



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Safety of the Food chain
Biotechnology and Plant health

Brussels, 18 March 2010
RB/ D(2009)

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE ON MODERNISING THE COMMON PLANT
HEALTH REGIME IN VIEW OF GLOBALISATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

Joint meeting of the Working Group "Plant Health" of the Advisory Group on the
Food Chain, Animal and Plant Health and an ad-hoc Working Group of Chief Plant
Health Officers

Held in Brussels on 23-24 February 2010

Commission services represented: DG SANCO, DG AGRI, DG ENV, DG RTD, DG
TRADE

Stakeholders represented¹: AIPH, ANTHOS, CEI-BOIS, CELCAA, CEPF, CLECAT,
COCERAL, COPA-COGECA, ECPA, EFNA, ELO, ESA, EUROPATAT, EUSTAFOR,
FEDIOL, FEFPEB, FRESHFEL, UNION FLEURS

Member States represented: AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE,
IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK

Other participants: Food Chain Evaluation Consortium (FCEC), EFSA, EPPO,
EUPHRESCO, Switzerland

Chairs: Mr. Eric Poudalet, Director Safety of the Food Chain, DG SANCO and Ms Paola
Testori Coggi, Deputy Director-General, DG SANCO

The Conference was opened by **Mr Robert Madelin**, Director-General of DG SANCO, who highlighted the importance of evaluations for better regulation. Mr Madelin recalled that the revision of the Common Plant Health Regime (CPHR) should rebalance the objectives according to the public good values and needs of Europe's population, economy and society as a whole. Strategic challenges for the CPHR cover not only globalisation and climate change but sustainability, water and land use, nutrition for 9 billion people, environment and biodiversity, and innovation. Apart from technical improvements, the new regime for the next 30 years requires a new strategy, a new culture, a change of perspective and practice.

¹ National member organisations are listed under their EU umbrella stakeholders' organisations.

Mr. Lucio Carbajo Goñi, Deputy Director-General Health of Primary Production, Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, underlined the importance of the evaluation of the CPHR. Mr Carbajo underlined the merits of the regime, which combines prevention of entry and eradication of harmful organisms with free movement of plants and plant products within the EU, with the aid of plant passports and protected zones. The enlargement of the EU, globalisation and climate change have nevertheless necessitated a revision. Increased scientific and political support and resources are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the regime.

Mr. Michael Jeger, Professor at Imperial College London and chair of the EFSA Panel on Plant Health, presented the plant health threats to agriculture from globalisation and climate change. Plant pests are causing substantial crop losses in all regions of the world. An increase in extreme weather events may well worsen these impacts. For the future we will have to rely on predictions from models and cross-talk between those involved with pest surveillance and monitoring with scientists analyzing data and modelling future scenarios will be critical. Although many introductions of novel plant pathogens have already occurred in different parts of the world, climate change may facilitate their further establishment and spread. Future plant health will not only have to be addressed above ground, but also in the soil. Increasingly it will become difficult to consider agricultural crops in isolation from their surrounding environment. Landscape pathology has become an emerging paradigm with plant health a subset of environmental health. Ensuring that landscape management incorporates the many insights from new studies on global change impacts on plant health will be important to improve the sustainability and security of food production.

Ms. Gillian Allard, Forestry Officer at the FAO Forestry Department, Rome presented the threats from globalisation and climate change to forest health. Globally, the extent of forest adversely affected by insects alone is 35 million hectares per year. Health problems may disrupt natural fire cycles, deplete water, affect international trade in forest products and have negative impacts on livelihoods (e.g. the outbreak of mountain pine beetle in Canada and US, exacerbated by dryer summers and warmer winters, where the loss of an estimated one billion trees (11 million ha.) is having direct impact on industry and livelihoods are threatened). Correlations have been reported by countries on insect outbreaks and severe weather events. Disturbed ecosystems are easier to invade. Climate change is predicted to increase the likelihood of pest establishment in new locations and to increase the severity of impacts of both native and introduced pests. Changes in the pattern of disturbances by forest pests are expected under changing climate as a result of warmer temperatures, changes in precipitation, increased drought frequency and higher CO₂ concentrations. These changes will play a major role in shaping the world's forests and forest sector. Pests may be the first predictors of climate change due to their ability to change more rapidly than tree populations.

Mr. Ralf Lopian, Senior Adviser, International Affairs at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland shared his reflections on the management of emerging plant health threats. He recalled that international trade rules have been liberalised and world trade has significantly increased during the last two decades. A diversification has taken place of agricultural products. There is an increased introduction potential for plant pests, a greater variety of host/pest combinations and an increase in the trade of high-risk pathways. Pest eradication costs increase exponentially. The management of emerging plant health threats comprises the pre-detection phase, the early response and the eradication phase. Critical to successful eradication are early detection of introduction, a short initial response phase, effective preliminary eradication measures and a

comprehensive eradication policy which is consistently implemented. Surveillance needs to be stepped up and obligatory contingency plans developed. Eradication programmes should be better and faster managed, implemented and reviewed. Resources constraints make prioritisation necessary. Resources and public and political awareness need to be substantially improved.

Mr. Gerard Meijerink, Chairman of the ESA Working Group on Plant Health, highlighted the relevance of the CPHR to the seed industry. He considered that good seed health practices are the basis for healthy crops and smooth global seed movements, company image, customer satisfaction and claim avoidance. In ESA's view, the CPHR should move to prevention. The seed pathway however requires a specific approach with involvement of the industry, integration of plant health and quality inspections and facilitation of (re-)export. Delegation of tasks under official NPPO supervision is desirable and execution of all operational inspections by one authority. A harmonised implementation and EU harmonised testing protocols are needed. A legal basis for international acceptance for movement of products produced in one Member State and exported to a third country via another Member State is needed, as well as a legal basis for electronic documents.

Mr. Luc Peeters, Chairman of the Working Party on Phytosanitary Issues of COPA-COGECA, presented the relevance of the CPHR to growers and foresters. He recalled that throughout the history of plant health, it has been natural for farmers to contribute to plant health protection in order to meet consumers' expectations, and preserve agriculture, horticulture, forests, public and private green and natural ecosystems against harmful organisms. Farmers play an essential role in monitoring the health of plants under their care on an ongoing basis so as to ensure that the first signs of disease are detected and that appropriate action is taken at the earliest opportunity. Copa-Cogeca requested simplification of the legislation, prioritisation of harmful organisms, harmonised implementation for ensuring a common playing field, certification of farms to reduce administrative burden, and a focus on prevention and rapid emergency action. Risk reduction should take place at international, EU, national and farm level. Financial resources should be supplied to farmers in this context. Communication to stakeholders, the public and third countries should be improved.

Mr. Bernd Gruner, Secretary-General of CELCAA, underlined the relevance of the CPHR to trade. CELCAA believed that the CPHR functions appropriately in many ways, with positive effects on plant health as well as intra-Community trade. Improvements to the regime should target the level of surveillance for harmful organisms, contingency planning, a more transparent notification system, more focus on prevention at the source (third countries), risk-based import inspections and early action, and prioritisation of harmful organisms. The current regionalisation system through protected zones should be amended. Tasks and duties should be further delegated to provide incentives. Investments are needed in research, development and innovation, in particular testing methods and this should be included in the scope of the regime. Suggestions were given for further trade facilitation. International reciprocity and recognition of the CPHR by third countries needs to be pursued to avoid non-tariff barriers for trade. A fully harmonised fee system and a level playing field are required.

Dr. Maria Christodoulou and **Mr. Conrad Caspari**, directors of the evaluation consortium FCEC, presented the interim outcome of the current plant health regime and reflections on options for the future plant health regime. A Working Document prepared

by FCEC had been sent out for this purpose to all participants prior to the meeting. The following issues addressed in the FCEC document were discussed:

- A. Definition of the scope of CPHR – how to determine best approach for:
 - A.1. Invasive Alien Species;
 - A.2. Natural spread;
 - A.3. Regulated Non Quarantine Pests.
- B. Prevention Strategies:
 - B.1. Prevention with regard to import: risk analysis of new trade and targeting of risks;
 - B.2. Prevention intra-EU: EU requirements for general surveillance.
- C. More rapid emergency action and creation of EU/MS emergency team.
- D. Functioning of the Internal Market:
 - D.1. Revision of plant passport system (further harmonisation);
 - D.2. Tightening of protected zones system (restoration of credibility).
- E. Incentives.

The participants were invited to send in their views concerning the issues raised by 5 March 2010 at the latest. The outcome of the discussion and the input received assist FCEC to develop the final report of the evaluation.

A second conference, inviting also the third countries that had been interviewed by FCEC and the general public, will be organised after completion of the evaluation in October 2010. Following an impact assessment (2010/2011), a new strategy will be available by early 2012. The legislation will be amended subsequently.