



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	International Year of Plant Health in 2020 – Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find attached an information note prepared by the Presidency on the above mentioned subject to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 16 June 2015.

Introductory note from the Presidency to the Council on an initiative to declare an International Year of Plant Health in 2020

Justification:

At the ninth session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-9) a member proposed that the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) could examine the possibility of declaring an International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). The Financial Committee and the CPM Bureau discussed the issue and felt that in principle the declaration of an International Year of Plant Health within the General Assembly of the United Nations system could present considerable opportunities for plant health in general and the IPPC specifically, and recommended that the Secretariat should carry out a study on the matter, to be presented to the CPM.

The Secretariat conducted such a study, which concluded that an IYPH would be possible at the earliest in the year 2020. The IYPH would have a substantial impact on public and political awareness of plant health.

The final decision on this issue will be made by the UN.

The Latvian Presidency had prepared a discussion paper on an IYPH and Finland presented the proposal, stressing that to become operational it should receive the approval of the FAO and the UN.

During the meeting of the Working Party of Chief Plant Health Officers on 3 March 2015, delegations generally welcomed the proposal, supported the paper prepared by the Presidency and expressed their willingness to mobilise support for the initiative in their respective administrations.

The tenth session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-10) decided to pursue an IYPH and nominated Finland to propose to the FAO Conference that an IYPH be held in 2020.

Benefits of the IYPH for the European Union

The growing threat of new plant pests emerging, spreading or becoming more damaging as a consequence of climate change and increased movement of goods and people poses high risks to plant health and is a cause for concern due to the negative environmental and social impacts and the associated costs.

International recognition of the importance of plant health issues is essential for the plant health policies of the EU and its Member States, aimed at facilitating early detection and notification of pests and minimising pest outbreaks.

The benefits for the EU in actively supporting the IYPH could lie primarily in an increased public, and consequently political awareness of plant health issues. Internationally, the EU and its Member States would gain a good reputation and a high degree of support, which may be beneficial in relation to other EU priority areas.

The IYPH would give the EU, its Member States and their national plant protection organisations an opportunity to effectively promote to a wide audience the aims and objectives of plant health policies and their considerable contribution to the protection of agricultural production and the environment.

The Presidency considers important that Member States support this initiative.
