



Brussels, 9 July 2009
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**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON "PLANT HEALTH" OF THE
ADVISORY GROUP ON THE FOOD CHAIN, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH**

Presentation of the evaluation of the Community plant health regime and discussion

Held in Brussels on 1 July 2009

European Commission: D. André (chairperson), H. Arijs, R. Baayen, G. Cardon (DG SANCO E1)

Stakeholders represented:

CELCAA, COCERAL, COPA-COGECA, ECCA, ECPA, ESA, FRESHFEL (members of the Advisory Group); AIPH, CEI-Bois, CEPF, CLECAT, ELO, EUROPATAT, EUSTAFOR, GLOBALGAP, IRU, UNION FLEURS (other stakeholders)

Other participants: M. Christodoulou, J. Nganga (Food Chain Evaluation Consortium – FCEC)

The Commission explained that the current Community plant health regime (CPHR) aims at sustainable agriculture, food security and reduction of pesticide use, impacts substantially on citizens and altogether is attracting political attention. It has contracted out an evaluation of the CPHR for a period of 12 months, starting in June 2009. Both stakeholders and Member States were invited to actively participate in the evaluation of the regime, which in due course will result in a Community Plant Health Strategy and finally an Action Plan for amending the legislation. Active participation of the stakeholders is critical for the quality of the evaluation report and recommendations.

The FCEC explained its background in evaluation studies, including the Animal Health evaluation, the Seed and Propagating Materials evaluation, the Plant Health Regime Financial Aspects evaluation, and impact assessment studies such as for *Diabrotica virgifera*. The FCEC presented its global approach to the evaluation, involving questionnaires and interviews with stakeholders' organisations, Member States, international organisations and third countries. It clarified that a wide range of stakeholders' organisations will be consulted so as to obtain a complete overview.

The Commission clarified that the Steering Group for the CPHR evaluation is composed of the relevant Commission Services and five Member State experts. Its role is to assist the Commission in ensuring the quality of the evaluation process. The list of Steering Group members is provided in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation which is available on http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/strategy/index_en.htm. Past and ongoing plant health evaluation and impact assessment studies contracted out by the Commission (for example the Plant Health Regime Financial Aspects evaluation and the *Diabrotica virgifera* impact assessment) will be taken into account in this comprehensive evaluation. The Inception Report and other relevant reports, once approved internally, would be put on the Commission website.

The members of the Advisory Group welcomed the evaluation and appreciated the ToR as a very useful and complete starting point for the evaluation. They appreciated the quality of the ToR and the transparent process. They would actively participate and, if desired, would involve their member organisations at national level. Some of them had begun internal discussions so as to be able to effectively contribute to the CPHR evaluation. In this context, they would need time to be able to organise internal discussions.

The Advisory Group members believed that a balance would need to be struck between backward-looking and forward-looking issues, the more because major changes had taken place in the past 15 years; for instance the position of agriculture had changed substantially and historic objectives and impacts were in part outdated. On the other hand, lessons learnt from the past such as those concerning pine wood nematode should also be included.

Some stakeholders' organisations believed that export and re-export issues should have been included in the ToR. The Commission considered that export was essentially out of the remit of this evaluation exercise; however, the evaluation questions included general IPPC issues as well as re-export. FCEC explained that it will study the plant health systems of several third countries for reasons of comparison.

Reimbursement of costs for growers for implementation of measures to eradicate regulated harmful organisms, additional to reimbursement of costs made by Member State authorities, was seen as an important element for the future.

The Commission notified the participants of its intention to organise a meeting with the stakeholders' organisations for a more in-depth discussion while the evaluation was ongoing, which they fully supported. The Advisory Group believed that such meeting should also involve the Member States.

Timetable

- Start of evaluation: June 2009
- Stakeholder consultation through questionnaires and interviews: from September 2009
- Final report of evaluation: delivered by May 2010, made public by autumn 2010
- Development of Community plant health strategy: 2010-2011
- Development of Action Plan: 2012
- Start of changing the legislation: 2013