked to identify the management options or carry out economic impact assessment in relation to the DOM PRAs. The Commission would however welcome the provision of additional information by the Panel, and analysis of all possible pathways. The endangered area was clarified, confirming that organisms can be considered for potential inclusion in the Directive, even if only one DOM is at risk. The Commission services agreed that a harmonised procedure for review of pest risk assessments needs to be developed rapidly.

6. PRESENTATION OF A PROPOSAL ON THE PLH PANEL’S INITIATIVE REGARDING PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF PRAS

The Panel Chair presented a draft proposal for a “self-task” initiative for the Panel to develop a procedure for the review/evaluation of pest risk assessments/pest risk analyses submitted to EFSA for scientific opinion.

The scientific opinions on PRAs are produced on request from the Commission, who asks the Panel's opinion whether a pest can be considered harmful in terms of phytosanitary risks. The Panel's advice can potentially be used for long-term decision-making at the EU level. The procedure should therefore be transparent and objective, and should make it possible to judge whether a pest risk assessment/pest risk analysis meets the provisions of internationally accepted guidelines, i.e. IPPC standards (ISPM No 2 & 11).

The Panel's experience from the current exercise shows that the documents under scrutiny vary in terms of the type of organisms considered, the level of detail, data and discussion. The large amount of PRAs expected fully justifies an urgent development of a harmonised framework for reviewing PRAs. The framework should define the aim of the review and include a review of the risk assessment process and a review of the evidence considered by the risk assessor in this process. Quality criteria for the evidence should also be defined. Suggestions made earlier by the panel members provide a good starting point.

7. PRESENTATION OF DRAFT OPINIONS ON PRAS MADE BY FRANCE ON ORGANISMS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED BY FRANCE AS HARMFUL IN 4 FRENCH OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS, I.E. GUADELOUPE, GUYANA, MARTINIQUE AND REUNION

The Rapporteurs presented the following draft opinions for the Panel's discussion:

- PRA on *Nacoleia octasema* (simplified)

The Panel expressed concern about the strength of statements stating that there was no entry pathway and questioned the premise that the review could, as a result, cease at this stage. It was agreed that the opinion needs to be amended to include assessment of all aspects relating to the phytosanitary risk of the organism as outlined in the terms of reference.

- PRA on *Metcalfa pruinosa* (full)

Suggestions for amendments to the text were agreed. It was particularly noted that in addition to providing a review of the document, the opinion needed to address the phytosanitary risk of the organism. The lack of information should not be used as the basis for drawing conclusions and the justification for the conclusions drawn should be clearly formulated within the summary.

- PRA on *Aceria sheldonii* (simplified)

General discussion took place. Minor amendments to the text were agreed. No conclusion had yet been drawn.

- PRA on *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *musacearum* (simplified)

An introduction to the organism and the detailed comments on the PRA were shown. No conclusions yet have been drawn.

- PRA on *Mycosphaerella eumusae* (simplified)

A number of shortcomings was identified in this PRA in relation to evidence available in the open literature but not used by the risk assessor. The Panel commented that the risk of *M. eumusae* should be in focus, the uncertainties addressed and the conclusion justified. Value judgement without justification should be avoided. The comments on the document and the status of the organism should be separated.

- PRA on *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* (full)

The panel discussed the pathogen's identity, establishment and scientific quality of the pest risk assessment. No conclusions have been made yet.

The Rapporteurs will incorporate the Panel's comments and circulate the new versions to the Panel.

8. SYSTEMATIC REVIEW – A METHODOLOGY FOR REVIEW PROCESS

Brief information was given by a Panel member on the systematic review as a method applied in evidence-based frameworks to assess scientific information to support decision-making processes. Currently the method is applied in the human health and environment sectors. Systematic review is designed to process large volumes of published data in an objective, transparent and repeatable manner which is in line with EFSA's principles of work. The disadvantage of the method from the point of view of the activity of the Panel on Plant Health is that in pest risk assessment in many cases data are scarce or the quality is questionable. The method needs more detailed study. None the less the requirements for quality of data might be useful for pest risk assessment process.

9. MISCELLANEOUS

- Economic impact assessment

Having consulted its legal services EFSA is developing its own approach to economic impact assessment in order to bring it in line with its risk assessment paradigm.

- Feedback from the Scientific Committee

The Panel Chair reported on the current work of the Scientific Committee. Aiming at improvement of the quality of scientific outputs the SC WG on Internal and External review develops system for EFSA scientific activities. The PLH Panel will test the proposal for self-review of draft opinions.

- Report on EUPHRESKO project

The Scientific Coordinator reported on the meeting of the Governing Board of EUPHRESKO project (**E**uropean **P**hytosanitary **R**esearch **C**oordination, 2006-2010). The project implemented within the 6th R&D Framework Programme is an ERA-NET initiative aiming at increasing cooperation and coordination of national phytosanitary research programmes at the EU level through networking research activities and mutual opening of national programmes.

- Standing Committee on Plant Health 29 June 2007

The Panel Chair and the Scientific Coordinator will attend the SCPH meeting on 29 June 2007 in order to present and discuss the opinions on the APHIS document and *Bactrocera zonata*.

- PLH meeting calendar

- Next WGs for DOM PRAs will convene in May (Viruses – 29-30/05), June (Bacteria – 12-13/06; Fungi – 13-14/06; Arthropods – 20-21/06, Viruses – 25-26/06) and July (Bacteria – 10/07; Arthropods – 12-13/07).
- The **next plenary meeting** will be held in **Parma** on **11-12 July 2007**.