

**MINUTES OF THE 1ST MEETING OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC
NETWORK FOR RISK ASSESSMENT IN PLANT HEALTH**

SALSOMAGGIORE (PARMA), ITALY

14 – 15 OCTOBER 2010

(ADOPTED ON 30 MARCH 2011)

ITEM	AGENDA
1.	Welcome and opening of the meeting
2.	Adoption of the agenda
3.	Introduction: Mandate of the Scientific Network
4.	Current activities of the EFSA Scientific Panel on Plant Health
5.	Outcome of the review of the Plant Health Regime
6.	Discussion 1: Items suggested by Member States
7.	Discussion 2: Enhancing data collection and exchange for Pest Risk Assessment at EU Level <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Presentation on the FVO activities and data collection systems</i>• <i>Presentation on Climpest model framework for assessing the EU climatic suitability for pest establishment</i>
8.	European Research Coordination – EUPHRESCO achievements and future plans
9.	Discussion 3: Harmonisation of Pest Risk Assessment practices and methodologies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Presentation of EFSA Article 36 project Prima Phacie</i>• <i>Presentation on EFSA PLH work on environmental risk assessment of plant pests</i>
10.	Discussion 4: Synergies in Pest Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Presentation of EFSA's strategy for emerging risks identification: Interactions with panels</i>• <i>Presentation on identification of emerging risks in plant health area</i>

11.	Conclusions
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PARTICIPANTS

Network Representatives

Sylvia BLUEMEL (AT), Georgieva Mariya TOMALIEVA (BG), Matti PUOLIMATKA (FI), Jens-Georg UNGER (DE), Barry DELANY (IE), Maurizio DESANTIS (IT), Astra GARKAJE (LV), Marcia GATT (MT), Åshild ERGON (NO), Dirk-Jan VAN DER GAAG (NL), Wiltold KARNKOWSKI (PL), Otakar KUDELA (SK), Valsta KNAPIC (SI)

Observers

Lefter TURTULLI (AL), Dragan TOMOVIC (BA), Sanja MILOS (HR), Nedelo LATINOVIĆ (KV), Dijana STOJKOSKA (MK), Jelana LEVIC (RS), Nevzat BIRISIK (TR), Robert BAAYEN (EUROPEAN COMMISSION – DG SANCO), Marcello DONATELLI (EUROPEAN COMMISSION – JRC), Nandor PETE (EUROPEAN COMMISSION – FVO), Gianni GILIOLI (EFSA PLH PANEL), Mike JEGER (EFSA PLH PANEL), Alan INMAN (EUPHRESCO)

EFSA

PLH Unit: Roberta CARFAGNINI, Elzbieta CEGLARSKA, Sharon CHEEK, Virag KERTESZ, Svetla KOZELSKA, Elizabeth MOORE, Doreen RUSSELL, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Joanna SWARCEWICZ, Sybren VOS

Assessment Methodology Unit: Olaf MOSBACH-SCHULZ

Emerging Risks Unit: Tobin ROBINSON

Communications: Ewa MONCURE

1. WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chair (Elzbieta Ceglarska - Head of EFSA Plant Health Unit) opened the meeting and welcomed the network representatives to the first network meeting for risk assessment in plant health. She also welcomed other observers and invitees to the meeting.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted. Participants were requested to declare any interests in relation to the items on the agenda. No interests were declared. Representatives were reminded to respect the confidentiality of discussions at the meeting.

A tour de table was undertaken to enable all participants to present themselves.

3. INTRODUCTION: MANDATE OF SCIENTIFIC NETWORK

Based on the adopted EFSA Management Board decision, the Chair provided an overview of the terms of reference of the network. The main objectives were presented together with communication arrangements in the form of electronic exchange, a functional mailbox and adopted and published minutes.

4. CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

Mike Jeger (Chair of EFSA's PLH Panel) gave a presentation of the activities of the PLH Panel indicating the steady increase in the number of requests for scientific opinions made of the Panel. Examples of the type of opinions already delivered were given and those currently being addressed were also mentioned. The importance of surveillance for data collection, particularly in relation to emerging risk, was highlighted.

Austria asked what the Panel considers in relation to risk management options. Mike Jeger confirmed that the Panel assesses different management options and the effect they have on the level of risk. Germany asked if full pest risk assessments will be requested of the Panel. Mike Jeger advised that the undertaking of full pest risk assessments was within the remit of the Panel, and has already been undertaken. In addition, he advised that it is the terms of reference of the mandate that determine if a full pest risk assessment is needed. Poland requested information about possible future developments in relation to climate change. Mike Jeger confirmed that climate change is a very important consideration particularly in relation to emerging risk and added that the presentation from the JRC will amplify upon the importance of climate change to organisms harmful to plants.

5. OUTCOME OF REVIEW OF PLANT HEALTH REGIME

The representative of the Commission (DG SANCO E.7 - Plant Health) presented the evaluation and review of the EU plant health regime. He highlighted that plant health is a public good, which as such deserves protection. It is a cornerstone for sustainable and competitive agriculture, for global food security and for environmental protection (forests, landscape, gardens). Plant health also has positive features in relation to the production and marketing chain. It is located at the crossroads between international trade, agriculture and the environment.

The objective of the EU plant health regime is to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of harmful organisms via import or intra-EU movements. The regime, which dates back to 1977, is being reviewed to meet future challenges and to better protect our crops, plants and forests against foreign invaders, to which they often have little or no natural resistance - a problem which is exacerbated by globalisation of trade and climate change. The regime is also in need of modernisation as concerns effectiveness in relation to resources, incentives and responsibilities.

Consultation of stakeholders and Member State authorities is essential to the review. The process consists of an evaluation phase (external study completed in 2010), in which provisional options for the future have been developed. The impacts of these options will be further assessed in a supplementary economic study, the results of which should allow the Commission to draw up a

formal impact assessment (in 2011). In conjunction with the impact assessment, a new legal text will be developed by the Commission and proposed to the Council and European Parliament in 2012.

The conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation study (to be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/strategy/index_en.htm) reflect solely the views of the contractor consortium.

Slovenia asked why food safety is not included in the definition as a cornerstone of the plant health regime and also raised the issue of pesticide residues in food: the Commission responded that both issues are for consideration. Poland's question concerned the movement of plant material from one member state to another without a plant passport. The EC responded that plant passports are not required for all plants or plant products and added that this trade issue is not within the remit of the EU plant health regime. Germany raised the issue of surveillance programmes suggesting emphasis on a number of priority organisms rather than all organisms. The EFSA secretariat confirmed that an Article 36 funded call has a selective surveillance element to it. Austria added a further contribution on funding and the need for collaboration and pooling of resources to address the challenges of surveillance.

6. DISCUSSION 1: ITEMS SUGGESTED BY MEMBER STATES

No matters for discussion were raised by Member States

7. DISCUSSION 2: ENHANCING DATA COLLECTION AND EXCHANGE FOR PEST RISK ASSESSMENT AT EU LEVEL

In an introduction to the discussion Giuseppe Stancanelli (EFSA PLH Unit) outlined the various projects funded by EFSA and how these can assist in improving collection and exchange of data. The network was informed of other EFSA mechanisms for data collection and exchange, such as questionnaires and use of the web based Information Exchange Platform (IEP). The importance of data and surveillance information was emphasised while recognising the limitations due to aspects such as scant resources in plant health which present difficulties to data collection and exchange.

Austria sought information on the customers of the network and who information will be shared with. EFSA reaffirmed that the network is collaborative and a central consideration behind its establishment is to avoid duplication especially at a time of restricted resources. Slovenia echoed the problem of limited resources, adding that Article 36 grants can assist in this respect and it is useful to know what calls are planned in the long and short term. Germany confirmed that completing questionnaires are important for establishing pest status. Netherlands and Germany asked if EFSA had considered sending a pest risk assessment to member states before finalisation. EFSA responded that it was not carried out at present, adding that EFSA does undertake public consultations and gave examples of this activity.

Nandor Pete (Commission Food and Veterinary Office -FVO) presented the reporting system Europhyt, the network for notifications on pest interceptions that can be accessed via the internet. Statistics were provided on the member states with the highest number of interceptions.

EFSA advised that data used in recent opinions was provided on the basis that it did not identify the source of the data. Germany added that survey activities and plans require considerable technical and scientific guidelines so a criterion should be established at EU level and among Member States. Austria asked if visits carried out by the FVO are consistent with the evaluation of the common plant health regime and whether it would be possible to compare activities. The FVO representative said that this aspect would be considered by the EC.

Active usage of the Europhyt information was highlighted by Finland as well as the ongoing concern in relation to the Pine Wood Nematode. Discussion on follow up of interceptions and the need for prompt reporting to the system to enable the most recent data to be made available. In relation to EFSA's use of data, reliability is the central consideration given that Member States may ultimately implement actions based on EFSA's opinions.

Marcello Donatelli (Commission- JRC) provided an overview of the Climpest model framework, a result of a collaborative agreement between the JRC and EFSA that uses weather data to estimate potential infections and has the capability to conduct simulations. Training for the network will be provided on the use of the software in 2011.

Austria asked if it is possible to use the application with different plant varieties or resistant plant varieties and Turkey asked if it is possible to elaborate with two organisms together. JRC confirmed that both scenarios can be performed by the application.

8. “EUROPEAN RESEARCH COORDINATION – EUPHRESCO ACHIVEMENTS AND FUTURE PLANS”

Alan Inman (FERA) provided an overview of the Euphresco project which established a network that aimed to provide a strategic approach to increased cooperation and coordination in plant pest research. It is hoped that a new project can be launched involving more countries, addressing more sector areas such as forestry, and capable of responding to emergency situations by being more proactive.

9. DISCUSSION 3: HARMONISATION OF PEST RISK ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND METHODOLOGIES

Virag Kertesz (EFSA PLH Unit) introduced the discussion on harmonisation of pest risk assessment practices and methodologies and how the network can work together towards this objective. Dirk Jan van der Gaag, a partner in the Article 36 project Prima Phacie, gave an overview of the project. Gianni Gilioli presented the PLH Panel's work undertaken to date on the mandate for environmental risk assessment for plant pests highlighting ecosystem services, environmental impact of invasive species and the effect on biodiversity.

Poland requested that EFSA guidance on environmental risk assessment should be available to others; EFSA confirmed that the environmental risk assessment draft output will be subject to a public consultation and will be available for use once published. Germany congratulated EFSA on the initiative of the environmental risk assessment guidance, the model being used and its ease of

use. Germany also asked about consideration of amenities in the guidance such as parks and asked about biodiversity. Turkey asked if there would be scheme to undertake a preliminary environmental risk assessment. Gianni Gilioli confirmed that more is known about biodiversity than ecosystem services so it is important to develop the guidance that cultural services such as parks are outside the remit of EFSA and added that a preliminary environmental risk assessment will be considered.

Slovenia asked about duplication of questionnaires from different projects. EFSA said careful consideration is needed to avoid this. Austria emphasised the importance of questionnaires for the provision of data and that data also assists risk managers. Austria requested more flexibility in timeframes for completing questionnaires and added that it was impressed with the work that EFSA is doing on environmental risk. Malta noted the difficulties of completion of questionnaires by small Member States and asked if consultation could be carried out using the EFSA expert database. EFSA said this database is not currently used for data collection or communication purposes. Ewa Moncure from EFSA communications added that if a draft opinion will benefit from a public consultation then one is conducted and reiterated that EFSA only considers science and not ethics, social or cultural aspects.

EFSA confirmed that the need to know what is going on in Member States is crucial, requiring greater collaboration and improved communication.

10. DISCUSSION 4: SYNERGIES IN PEST RISK ASSESSMENT

Sharon Cheek introduced the discussion on creating synergies through working together for mutual benefit, the importance of common themes, exchange mechanisms such as the Information Exchange Platform and Emerging Risks identification.

Tobin Robinson from the EFSA Emerging Risks unit presented the work of the unit and how it conducts its work through the identification and assessment of such risks. In 2011 Plant Health will be added to the list of emerging risks that are monitored by EFSA. The tools used to conduct this activity were outlined as was the potential for collaborative work with existing systems. The network was asked to identify any known experts in the field of emerging risk who can assist with this work.

Mike Jeger provided the definition of emerging risk as defined by the plant health Panel and the sources of information that could be used.

Austria asked if emerging risks are considered to be new pests or re-emerging pests. EFSA confirmed that EFSA considers re-emerging pests. Germany noted the importance of this aspect of EFSA's work as new trade and commodities data needs to be collected. The emerging risk unit requested that the network can also provide data and is investigating better access to other EU data for EFSA such as from the EU fraud office. EFSA Plant Health confirmed that a scientific colloquium would be held in 2011 to which the network would be invited. Austria suggested that the European media monitoring system could be extended to plant health; Poland added that a new emergent risk should be discussed at meetings of the standing committee and the Netherlands suggested that a survey is conducted on passenger baggage as a pathway.

11. CONCLUSIONS

An overview of the preliminary conclusions of the network was presented namely assistance in the development of technical guidance by EFSA to assist the network.

A summary of the actions requested by the Network of EFSA are:

- EFSA to determine if Turkey's request for access to the Information Exchange Platform can be accommodated
- Communication on the Pest Risk Assessments prepared by EFSA to be an agenda item at the next network meeting.

The next meeting will be either 13-14 or 20-21 October 2011.

Venue to be confirmed.