

**MINUTES OF THE 24TH PLENARY MEETING
OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH
HELD IN PARMA ON 20-21 JANUARY 2010**

(ADOPTED ON 17 MARCH 2010)

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PARTICIPANTS

Members of the PLH Panel

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Emerging Risks Unit: Tobin ROBINSON

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Apologies

Johan Coert VAN LENTEREN, Jan SCHANS (PLH Panel)

Guillermo CARDON and Jean-François MALJEAN (European Commission)

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Panel Chair welcomed the Panel members and the Commission observers. Apologies were received from Jan SCHANS and Johan Coert VAN LENTEREN (PLH Panel), Guillermo CARDON and Jean-François MALJEAN (European Commission).

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interest, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest (ADoI) and Specific Declaration of Interest (SDoI) filled in by the experts invited to the meeting. For further details on the outcome of the declaration of interest please refer to Annex 1.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 23RD PLENARY MEETING

The minutes were adopted without changes. The list of action points from the previous meeting was reviewed.

5. MB DECISION CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE, SCIENTIFIC PANELS AND THEIR WORKING GROUPS

The EFSA Director of Risk Assessment provided information on EFSA priorities for 2010. Within this context the new rules covering expert indemnities were also given. Feedback from the report compiled by the external reviewers concerning the quality of scientific outputs was shared with the Panel.

6. PRESENTATION OF THE ACTIVITY OF DG SANCO E1 AS REGARDS PLANT HEALTH

The Panel was provided with an overview of the activities of EC DG SANCO E1 with respect to plant health and informed of activities for 2010. The main priority relates to the evaluation of the Community plant health regime in response to changing conditions such as globalisation, climate change, EU enlargement, establishment of EFSA and decline in resources. It is envisaged that in the future plant health will have more visibility.

7. THE RELEVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS IN THE EU RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS – THE CASE OF THE IPPC

EFSA's Legal and Policy Unit gave a presentation to explain and clarify the significance of international standards, with respect to legal frameworks, to the work of the Panel. In essence the WTO (World Trade Organisation) standards have some equivalence to SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreements). The SPS requires harmonisation and the adoption of measures of

equivalence that conform to international standards. The history of the IPPC was outlined together with its organisational structure and how it represents an international consensus in relation to phytosanitary matters. For EFSA, however, though the standards are not binding they should be taken into account for their scientific relevance.

The Panel were given the opportunity to question the speaker and obtain further clarifications.

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT OPINION ON THE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON HARMONISED FRAMEWORK FOR PEST RISK ASSESSMENT

The Panel on Plant Health is requested by EFSA to produce a guidance document on a harmonised framework for risk assessment of organisms harmful to plants and plant products and the identification and evaluation of risk management options. The mandate is registered in the EFSA Register of Questions as EFSA-Q-2008-704.

The chair of the working group gave a final presentation to the Panel, outlining the main points. Following a discussion the opinion was adopted by the Panel unanimously. The chair asked that the involvement in the opinion of the previous Panel be acknowledged in the opinion.

9. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT OPINION ON *DRYOCOSMUS KURIPHILUS* YASUMATSU

EFSA is requested to provide a scientific opinion on the risk to plant health of *Dryocosmus kuriphilus* Yasumatsu, the oriental chestnut gall wasp, for the EU territory. The mandate requests that EFSA identifies risk management options and evaluates their efficiency in reducing the risk to plant health posed by this organism. The mandate is registered in the EFSA Register of Questions as EFSA-Q-2009-00677.

Following an outline of the background to this harmful organism, including impact on tree growth, tree survival and nut production, a summary of the status and preliminary conclusions of the draft opinion was given by the working group chair. The rapporteurs presented additional analyses conducted by the working group on key aspects including a) the distribution of *Castanea*, and climatic suitability to identify the endangered area and b) the development of a model to analyse the potential for spread of the organism in the EU territory. A preliminary environmental risk assessment for the biological control agent, *Torymus sinensis* has also been conducted.

The findings presented by the working group were discussed further by the Panel.

10. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT OPINION ON *GIBBERELLA CIRCINATA* NIRENBERG & O'DONNELL

EFSA is requested to provide a pest risk assessment of *Gibberella circinata* Nirenberg & O'Donnell for the EU territory. The mandate is registered in the EFSA Register of Questions as EFSA-Q-2009-00678.

The rapporteur presented an update on the progress of the working group. An overview of the evaluation of the entry pathways was provided including the assessment of probability and

uncertainty. The CLIMEX model was used to evaluate establishment of the organism. The conclusion of impact evaluation and the preliminary assessment of available management options were also presented to the Panel. The future tasks to be undertaken, before the final opinion is presented to the Panel, were summarised including the need for further work on establishment and evaluation of pathways, as well as completion of the list of available management options and the evaluation of their effectiveness in reducing the risk.

The Panel had the opportunity to explore the preliminary conclusions reached by the working group.

11. DISCUSSION OF THE FORMAT OF PEST RISK ASSESSMENT OPINIONS

The EFSA secretariat provided an overview of the various reference documents available for consideration on rating methods in the field of plant health in the EU concluding that currently no clear guidance is provided. The Panel debated the issue and agreed that the topic requires further discussion.

12. UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE DRAFT OPINION ON *TILLETIA INDICA*

EFSA is requested to provide a scientific opinion on the Quantitative Pathway Analysis on U.S. wheat – April 2008 for the EU territory. The mandate is registered in the EFSA Register of Questions as EFSA-Q-2009-00760.

The chair of the working group provided background information on the organism and its biological effects on wheat and the legal requirements concerning EU wheat imports. An outline of the procedure used to review the Quantitative pathway analysis was provided and details on the sensitivity analysis, including the main sources of uncertainty, of the model outputs given. Though simulations relating to how the organism can enter and some preliminary conclusions are available, formulating the draft opinion is still needed which was noted together with other tasks for addressing at future meetings of the working group.

The Panel asked questions and sought clarifications from the working groups including the assumptions to be made for running the model, the reliability of testing and feasibility of sampling.

13. NEW MANDATES

The Commission representatives provided an overview of the type and scope of scientific advice the Commission is likely to request of the Panel.

14. UNDERPINNING THE EFSA PLH RISK ASSESSMENT

a. Self-tasking management options

A new proposal for a self task to produce guidance on the evaluation of risk management options was presented to the Panel. The background to the proposal was described with reference to the increasing number of requests for risk management options to be addressed by the Panel confirming this as a key aspect of its work.

The Panel discussed the proposal and agreed that such guidance would be invaluable in the development of its outputs and would provide an opportunity to elaborate in further detail on the aspects outlined in broad terms within the Guidance Document on a harmonised framework for pest risk assessment and the identification and evaluation of risk management options (available at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/1495.htm>). The terms of reference will be developed further and presented to the Panel at the March plenary together with a provisional work plan. The Panel chair agreed to the nomination of David Makowski as chair of the working group.

b. Self-tasking environmental RA

A new self task for the development of guidance on Environmental risk assessment was proposed. The need for such guidance evolved from the experience of creating the Guidance Document. Impacts on ecosystem services and on biodiversity in the field of plant health have been discussed by the panel and the assistance on the consideration of this aspect in the Panel's opinions has been identified as needed.

The Panel discussed the proposal. Suggestions were made with respect to the title and the EC reminded that such guidance may be premature given that the entire EU plant health regime is under review. However the outcome of this review activity will not be available for a number of years and the Panel agreed that guidance on this aspect is needed sooner and in any event all guidance be subject to periodic review in the light of new developments. A further cautionary note was that any guidance should not contradict any other guidance produced by the Panel to prevent conflicting advice. The Panel agreed to the necessity of this and asked that carefully considered terms of reference are drawn up in time for the March plenary meeting. The Panel chair agreed to the nomination of Maria Navajas as chair of the working group.

15. UPDATE ON EFSA'S STRATEGY FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF EMERGING RISKS IN THE FOOD/FEED CHAIN

EFSA provided the Panel with an overview of emerging risks as defined by EFSA that is emerging risks in relation to food and feed. An overall strategy will be published in 2010 the main components of which will be data collection, data analysis and the exchange of information. A methodology will be developed to establish procedures and best practice and the aims of the work described namely in the medium term the identification of emerging risks and in the long term the prediction of emerging risks.

The opportunities in the plant health area were highlighted by the Panel members and their associated interest in improving these aspects is high. However concerns were expressed in relation to the minimal involvement of the Plant Health Panel envisaged for the first few years.

Following the presentation on emerging risks a representative of the EFSA Assessment Methodology Unit provided an overview of indicators for emerging risks in Plant Health. The specific case of the Pinewood Nematode (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/1055.htm>) and the role of the statistical conclusions in the published opinion were described. A proposed for preparing specific

guidelines for conduction pest surveys was made. The Panel contributed to the discussions highlighting elements for further consideration.

16. PRESENTATION ON THE JRC INTERPOLATED CLIMATIC DATA

The database of EU meteorological station and interpolated data of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) was presented to the Panel by a representative of the JRC, Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen (IPSC). The presentation covered the station data collection and its timeliness, the parameters measured, the EU grid of interpolated data for agricultural areas and the quality checks carried out. The data collected is important for crop simulation and statistical analysis and assists in the provision of both monthly and seasonal forecasts.

17. PRESENTATION OF BIOMA-CLIMPEST APPLICATION TO MODEL EU CLIMATE SUITABILITY TO MODEL PLANT PESTS

The Panel were provided an overview of the framework agreement between EFSA and the JRC. Currently the main application of the project enables estimates of potential infection to be made based on meteorological factors. In some instances agricultural management and the growth phenology of hosts can also be considered.

A demonstration was given of what the application can do and what is expected from future releases. Training will be offered by the JRC to facilitate use of the application for the Panel and its working groups.

18. MISCELLANEOUS

- Update on EFSA action plan on COPHS guidelines

The EFSA actions on the COPHS guidelines have been sent to the Commission for comments with a deadline of 20th February 2010.

- Feedback from the Scientific Committee

The Chair advised the experts that they would receive a questionnaire from EFSA concerning travel arrangements and those discussions are ongoing concerning the location of meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for the 2nd week of February 2010 and will take place in Paris. The Panel should contact the Chair if there is anything they want to raise at that meeting.

- Feedback on the outcome of written adoption of the opinion on *Bemisia tabaci* (EFSA-Q-2009-00937)

A report was given on the unanimous adoption and successful publication of the opinion urgently requested by the Commission in November 2009. The Commission confirmed that the opinion was forwarded to the US and a response has not yet been received.

- Update on the status of Wood Packaging Material

The previous concerns regarding the request were listed by the Chair. A statement has been produced on the matters raised by the Panel and needs to be endorsed. The draft was shared with the Panel for their consideration with a view to adoption by written procedure for publication the same week. The Panel discussed the draft and agreed with the approach as presented.

- **Import RA workshop, 10/02/2010, Sevilla, Spain**

A positive response already obtained from Panel members who were informed to the availability of additional places.

- **Update on EFSA Art. 36 “Prima phacie”**

A description of the activities of the project was presented to the Panel including deadlines and deliverables.

- **Next meetings confirmation**

The 25th PLH Plenary meeting: 17-18 March 2010, Sofia, Bulgaria.

The 26th plenary meeting: 11-12 May 2010 in Ispra Italy.

The 27th plenary meeting and proposed workshop, 21-22 July 2010 in Norway.

Annex 1

INTERESTS AND ACTIONS RESULTING FROM DECLARATIONS DONE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING

With regard to this meeting Dr Marina Zlotina declared the following interest. As part of her activities with her employer USDA APHIS she has an interest in relation to the mandate on *Bemisia tabaci*, *Tilletia indica* and wood packaging material. The EFSA Panel on Plant Health is addressing questions (EFSA-Q-2009-00937, EFSA-Q-2009-00760 and EFSA-Q-2010-00056) concerning documents on these subjects, produced by or with involvement of USDA APHIS. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interest 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 B). Pursuant to EFSA's Procedure on Identifying and Handling Declarations of Interest, the said expert as per point C.III¹ is excluded from drafting the opinion and discussing and adopting the final Panel output.

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/resource_EFSA/about/who/dois/doiconflict.pdf?ssbinary=true