

**MINUTES OF THE 20TH PLENARY MEETING
OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH
HELD IN JOKIOINEN (FINLAND) ON 13-14 MAY 2009**

(ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE ON 15 JUNE 2009)

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PARTICIPANTS

Members of the PLH Panel

Richard BAKER, David CAFFIER, James William CHOISEUL, Patrick DE CLERCQ, Erzsébet DORMANNSNÉ SIMON, Oľia Evtimova KARADJOVA, Gábor LÖVEI, David MAKOWSKI, Charles MANCEAU, Alfons OUDE LANSINK, Dionyssios PERDIKIS, Angelo PORTA PUGLIA, Jan SCHANS, Gritta SCHRADER, Kari TIILIKKALA, Johan Coert VAN LENTEREN

Apologies

Bärbel GEROWITT, Luisa MANICI, Robert STEFFEK, Anita STRÖMBERG, Irene VLOUTOGLOU

Invited Expert

Jean-Claude GRÉGOIRE

European Commission (DG SANCO)

Guillermo CARDON and Michael WALSH

EFSA

PLH Unit: Elzbieta CEGLARSKA, Sharon CHEEK, Virag KERTESZ, Doreen RUSSELL, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Sara TRAMONTINI, Sybren VOS

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Panel Chair welcomed the Panel members and the Commission observers. Participants were welcomed to Jokioinen and given an overview of the activities of MTT. Apologies were received from Bärbel GEROWITT, Luisa MANICI, Robert STEFFEK, Anita STRÖMBERG and Irene VLOUTOGLOU. In view of potential adoptions of draft opinions the Chair declared the quorum present.

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The agenda was adopted. Items 9 & 12 were deleted for time reasons.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

EFSA Secretariat screened the annual declarations of interest (ADoI) and Specific Declarations of Interest (SDoI) submitted by the experts invited to this meeting in accordance with EFSA Policy on Declarations of Interests and implementing documents thereof (Annex I). With regard to the agenda no other interests than those already declared were declared by the experts. Due to conflict of interest one expert was excluded from voting.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF 19TH PLENARY MEETING

The minutes of the 19th Plenary were adopted with minor changes.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE OPINION “GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON EVALUATION OF PEST RISK ASSESSMENTS PREPARED BY THIRD PARTIES TO JUSTIFY PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES UNDER THE COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2000/29/EC” (EFSA-Q-2008-259)

Protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community are established by Council Directive 2000/29/EC (OJ L169, 10.7.2000). A transparent evaluation procedure is required, based on scientific principles, to ensure an objective and consistent approach for the evaluation of pest risk assessments to support decision making by EU risk managers on organisms potentially harmful to plants or plant products. Currently there is no clear and shared consensus on the criteria by which a pest risk assessment dossier should be reviewed. In view of the above, the Panel on Plant Health is requested by EFSA to produce a guidance document on the evaluation of pest risk assessments prepared by third parties to justify phytosanitary measures under the Council Directive 2000/29/EC. The mandate is registered in the EFSA Register of Questions as EFSA-Q-2008-259.

The rapporteur presented the amended draft document based on the public consultation. The document structure does not differ significantly from the previous version. The main changes relate to the potential consequences section which has been divided between agronomic and environmental effects. The evaluation of risk management options has also been included in the document.

The definition of agronomic effects was discussed by the Panel and the title of the chapter amended to “Consequences to cultivated and managed plants”. Environmental impact was also discussed, relating to the concept of ecosystem functioning and services. The chapter on risk management options was discussed in detail and amendments agreed. The Panel concluded that decisions on the acceptability of risk are not within its remit but a Commission decision.

Following agreement that the suggested changes would be incorporated into the document the Panel adopted the Guidance Document.

6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE PAPER “EFSA ROLE IN PROTECTING PLANT HEALTH IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY”

The draft paper on EFSA contribution to the protection of plant health and plant life in the European Community was presented to the Panel. Proposals for improvements and additions to the paper were made and the Panel agreed to submit their comments by 31st May to ensure the paper is ready for first meeting of the new Plant Health Panel.

7. SUMMARY OF THE PANEL ACTIVITY 2006 – 2009 AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT MANDATE

The Chair gave an overview of the goals and achievements from the previous 3-year-activity of the Panel. Examples were given illustrating the increased recognition and visibility of the work of the Panel, such as referencing of opinions by other international phytosanitary bodies as well as peer

reviewing of opinions. Comments were received from Panel members together with suggestions for improving efficiency and output quality for the next mandate.

Responding to the Panel question regarding the delivered opinions, the Commission services expressed their satisfaction with the scientific quality of the Panel opinions and emphasised the importance of EFSA independence. The Panel Chair suggested that regular feedback from the Commission should be tabled on the agenda twice a year. The Commission advised that according to an agreement between the EFSA Executive Director and Director General of DG SANCO a paper on the impact of EFSA opinions will be presented to the panel inaugural plenary in June.

With regard to the guidance documents prepared in this Panel's mandate it was recommended that they should be revisited and revised by the end of the next mandate. Increase of visibility of the Panel in the scientific community should be addressed by scientific publications and participation in renowned scientific events.

In order to increase efficiency of the Panel's work the experts suggested that training should be provided on risk assessment issues as well as on management and chairing of meetings. Code of conduct for the panel members and other experts involved could greatly contribute to efficient use of meeting time.

A list of organisms considered by the SCPH as priorities for risk assessment in the EU was shared with the Panel. Experts were requested to suggest a top-ten of organisms, the most interesting from the point of view of development of risk assessment methodologies. Methodology will be an area to improve and develop in the next mandate, and is considered by EFSA of key importance for collaboration with the EU Member States.

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE OPINION “GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON HARMONISED FRAMEWORK FOR PEST RISK ASSESSMENT IN THE EU”

To assist the Panel with its work, a self-task activity has been accepted to produce a guidance document on a harmonised framework for the assessment of risks of organisms harmful to plants and plant products. The mandate is registered as EFSA-Q-2008-704.

The draft document was presented to the Panel by the rapporteur. It is composed of two parts: the draft guidance and a modified EPPO scheme. The rapporteur explained that addressing terminology was difficult given EFSA's obligation to comply with the founding Regulation (EC) 178/2002. IPPC terminology also differs from EFSA's. New terms have been developed guaranteeing transparency on the PLH activity. In the future, it will be compulsory to harmonise this guidance document with the “Guidance Document on Evaluation of Pest Risk Assessments”.

The Commission was advised that commonly used words such as “pest” and “pest risk assessment” are not present in the founding regulation. The Commission responded that despite this they will not replace “risk assessment of harmful organism” but will continue with the term “pest risk analysis” as this is used in Council Directive 2000/29 EC. The commission representatives also confirmed that the Panel will be asked to undertake pest risk assessments on certain harmful organisms. The Panel requested confirmation by email from the Commission on the use of terminology.

A possible approach for combining qualitative scores is given in the draft document and was discussed among the participants.

Further inputs from the Panel members on the document were requested and noted for inclusion to enable the next step to be reached. At the moment, the document lacks a paragraph on the assessment of consequences. The Panel suggested that this omission should be rectified.

The discussion concluded with agreement that the revised draft of the document, incorporating the comments from the Panel, will be circulated to the Panel for adoption by written procedure followed by public consultation.

9. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE OPINION ON THE PRA MADE BY UK ON PROCESSIONARY MOTH *THAUMETOPOEA PROCESSIONEA*

EFSA is requested to provide a scientific opinion on a Pest Risk Analysis provided by the United Kingdom on *Thaumetopoea processionea* L., the oak processionary moth (OPM), and in particular whether this organism can be considered as a harmful organism within the meaning of the definition in Article 2.1(e) of Council Directive 2000/29/EC. The mandate is registered as EFSA-Q-2008-711.

The rapporteur presented the final version of the opinion. The high level of uncertainty on the damage potential was the main obstacle to overcome in the production of the opinion. Special emphasis was given by the rapporteur on the methodologies used for evaluating climate suitability.

The Panel agreed on the conclusions reached for the UK document. The opinion was adopted pending the amendments made in the meeting. One expert expressed a minority opinion with regard to the final conclusion maintaining that the organism in subject should not be considered harmful for the whole EU.

10. MISCELLANEOUS

The Panel warmly thanked the MTT organising team for their efforts and hospitality throughout the visit.

Next plenary meeting, corresponding to the beginning of the new Panel mandate 2009-2012, will be held in Parma on 16-17 June 2009, jointly with the FEEDAP Panel.

Annex I

I. INTERESTS AND ACTIONS RESULTING FROM THE SCREENING OF ADOIS OR SDOIS

a) CONFLICT LEVEL B:

EFSA secretariat screened the ADoI and SDoI filled in by the scientific experts invited to this meeting in accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declaration of Interests. In his ADoI Mr. David Caffier declared the following additional interest: French representative to EFSA special Advisory Forum on Plant Health. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests and Implementing documents thereof, and taking into account the specific matters discussed at the meeting in question, the interest above was deemed to represent a conflict of Interest (level C). Pursuant to EFSA's procedure on Identifying and Handling Declarations of Interest, a waiver was granted to the expert. Therefore pursuant to EFSA's Procedure on Identifying and Handling Declarations of Interest, the said expert incurs in the limitations identified under point C.III.b¹. of the mentioned document that is indicative level of potential conflict of interest adjusted to level B.

II. INTERESTS AND ACTIONS RESULTING FROM DECLARATIONS DONE AT THE MEETING

b) NO FURTHER INTERESTS:

With regard to this meeting no other interests than those already declared in the ADoI or in a previous SDoI and screened by EFSA in accordance with its Policy on Declarations of Interests and implementing documents thereof were declared by the experts.

¹ Implementing act to the policy on declaration of interests procedure for identifying and handling potential conflicts of interest

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/cs/BlobServer/General/mb_annex_procedure_doi_en%20221008,0.pdf?ssbinary=true