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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Conclusions from the Ministerial Conference on *Xylella fastidiosa* (Paris, 1 December 2017)
- Information from the French delegation and the Commission

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the French delegation and the Commission on the above mentioned subject to be raised under "Any other business" at the session of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 29 January 2018.

Conclusions from the Ministerial Conference on *Xylella fastidiosa* (Paris, 1 December 2017)

Xylella fastidiosa (Xf) poses a serious global threat to plants and is a priority for the EU. Strict emergency measures are already in place and regularly updated. The situation varies greatly between the territories affected (Italy, France, Germany and Spain). Eradication remains the primary objective, but when it is no longer feasible, an active containment strategy must be implemented to protect the rest of the territory. The threat is real for many crops, in particular for olive trees, almond trees and vineyards, and our landscapes. High-level mobilisation, commensurate with the stakes involved, is vital.

The European Commission and France invited ministers of the Member States most concerned, owing to the soil and climate conditions in their territory or the existence of an outbreak, to the high-level meeting held in Paris on 1 December 2017, which was preceded the day before by a preparation meeting with COPHS.

The delegations of Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Greece, and the European Commission expressed their collective commitment to tackling *Xylella* by adopting an ambitious road map to strengthen controls for this disease. The key points of the agreement relate to three strands:

- improving knowledge through support for applied research programmes;
- strengthening surveillance measures to ensure early detection and rapid eradication of any new outbreaks;
- strengthening awareness-raising and information measures.

The success of this road map depends on the allocation of sufficient human and budgetary resources, by each delegation, at all levels.

The conclusions of this meeting, approved by all delegations in attendance and the European Commission, are set out in the Annex.



**Conclusions from the Ministerial Conference on *Xylella fastidiosa*
Paris, 1st December, 2017**

In the context of the current *Xylella fastidiosa* situation, the delegations of Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Greece, together with the Commission agreed on the following:

1. *Xylella fastidiosa* (Xf) is one of the most dangerous plant bacteria known worldwide. Its quarantine status and the precautionary approach for preventing its further introduction and spread within the Union is crucial.
2. The EU has introduced strict emergency measures, regularly updated as scientific and technical information becomes available, with the aim to prevent further introduction and spread into the rest of the Union territory, and thus avoiding serious agricultural, environmental and social consequences.
3. The knowledge acquired on Xf since its first detection in 2013 in Europe indicates the presence of different isolates of Xf in the infected areas concerned, with specific symptoms and different host plants affected, resulting in a contrasted situation amongst the different infected areas. It is therefore recommended that the Pest Risk Assessment on Xf published by EFSA in January 2015 be updated in line with the recent scientific developments that will allow to adapt the current phytosanitary measures to the latest scientific developments.

4. Intensive monitoring of the EU territory is crucial for early detection and timely actions. The EU survey guidelines should be updated based on an EFSA scientific assessment in order to improve the robustness of the monitoring campaign. The future EU Reference Diagnostic Laboratory will assist the National Laboratories in strengthening diagnostic capacity on the basis of the EPPO diagnostic standard. Ministers commit to enhance cooperation in order to face temporary increase in the number of samples to be tested.
5. Development of tools to carry out efficient surveys and recording should be upgraded and coordinated at EU level. In certain cases, also remote sensing methods could be considered in order to cover a large territory and facilitate targeted inspections and sampling on the ground.
6. Intensive cooperation at EU level is needed in order to share best practices and supporting tools (such as good practice code) as regard prevention, detection and control of Xf, taking into account the economic, ecological and social consequences of different outbreaks scenarios and different strategies. For this objective, a Working Group should be established by the European Commission with the involvement of Member States and EFSA. This working group should provide technical support in the control of Xf and contribute to specify the measures for implementing EU regulation.
7. Current emergency measures provide strict import requirements for more than 300 plant species. New regulations for plant health and official controls will build a strong system for defining phytosanitary requirements at import. The status of Xf communicated by third countries to Commission shall be regularly monitored both at EU level, with EFSA and Member States support, as well as at international level, with EPPO and IPPC support.

8. Specified plants which have spent part of their life in a demarcated area should remain subject to strict and risk-based requirements for movement out of that area. The recently introduced requirements for internal movement of the most susceptible plant species, when grown in the rest of the Union territory, should allow quicker detection and prevention of Xf spreading in the rest of the Union; temporary ban on movement of plant species and on planting if necessary may be considered as an option in case of positive findings in trade. The list of the most susceptible plant species shall be updated if needed. Equally, strict conditions should remain applied to import.
9. Eradication of outbreaks in a short timeframe remains the first objective of the EU plant health policy. The situation of Xf in the EU demonstrates the need to introduce the appropriate administrative procedures for dealing more rapidly and in line with the latest scientific developments with major outbreaks.
10. Where following a scientific and technical assessment, it is concluded that the bacterium is established in the infected area and eradication is no longer feasible, an active containment approach should be implemented, aiming at protecting the rest of the EU territory. Containment areas are submitted to a specific approach against the Xf strain which is present there for avoiding any spread outside the area, taking into consideration the consequences on ecosystems, society and local economy. Overall, containment areas maintain the same protection as the rest of the EU territory against other Xf strains; those areas face specific risks towards recombination.
11. Setting up contingency plans, simulation exercises and training programmes should ensure better crisis preparedness across Member States and EU neighbouring countries as appropriate.

12. In order to reduce the losses as consequence of late eradication measures and to increase the acceptance of the measures, involvement of stakeholders is essential. Awareness raising campaigns need to be further strengthened and discussed as part of the newly established Commission Working Group, with EFSA, EPPO and stakeholders involvement. Stakeholders should be also encouraged to take an active part in raising awareness on the risks posed by Xf and to adopt pest risk management plans, as foreseen by the new plant health law.
13. Communication at international level about the actions taken by the EU, Member States and operators in fighting Xf is of relevant importance, together with the plant health status of planting material. In this respect, the European Commission, based on Member States inputs, should make the results of the survey activities and other relevant measures taken by Member States publicly available.
14. The Commission's efforts to invest 10 million € on dedicated research projects will hopefully bring new ways to tackle the disease in the midterm. This could be completed by ad-hoc applied targeted and quick research carried out under the umbrella of Euphresco and other organisations, especially related to diagnostic methods.
15. In order to provide the basis for a sound response to the threat caused by Xf, adequate financial and human resources should be allocated at all levels, as well as prevention activities funded under the Common Agricultural Policy. It is acknowledged the support that Regulation 652/2014 could provide on strengthening survey programmes as well as emergency measures which include the costs of compensating the owners concerned.
