



19.12.2018

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 0462/2018 by Marco Bava (Italian) on the possibility of using alternative techniques to treat olive trees affected by Xylella

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner expresses concern over the invasiveness and dangers deriving from the enforced new remedies to treat *Xylella fastidiosa*, a disease affecting olive trees in the Puglia region. The petitioner condemns the situation that would arise in Italy following a decree requiring farmers to use insecticides that are not permitted in organic farming. These insecticides are extremely harmful to bees and could lead to olive oil losing its organic certification. The petitioner therefore proposes alternative techniques to safeguard organic farming.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 5 October 2018. Information requested from Commission under Rule 216(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 19 December 2018

‘The Commission would like to refer the Committee on Petitions to its reply concerning petition 1061/2017.

In addition, the Commission would like to stress that methods aimed to reduce the bacterial inoculum (such as the ones mentioned in the petition) may already be used in the very south of the Apulian infected zone, where the felling of infected trees is not required as the bacterium is considered to be established. However, in the buffer zone and in the last 20 km of the infected zone, plants removal [as required by Decision (EU) 2015/789¹] is considered

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal->

by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) plant health panel to be the safest option to stop a further spread of the bacterium.

As far as insect control treatments are concerned, current EU provisions require the Member States concerned to carry out appropriate phytosanitary treatments against the insect vectors prior to the removal of the plants and to use appropriate agricultural practices for the management of *Xylella fastidiosa* and its vectors in different parts of the demarcated areas. Such provisions provide sufficient flexibility to the Member State to consider the most effective tool against the insect vectors, be it mechanical, biological or chemical, in line with the principles of Integrated Pest Management. Furthermore, the Commission is aware that for organic farms, the Italian authorities have foreseen specific active substances, amongst which the extracts of essential oils of oranges.

Conclusion

As indicated in its observations on petition 1061/2017, the Commission is actively involved in the promotion and development of research on *Xylella fastidiosa* together with several partners within the EU and relevant non-EU countries. As soon as new scientific evidence is made available, it will be immediately assessed by EFSA and, if need be, considered in the framework of the EU control strategy against *Xylella fastidiosa*.’