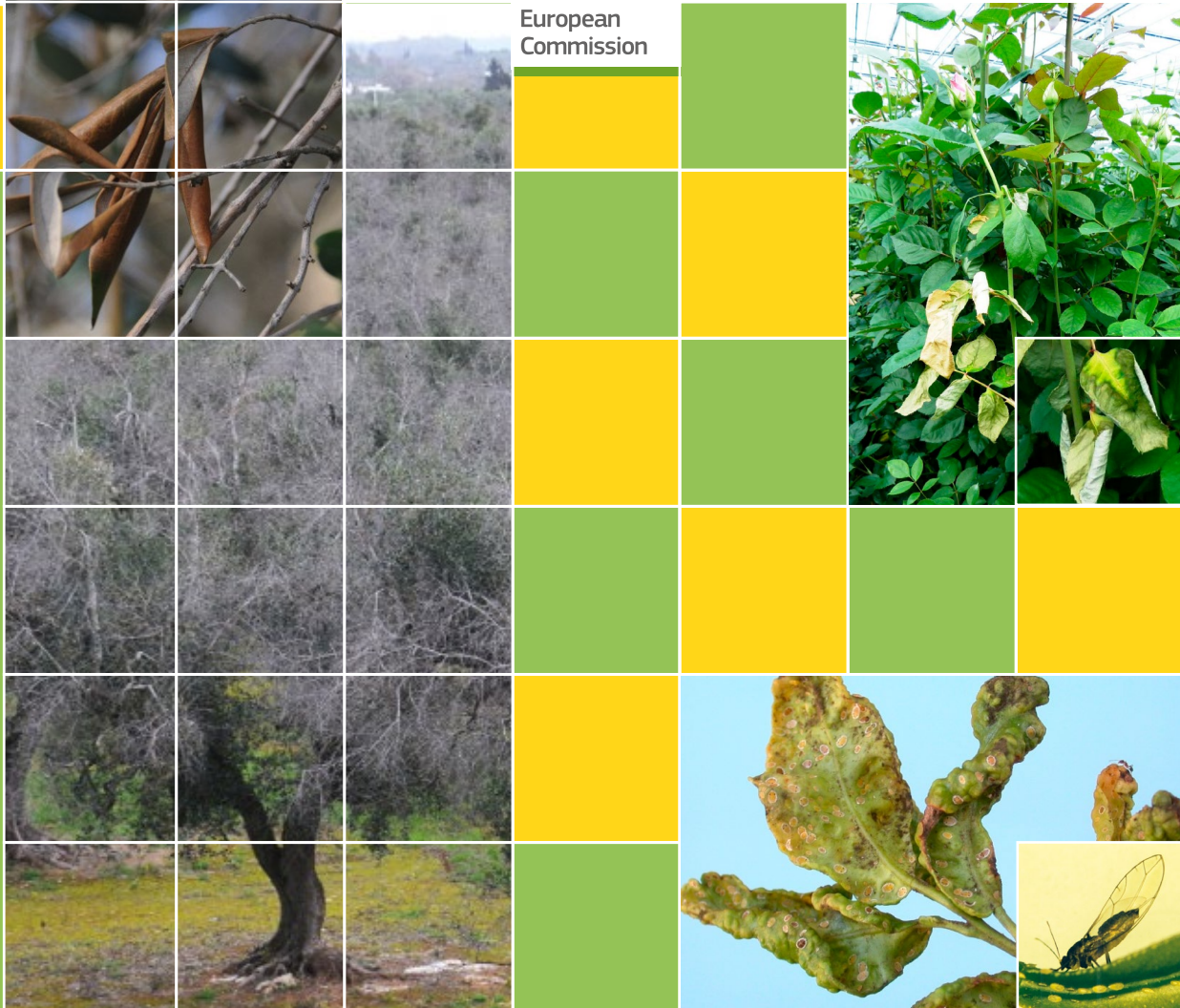




European
Commission



DG Health and
Food Safety

Harmful Organisms

in the European Union

MEMBER STATES'
REPORTING **2015/2016**

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Health and food audits and analysis

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HARMFUL ORGANISMS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
MEMBER STATES' REPORTING 2015-2016

Executive summary

Article 16 (1) and (2) of Directive 2000/29/EC, requires that Member States notify the European Commission and other Member States, of the presence or appearance of harmful organisms found on their territory or part of it, as well as the measures taken to eradicate or avoid the spread of the harmful organism concerned. This is required whether the harmful organisms are regulated (specifically listed in European Union (EU) legislation) or not.

This report provides an overview of the notifications of harmful organisms sent by Member States to the European Commission in 2015 and 2016 pursuant to Article 16 (1) and (2) of Directive 2000/29/EC.

*In 2015 and 2016, Member States sent 288 and 318 notifications respectively concerning harmful organisms detected in their territory. This corresponds to an annual increase of 29% in the number of notifications sent in 2015 compared to 2014 and an additional 10% in 2016 compared to 2015. The Commission analyses notifications on a continuous basis. Notifications of concern are considered by Member State experts at the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed in order to assist management decisions at EU level. The Commission also carries out a number of targeted audits on the spot every year in order to assess the situation. In 2015 and 2016, the Commission performed 14 audits related the following harmful organisms: *Xylella fastidiosa*, *Popillia japonica*, *Anoplophora chinensis* and *glabripennis*, *Geosmithia morbida*/*Pityophthorus juglandis*, *Trioza erytrae*, *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*, *Epitrix* and *Pomacea*.*

Following the adoption of Decision 2014/917/EU, Member States introduced changes in their notification practices as of 2015. The format and content of the notifications have been progressively adapted pursuant to the Decision and updates of notifications were sent more regularly. However, Member States' notification practices are not yet fully harmonised and notifications are not always made within legal deadlines.

The launch of the web-based notification system EUROPHYT-Outbreaks at the beginning of 2017 and the development of a common protocol for notifications are expected to facilitate rapid reporting and foster the harmonisation of practices between Member States. This should in turn contribute to timely decision making at EU level for an increased level of protection of the EU territory against phytosanitary risks.

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Abbreviations and definitions used in this report

Annexes I and II	Annexes of Directive 2000/29/EC listing harmful organisms which are totally banned (Annex I) or banned if present on specific plant and plant products (Annex II) from entry into and spread within the Union territory.
Article 16	Article 16 of Directive 2000/29/EC
Closing note	An update notification indicating the termination of phytosanitary measures.
Commission	European Commission
The Directive	Council Directive 2000/29/EC of 8 May 2000 on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community
EPPO	European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation
EPPO A1/A2 lists	Lists of harmful organisms absent from (A1) or only present locally (A2) in the EPPO region, recommended for regulation as quarantine harmful organisms. These can be consulted on the EPPO website at: http://www.eppo.int/QUARANTINE/quarantine.htm
EPPO Alert list	Harmful organisms possibly presenting a risk to EPPO member countries (early warning). This can be consulted on the EPPO website at: http://www.eppo.int/QUARANTINE/Alert_List/alert_list.htm
EU	European Union
EUROPHYT	European Union notification system for plant health
First finding	Notification related to a harmful organism which is detected for the first time in the territory of the notifying Member State
Harmful organism	Defined in Article 2 (e) of Council Directive 2000/29/EC as any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products
ISPM	International Standard on Phytosanitary Measures, issued by the International Plant Protection Convention. These standards can be consulted at: https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/ispms/#publications
New finding	Notifications of harmful organisms which have been previously detected in the territory of the notifying Member States (by opposition to first findings).

Outbreak notification	A notification from a Member State to the Commission and the other Member States, informing of a recent development in the situation or status of a harmful organism in their territory or part of it, in accordance with Article 16 (1) or (2). It can be a "first finding" or a "new finding" as defined in this report.
Outbreak	According to ISPM n°5 'A recently detected pest population, including an incursion, or a sudden significant increase of an established pest population in an area'. In this report, it also includes pest findings that do not constitute "populations".
Regulated harmful organisms	Harmful organisms specifically listed in EU legislation, in the annexes of Directive 2000/29/EC or addressed by EU emergency Decisions
Update notification	A notification from a Member State to the Commission and the other Member States, providing complementary or updated information on a previous outbreak notification, in accordance with Article 2 (2), (4) and (5) of Decision 2014/917/EU. This information can be related to the spread, the successful eradication or any other development or information that was not available at the time of the initial notification of the harmful organism. An update notification indicating the termination of phytosanitary measures is referred to as a closing note in this report.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the notifications of harmful organisms sent by Member States to the European Commission (hereafter "the Commission") in 2015 and 2016 pursuant to Article 16 (1) and (2) of Council Directive 2000/29/EC (hereafter "the Directive"). Information presented in this report is based on data provided by Member States in their notifications. Information on harmful organisms has also been taken from the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO)'s website.

2 LEGAL BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 EU-regulated harmful organisms

EU-regulated harmful organisms are either listed in the Directive and/or covered by an emergency measure. The listing of harmful organisms in the Directive is organised as detailed in figure 1. Harmful organisms listed in section I of part A of Annexes I and II (hereafter referred to as Annexes IAI and IIAI) are those which are not known to occur in the European Union territory.

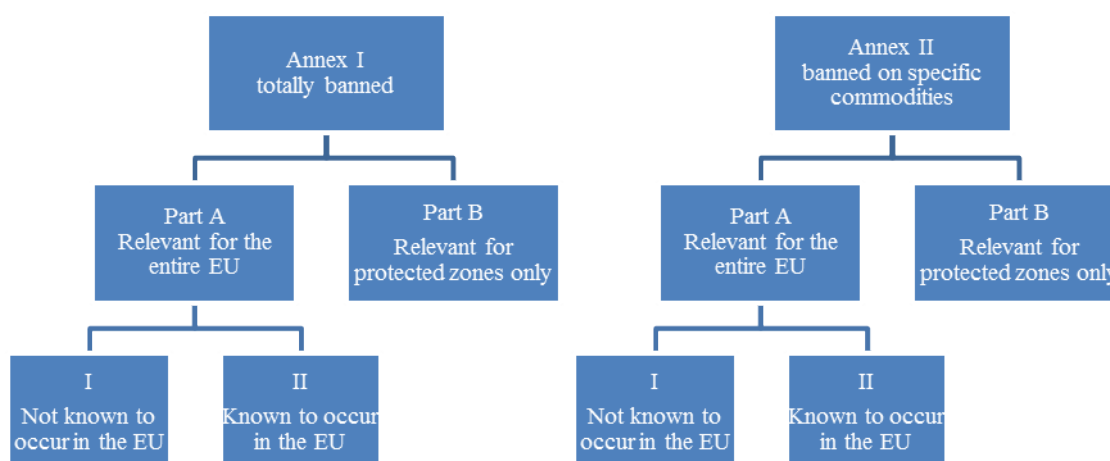


Figure 1. Organisation of Annexes to Directive 2000/29/EC listing harmful organisms

Some EU-regulated harmful organisms are subject to a compulsory survey:

- Member States which have protected zones, have to conduct official surveys for the harmful organisms for which they have protected zones recognised;
- Certain potato harmful organisms that occur in some parts of the EU territory have to be surveyed by all Member States;
- Most of the emergency measures require an annual survey of the Member States' territory.

Since 2015, EU co-financing of Member States' survey activities has been available in line with the Commission annual or biannual work programmes (https://ec.europa.eu/food/funding/plant-health_en).

2.2 Member States' obligations to report harmful organisms on their territory

Article 16 (1) and (2) of the Directive requires that Member States notify in writing the Commission and other Member States of the presence of harmful organisms listed in Annex I and II and the actual or suspected appearance of harmful organisms which are not listed in Annex I and II, as well as the measures taken to control them. Commission Implementing Decision 2014/917/EU lays down the format and information to be notified and deadlines for their communication.

In addition, Member States are also obliged to provide annual reports of survey results for all mandatory and co-financed surveys to the Commission and other Member States.

The notifications under Article 16 (1) and (2) aim at informing the Commission and the other Member States of a recent development in the situation or status of a harmful organism in their territory or part of it. The following terminology is used in this report:

- "Outbreak notification" refers to an initial report informing of the detection of a harmful organism in an area where it was not known to be present, irrespective of the size of the population detected (including isolated pest findings) and the likelihood of its present or future establishment in the area. These are qualified in this report as "partial" notifications when they are sent pursuant to Article 2(1) and (3) of Decision 2014/917/EU, which specify the limited range of information to be communicated within eight working days from the date of official confirmation or, where relevant, suspicion by the official body;
- "Update notification" refers to notifications complementing or updating a previous notification (outbreak or update notification). This aims at clarifying the situation of a harmful organism in a specific area, its spread, its successful eradication or any other development or information that was not available at the time of the initial outbreak notification or subsequent updates. The obligation of reporting on updates is laid down in Article 2(5) of Decision 2014/917/EU. In this report, a notification sent in order to complement a "partial" notification in accordance with Article 2(2) and (4), is also qualified as an update. The comprehensive range of information on an outbreak is required to be notified within 30 days from the date of official confirmation or, where relevant, suspicion by the official body;
- "First finding" refers to a notification of a harmful organism which is detected for the first time in the territory of the notifying Member State. This might also be a first detection of a harmful organism in the EU territory.
- "New finding" refers to a notification of a harmful organism which is not a first finding.

The Commission analyses notifications on a continuous basis, provides monthly summary reports on notifications and discusses notifications of concern at the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed, section Plant Health (hereafter "the Standing Committee") in order to assist management decisions at EU level. The Commission also follows up the situation on the spot by carrying out a number of audits every year to assess the situation of harmful organisms of concern to the EU and control

measures implemented by competent authorities in order to eradicate or contain them. In 2015 and 2016, the Commission performed 14 audits related to the following harmful organisms: *Xylella fastidiosa*, *Popillia japonica*, *Anoplophora chinensis* and *glabripennis*, *Geosmithia morbida/Pityophthorus juglandis*, *Trioza erytraea*, *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*, *Epitrix* and *Pomacea*.

2.3 Notification process and EUROPHYT-Outbreaks

Since the beginning of 2015, Member States have progressively adapted the format of their notifications and their notifying practices in line with Decision 2014/917/EU. As reflected in the following sections, this has contributed to an increase in the number of notifications, as well as the comprehensiveness and comparability of the information communicated. In 2015 and 2016, these notifications were all transmitted in PDF format by e-mail.

In 2015 and 2016, the web-based standardised information system EUROPHYT-Outbreaks was developed with a view to facilitating the notification process in line with Decision 2014/917/EU. This system entered into production at the beginning of 2017 and is used by all Member States and Switzerland. Notifications, once approved, are sent automatically by the system to the Commission and to all Member States and Switzerland, and relevant information transferred to EPPO in line with the Member State's request.

3 NOTIFICATIONS

3.1 Notifications in the EU and Switzerland

In 2015 and 2016, Member States sent 288 and 318 notifications respectively concerning harmful organisms detected in their territory. This corresponds to an annual increase of 29% in the number of notifications sent in 2015 compared to 2014 and an additional 10% in 2016 compared to 2015.

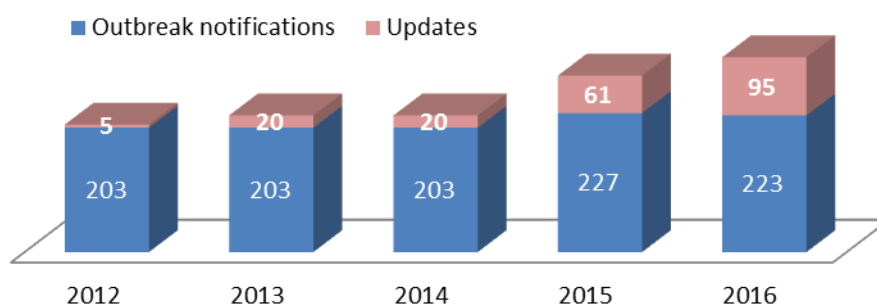


Figure 2 Number of notifications per year (2012-2016)

Figure 2 shows an upward trend since 2015 for outbreak notifications and, more significantly, for update notifications. For the latter, this can be explained by a change in Member States' reporting practices in response to the entry into force of Decision 2014/917/EC at the end of 2014 and Commission services' requests for regular updates concerning outbreaks of major concern to the EU.

In 2015 and 2016, Member States sent 450 outbreak notifications in order to report first or new findings of harmful organisms. This number is not directly representative of the number of outbreaks detected in the EU territory and notified during this period because the number of outbreaks reported in a notification, which is not always specified in the notification, can vary greatly (from 1 to 21). This may depend for instance on the Member States' notification practices or on the harmful organism concerned (its regulatory status, the control measures implemented, etc.). In some cases, new outbreak(s) were also reported through update notifications; 28 such update notifications were sent in 2015 and 2016.

These practices may not always be harmonised across Member States as shown in the following examples:

- in 2015 and 2016, Italy sent five outbreak notifications and nine updates in order to report on the situation of *Xylella fastidiosa* in the demarcated area in Apulia, while France sent one outbreak notification and 16 updates to report 329 outbreaks of *Xylella fastidiosa* in two different regions;
- Spain sent seven outbreak notifications and two updates in order to report on the situation of *Tecia solanivora* in two regions during the period 2015-2016. In each of these notifications and subsequent updates, several outbreaks were reported.
- the UK sent one outbreak notification reporting 21 outbreaks of *Siroccocus tsugae* in England, Wales and Scotland.

With the introduction of the EUROPHYT-*Outbreaks* system and supporting protocol for notifications guide, reporting practices will be progressively harmonised. It is therefore expected in the future to have more information on the number of outbreaks and their development over time.

3.2 Notifications per country

In 2015 and 2016, 26 Member States and Switzerland sent notifications including updates, to report the presence of harmful organisms in their territory. As reflected in figure 3, the number of notifications varies significantly across Member States while, with a few exceptions, the number of notifications sent by each Member State is fairly stable from one year to another. In 2015 and 2016, the level of notifications made by five Member States was significantly higher than that of other Member States. Together, they accounted for almost two thirds of all the notifications made, both in 2015 and 2016. Germany, Spain, Italy and Portugal were already in previous years amongst the Member States sending the highest number of notifications. In contrast, the number of notifications from Lithuania significantly increased, from a maximum of four per year from 2012 to 2014 up to 36 and 54 in 2015 and 2016 respectively, due to a change of notification practices.

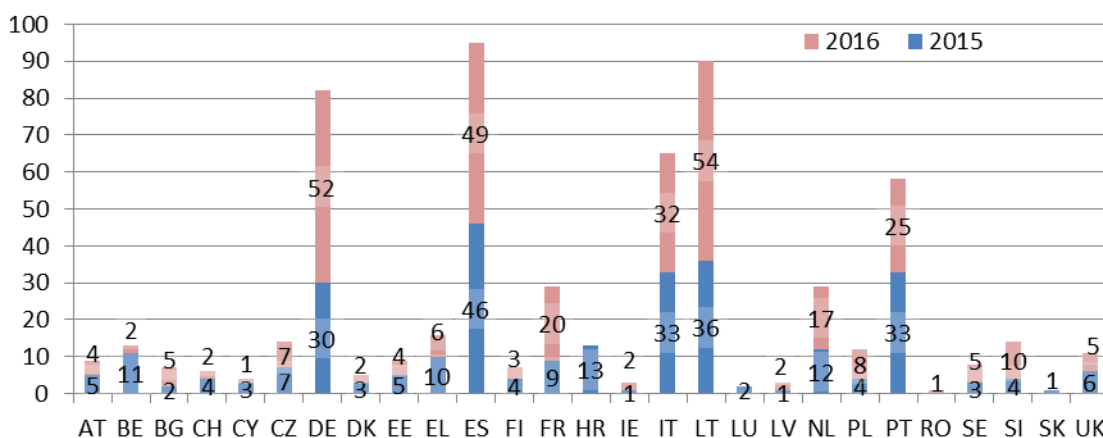


Figure 3. Number of notifications per Member State in 2015 and 2016

The number of countries sending updates of notifications significantly increased in the period 2012-2016, from 3 in 2012 to 19 in 2016. As reflected in figure 4, the number of updates also varies across countries and, for the majority of them, increases from 2015 to 2016.

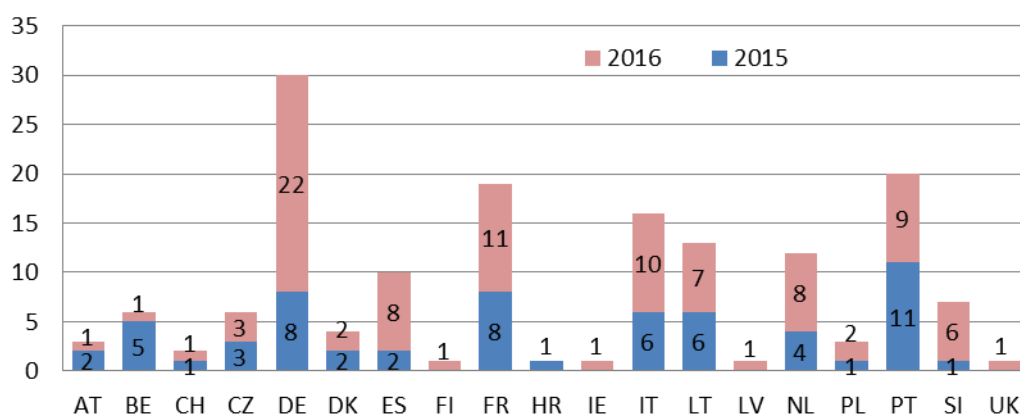


Figure 4. Number of update notifications per country in 2015 and 2016

Of these 19 countries, 11 sent partial outbreak notifications and subsequent updates. Amongst them, Germany, France and Italy also sent regular updates concerning the outbreak(s) of *Xylella fastidiosa* in their territory, and Portugal concerning the presence of *Trioza erytrae* in continental Portugal.

The differences between Member States concerning the number of annual outbreak notifications and updates can be greatly impacted by national notification practices. This is reflected for instance in the way Member States report the presence of certain potato harmful organisms covered by EU control Directives in particular *Clavibacter michiganensis* ssp. *sepedonicus* (ring rot of potato) and *Globodera rostochiensis* (potato cyst nematode). These are generally reported with survey results pursuant to the above mentioned Directives. However, of the 94 notifications concerning these two harmful organisms, 65 related to ring rot and 29 to potato cyst nematode, were sent by 10 Member States in 2015-2016. Of these notifications, 55 (84%) and 25 (86%) were sent

by Lithuania to notify the suspected or confirmed presence of ring rot of potato and potato cyst nematode respectively.

3.3 Reasons for notifications

3.3.1 Outbreak notifications

Figure 5 shows the main reasons for sending outbreak notifications in 2015-2016:

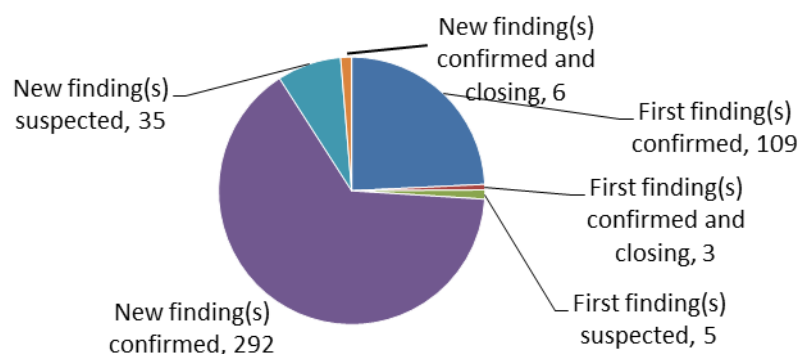


Figure 5. Reasons for the outbreak notifications in 2015-2016

- The majority of the 450 outbreak notifications concerned new findings, i.e. harmful organisms detected at least for the second time in a given Member State, while 26% (117 notifications) concerned harmful organisms detected for the first time in a given Member State (first findings). However, as reflected in figure 6, two thirds of the notifications of non-regulated harmful organisms, are first findings. Their number has increased every year from 2014 to 2016.

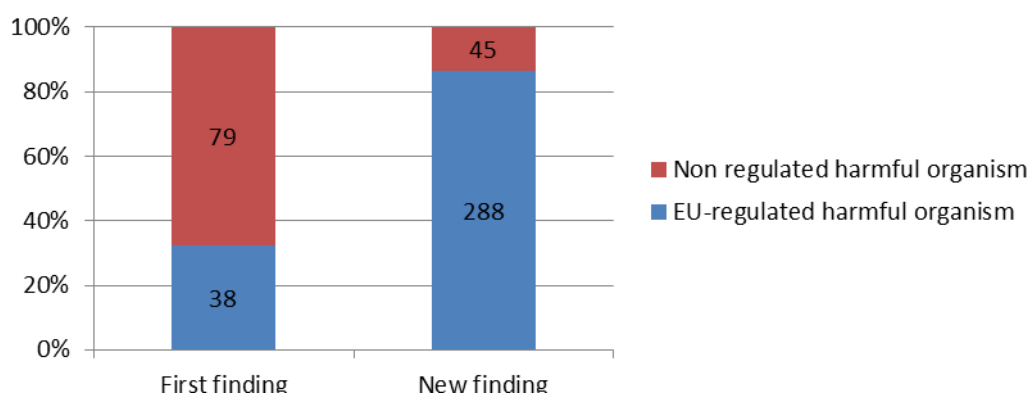


Figure 6. Proportion of non-regulated harmful organisms in first/new findings in 2015-2016)

- Of the 450 notifications, 40 suspected cases were reported. Most of these related to EU-regulated harmful organisms (92% of the notifications), mainly potato pests (*Clavibacter michiganensis* ssp. *sepedonicus* (32 notifications) and *Potato spindle tuber viroid*); some of these were subsequently confirmed in updates. Amongst the other notifications of a suspected presence, one of particular concern related to Candidatus *Liberibacter asiaticus* in Portugal; this presence was not confirmed following further investigations.
- In a limited number of cases, outbreak notifications included a closing note, indicating that there would be no further notifications related to the reported case.

This is either because the harmful organism was eradicated or because phytosanitary measures were not implemented.

3.3.2 Update notifications

As shown in figure 7, of the 156 update notifications sent by Member States in 2015 and 2016, more than a third (58) complemented a “partial” notification sent pursuant to Article 2(1) and (3) of Decision 2014/917/EU. The remaining 98 notifications gave an update of the situation of harmful organisms, which had been previously notified, mainly in 2015 or 2016. One third of these 98 updates were related to outbreaks of *Xylella fastidiosa* in the EU and Switzerland.

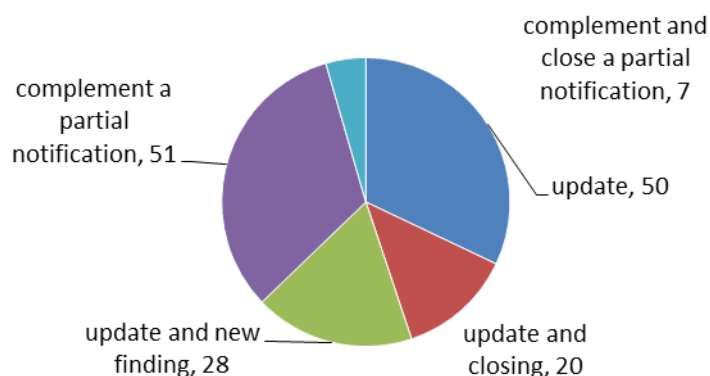


Figure 7. Reason for the update notifications in 2015-2016

3.4 Average time for outbreak notifications in 2015-2016

Rapid communication of the presence of harmful organisms is important in order to enable timely identification and management of risks at EU level. Preliminary information (partial notification) is legally required within eight working days, while a comprehensive range of information is required within 30 days, both from the date of official confirmation or, where relevant, suspicion by the official body. The average notification times for 427 outbreak notifications received in 2015-2016 is shown in figure 8.

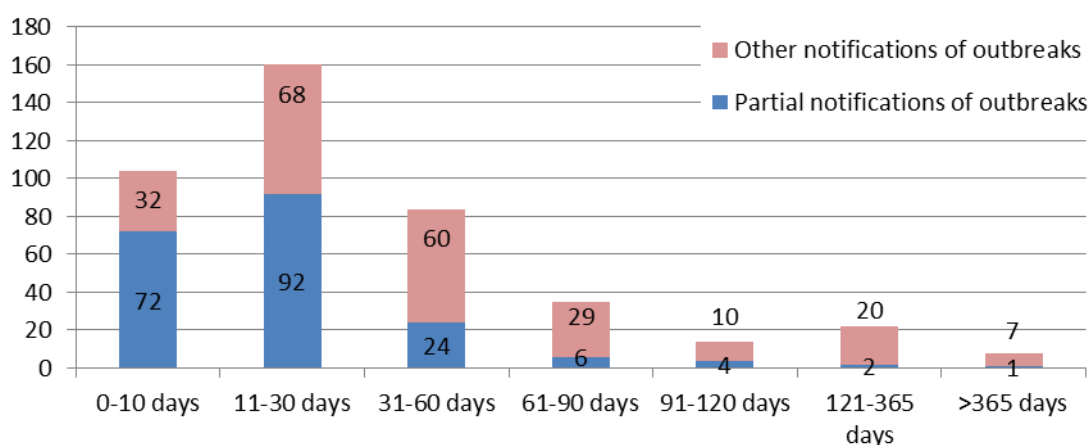


Figure 8 Average number of calendar days from a finding to its notification in 2015-2016

Of these 427 notifications, almost a quarter were sent within 10 calendar days and two thirds within 30 days following either the date of finding or its confirmation by the competent authorities. For “partial” outbreak notifications, this proportion reaches

approximately 35% and 80% respectively. However, these partial notifications were not always limited to the minimum information required by Article 2(1) and (3) of Decision 2014/917/EU, which may explain why they were not always sent within the required deadline of 8 working days. Delays in sending notifications may also be due to the fact that some notifications reported on several outbreaks or were used to report on survey results at the end of a survey period.

3.5 Harmful organisms notified

3.5.1 Distribution per taxonomic groups

Almost all outbreak notifications received in 2015 and 2016, provided the species name of the harmful organisms detected. The figure below shows the proportion of notifications of 2015-2016 per taxonomic group of the harmful organisms involved.

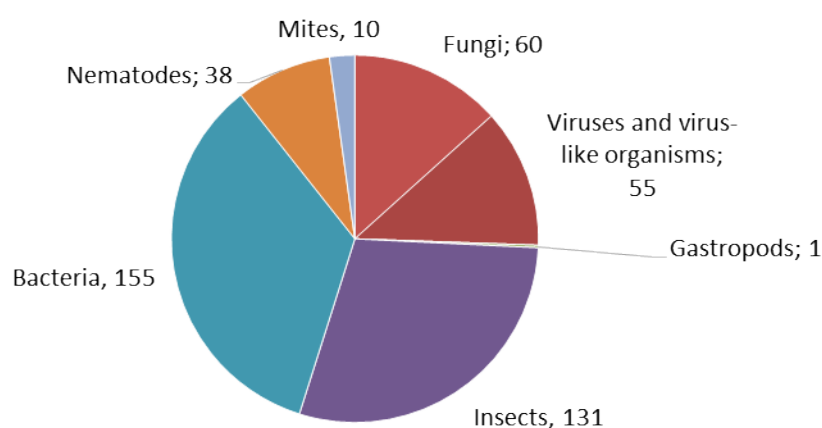


Figure 9. Distribution of notifications per taxonomic group (2015-2016)

In 2015-2016, some 30% of the outbreak notifications concerned insects and mites, while this represented 50 to 55% of the notifications in the period 2010 to 2014. This is due to:

- significantly less notifications of insects, mainly *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*, *Dryocosmus kuriphilus* (following the withdrawal of the emergency measures) and *Drosophila suzukii*;
- increased reported presence of nematodes and bacteria, caused by notifications from Lithuania of *Globodera rostochiensis* and *Clavibacter michiganensis* ssp *sepedonicus*, as well as notifications on the presence of *Ralstonia solanacearum* (in total 29 notifications in 2015-2016) from 11 Member States. Of these 29, eight concerned infested rose plants in five Member States.
- notification numbers related to fungi were twice as high in 2016 compared to the previous years, in particular with increased cases of *Fusarium circinatum*, *Phytophthora ramorum* and *Dothistroma septosporum*.

By comparison, it is interesting to note that every year more than 90% of the harmful organisms detected by import controls are insects and mites.

3.5.2 EU regulatory status

As shown in figure 10, the annual number of outbreak notifications of non-regulated harmful organisms has remained stable overall since 2014. This is also the case for notifications related to harmful organisms subject to emergency measures and listed in Annexes IAI and IIAI of the Directive (Harmful organisms not known to occur in the EU territory). The increase in the total number of outbreak notifications since 2014 concerns essentially harmful organisms listed in Annexes IAI, IB, IIAI and IIB, i.e. harmful organisms known to occur in certain parts of the EU territory, and this is mainly caused by an increase in the number of notifications related to *Globodera rostochiensis*, *Clavibacter michiganensis* ssp. *sepedonicus* and *Ralstonia solanacearum*.

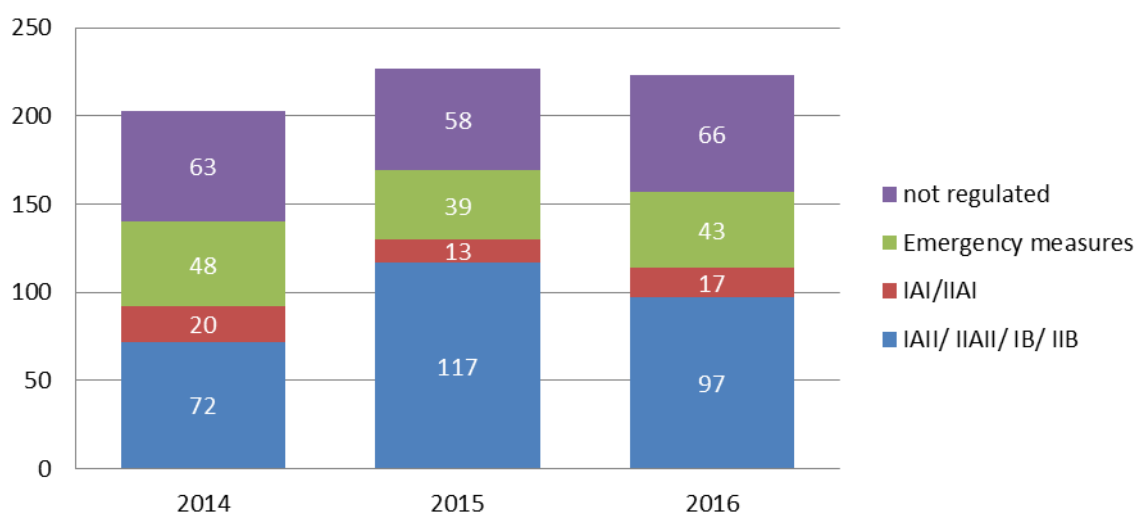


Figure 10. Distribution of outbreak notifications per EU regulatory status of harmful organisms (2014-2016)

3.5.3 Non-regulated harmful organisms

In 2015-2016, of the 124 notifications of non-regulated harmful organisms received, 79 were related to first findings. These concerned 66 different harmful organisms, most of which had not been previously notified to the Commission. Since 2012, some 17 different species were reported twice or more as first findings.

3.5.3.1 Assessment of the risk for non-EU regulated harmful organisms

When Member States report a non-regulated harmful organism for the first time, it is appropriate that they provide information on the phytosanitary risk presented by the harmful organism notified. Most of the notifications sent in 2015-2016 provided information on whether or not a risk assessment was performed. As shown in figure 11, in almost two thirds of the notifications of first findings of non-regulated harmful organisms, Member States declared that a pest risk analysis existed or was under development. For the rest, there was either no information provided or an indication that the PRA was not required, necessary or available. This is not in accordance with the options laid down in Decision 2014/917/EU.

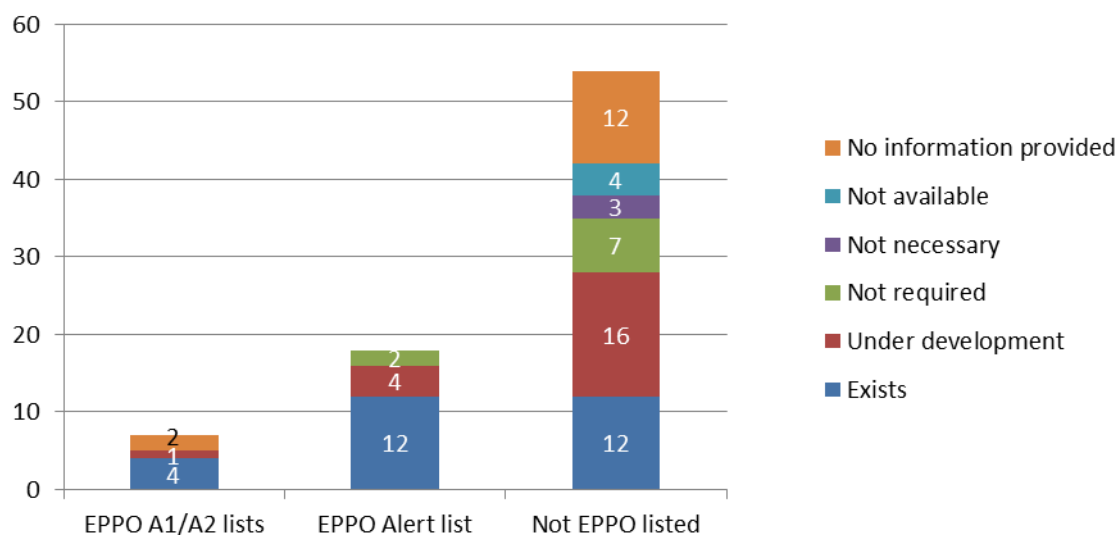


Figure 11. Pest risk Analysis in first findings of harmful organisms (2015-2016)

The EUROPHYT-*Outbreaks* application and its related protocol for notifications guide are being adapted in order to encourage Member States to provide information on the phytosanitary risk presented by the harmful organism notified, whether this was assessed by a PRA or not.

3.5.3.2 EPPO categorisation of non-regulated harmful organisms

Of the 86 different species of non-regulated harmful organisms notified in 2015-2016, 22 are listed in an EPPO pest list (EPPO A1 and A2 lists of pests recommended for regulation as quarantine pests or the EPPO Alert list of pests possibly presenting a risk to EPPO member countries). Table 1 provides details of these harmful organisms and the number of notifications received since 2010.

Table 1. Non-regulated harmful organisms notified in 2015-2016 and listed by EPPO

Name of the harmful organisms	Year of listing	No of notifications /MS 2015-2016	No of notifications / MS 2010-2014
EPPO A1 lists			
<i>Aromia bungii</i>	2014	1 (DE)	3 (DE, IT)
<i>Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum</i>	2012	5 (DE, ES, IT, SE)	4 (AT, ES, FR)
<i>Puccinia hemerocallidis</i>	2007	1 (PT)	0
EPPO A2 lists			
<i>Drosophila suzukii</i>	2011	3 (BG, IE, SE)	59 (14 MS + CH)
<i>Geosmithia morbida</i>	2015	1 (IT)	1 (IT)
<i>Megaplatypus mutatus</i>	2007	1 (IT)	0
<i>Pityophthorus juglandis</i>	2015	2 (IT)	2 (IT)
<i>Trichoferus campestris</i>	2007	1 (DE)	0
EPPO Alert list			
<i>Aproceros leucopoda</i>	2011	3 (IT, LV)	5 (CZ, DE, IT)
<i>Citrus bark cracking viroid (CBCVd)</i>	2015	1 (SI)	0
<i>Contarinia pseudotsugae</i>	2016	4 (BE, DE, FR, NL)	0
<i>Diplocarpon mali</i>	2013 (deletion 2017)	2 (CZ, DE)	3 (DE, SI)
<i>Heterodera elachista</i>	2014	1 (IT)	1 (IT)
<i>Hosta Virus X</i>	2013 (deletion 2017)	1 (EE)	1 (IT)
<i>Meloidogyne ethiopica</i>	2011	1 (SI)	0
<i>Meloidogyne mali</i>	2014	1 (FR)	1 (NL)
<i>Sirococcus tsugae</i>	2015	1 (UK)	1 (DE)
<i>Thekopsora minima</i>	2016	4 (BE, DE, ES)	0
<i>Thrips setosus</i>	2014	4 (DE, FR, UK)	1 (NL)
<i>Tomato apical stunt viroid</i>	2003 (deletion 2017)	1 (EE)	6 (AT, DE, FR, IT, NL)
<i>Tomato leaf curl New Delhi virus</i>	2015	6 (ES, IT)	4 (ES)
<i>Xylosandrus compactus</i>	2017	2 (FR, IT)	2 (IT)

3.6 Source of the infestation notified

The source of the infestation is a key piece of information for the prevention of further introduction into and spread within the EU territory. However, it is often difficult for Member States to ascertain or even make assumptions on the origin of the harmful

organism detected. In 2015-2016, only one third of the outbreak notifications specified a possible or likely source of infestation. The sources given in these cases are illustrated in figure 12 below.

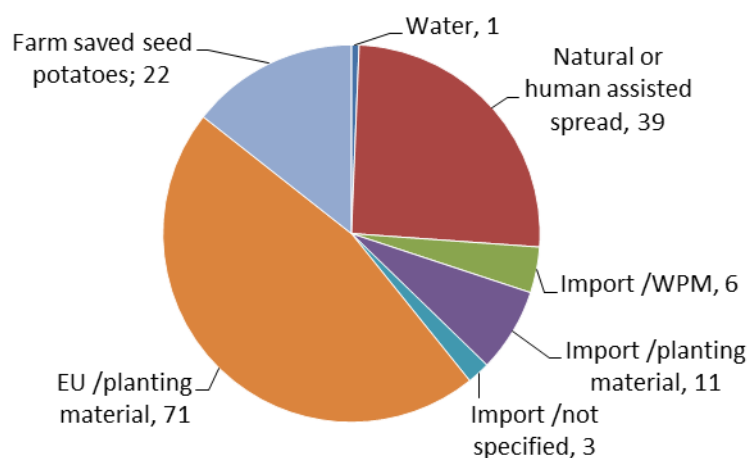


Figure 12. Possible sources of the harmful organisms notified in 2015-2016

Planting material of domestic origin or planting material moved from another Member State, is the most quoted possible source of infestation. Indeed a number of these outbreaks are identified by trace back and forward investigations and through communication between involved Member States on the risk of infestation of lots of plants moved within the EU.

3.7 Phytosanitary measures notified

In 2015 and 2016, most of the outbreak notifications (93 %) contained information on the Member States' decision to either implement official phytosanitary measures or not to do so in response to the finding notified, as illustrated in figure 13.

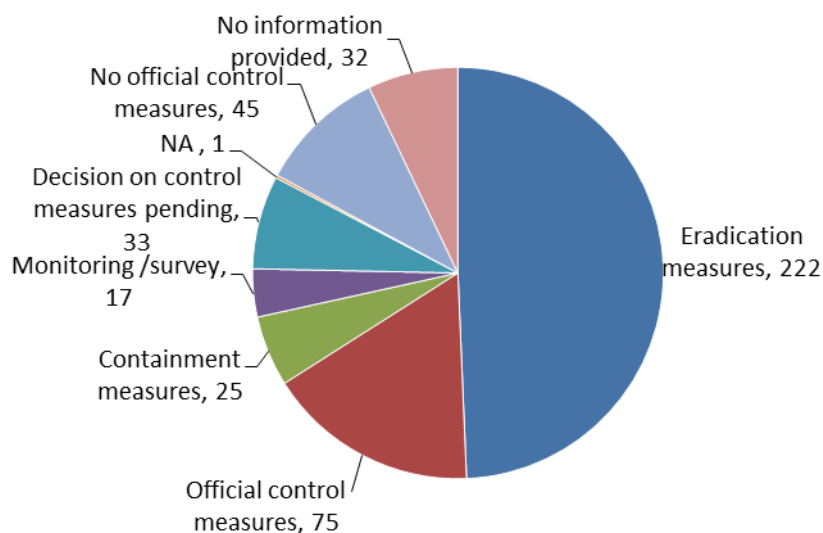


Figure 13. Phytosanitary measures reported in the notifications in 2015-2016

In 72% of the cases, the Member States notified the implementation or the intention to implement official phytosanitary measures, predominantly eradication measures. The

success of these measures can be assumed in a number of cases, in particular, when the destruction of the annual crop found infested is considered sufficient to eradicate the harmful organism. However, successful eradication is often not clearly stated in the outbreak notification and not confirmed by a subsequent update.

In 11 % of the notifications, Member States declared that the decision on phytosanitary measures was pending or limited to monitoring or surveys. In most cases, this was explained by the need to determine the extent of the infestation or distribution of the harmful organism in the Member State's territory in order to take a decision on phytosanitary measures. In some cases, the decision was pending the completion of a pest risk analysis.

In 10% of the outbreak notifications, the competent authorities decided not to implement official control measures. In two thirds of these cases, a justification was provided. The most common justifications were the conclusions of a pest risk analysis, the already wide distribution of the harmful organism, the absence of known effective control measures or the fact that control measures were not required or not implemented in other Member States where the harmful organism was also present. A limited number of these cases were related to EU regulated harmful organisms, of which four are listed in Annexes IAI/IIAI: *Lecanosticta acicola*, *Rhagoletis completa*, *Rhagoletis cingulata* and *Rhagoletis suavis*.

4 CONCLUSIONS

In 2015 and 2016, Member States sent 288 and 318 notifications respectively concerning harmful organisms detected in their territory. This corresponds to an annual increase of 29% in the number of notifications sent in 2015 compared to 2014 and an additional 10% in 2016 compared to 2015. The Commission analyses notifications on a continuous basis. Notifications of concern are considered by Member State experts at the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed in order to assist management decisions at EU level. The Commission also carries out a number of targeted audits on the spot every year in order to assess the situation. In 2015 and 2016, the Commission performed 14 audits related the following harmful organisms: *Xylella fastidiosa*, *Popillia japonica*, *Anoplophora chinensis* and *glabripennis*, *Geosmithia morbida/Pityophthorus juglandis*, *Trioza erytrae*, *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*, *Epitrix* and *Pomacea*.

Following the adoption of Decision 2014/917/EU, Member States have introduced changes in their notification practices as of 2015. The format and content of the notifications have been progressively adapted pursuant to the Decision and updates of notifications were sent more regularly. However, Member States' notification practices are not yet harmonised.

The launch of the web-based notification system, EUROPHYT-*Outbreaks* at the beginning of 2017, and the development of a common protocol for notifications are expected to facilitate rapid reporting and foster the harmonisation of practices between Member States. This should, in turn, contribute to timely decision making at EU level for an increased level of protection of the EU territory against phytosanitary risks.

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