



## Plant Health: Member States endorse reinforced measures at EU level to prevent the spread of *Xylella Fastidiosa*

Brussels, 28 April 2015

EU Member States experts in the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF) today endorsed reinforced measures, proposed by the Commission, to prevent further introduction and spread within the EU of *Xylella Fastidiosa*. The bacterium is a quarantine organism harmful to olive trees and potentially dangerous for a broad range of other plants important for the EU agriculture, such as grapevine and citrus.

The new EU measures require Member States to notify new outbreaks in the EU, to carry out official surveys, and to promptly demarcate infested areas. Strict eradication measures in such areas are put in place, which include removal and destruction of infested plants, and all host plants within a radius of 100m, irrespective of their health status. The measures also provide the possibility for Italy to apply containment measures in the whole province of Lecce, where eradication is no longer possible. In this case, it is maintained the requirement to remove systematically all infected plants and to test the surrounding plants (within 100m) in a 20km zone adjacent to the provinces of Brindisi and Taranto.

Imports and movement within the EU of specified plants known to be susceptible to *Xylella Fastidiosa* worldwide will be subject to strict conditions. A specific ban is put in place on the import of coffee plants originating in Honduras and Costa Rica, considering the high risk of being infected by the bacterium.

The occurrence of *Xylella Fastidiosa* in the EU was notified for the first time by the Italian authorities on 21 October 2013. The area affected by this organism is the entire province of Lecce in the south of Italy, with a new outbreak recently confirmed in the neighbouring province of Brindisi. EU emergency measures were first taken in February 2014 and further detailed in July 2014.

The lack of effective treatments to cure the plants once they get infected, the broad range of plants species known to be susceptible, as well as the high probability of spread and establishment further in the EU, make this bacterium a very serious threat to the EU agricultural sector.

On the basis of the scientific opinion of the European Food Safety Authority, published in January 2015, and the findings of the audits carried out by the Commission's Food and Veterinary Office in 2014, the Commission has presented a set of reinforced measures aiming to preserve the healthy plants located in the affected area, as well as to prevent further spread of the bacterium in the rest of the Union. Strict measures are also taken on import from third countries.

### For more information on plant health and biosecurity:

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant\\_health\\_biosafety/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosafety/index_en.htm)

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#### Press contacts

[Enrico BRIVIO](#) (+32 2 295 61 72)

[Aikaterini APOSTOLA](#) (+32 2 298 76 24)

#### General public inquiries:

[Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](tel:0080067891011) or by [email](#)