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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B8-0117/2015

pursuant to Rule 128(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the Xylella emergency
(2015/2652(RSP))

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on behalf of the EFDD Group

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**European Parliament resolution on the *Xylella* emergency
(2015/2652(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Implementing Decision of 2015 as regards measures to prevent the introduction into and the spread within the Union of *Xylella fastidiosa*,
 - having regard to Council Directive 2002/89/EC amending Directive 2000/29/EC on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community¹,
 - having regard to Council Directive 2000/29/EC on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community²,
 - having regard to the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) diagnostic protocols for regulated pests,
 - having regard to the Guidelines against the spread within the Community of *Xylella fastidiosa*, subspecies *pauca*, olive rapid decline complex strain, published in 2014,
 - having regard to Commissioner Silletti's Plan on the *Xylella* emergency, published on 16 March 2015,
 - having regard to Executive Decision No 10 of the Apulia Region on the measures to be applied in order to eradicate the bacterium *X. fastidiosa*, including the massive use of pesticides on a large scale and listing a number of pesticides to be used,
 - having regard to Directive 2009/128/EC establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides³,
 - having regard to the question to the Commission on the *Xylella* Emergency (O-000038/2015 – B8-0117/2015),
 - having regard to Rules 128(5) and 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, according to Article 5 of the above-mentioned Implementing Decision, the planting of host plants in the infected zones shall be prohibited;
- B. whereas, as stated in Article 6 of the above-mentioned implementing decision, in the demarcated area, including the infected area and the buffer zone, 'within a radius of 100 m around the plants which have been tested and found to be infected by the specified

¹ OJ L 355, 30.12.2002, p. 45.

² OJ L 169, 10.7.2000, p. 1.

³ OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71.

organism', the Member State concerned is required to 'immediately remove:

- (a) host plants, regardless of their health status;
 - (b) plants known to be infected by the specified organism;
 - (c) plants showing symptoms indicating possible infection by that organism or suspected to be infected by that organism';
- C. whereas in many parts of the implementing decision there are references to compulsory phytosanitary treatments, also prior to the removal of plants;
- D. whereas, in a recent scientific opinion on the risk assessment of *X. fastidiosa*, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) showed that there are several elements that make eradication impractical; whereas EFSA stated, in particular, that 'there are no indications that the option of eradication will be successful once the disease is established in an area' and 'so priority should be given to the prevention of the introduction', while for containment strategies, which 'are no longer possible when the disease is widespread', effectiveness 'varies from negligible to moderate';
- E. whereas, in a recent scientific opinion on the risk assessment of *X. fastidiosa*, EFSA¹ showed that 'the intensive use of insecticide treatment to limit the disease transmission and control the insect vector may have direct and indirect consequences for the environment by modifying whole food webs with cascading consequences, and hence affecting various trophic levels. For example, the indirect impact of pesticides on pollination is currently a matter of serious concern (EFSA, 2013). In addition, large-scale insecticide treatments also represent risks for human and animal health';
- F. whereas the EU model of agriculture is increasingly based on unhealthy agricultural systems which are not resilient, with very limited attention to biodiversity and crop rotation in the case of non-perma-crop monocultures, a lack of beneficial organisms, and biodiversity declining in general, thus making it relatively easy for exotic plants and animals to establish themselves;
- G. whereas resistance to pesticides used as insecticides is accelerated by the excessive and uncontrolled use of these products, thereby jeopardising any phytosanitary successes achieved;
- H. whereas inappropriate and irrational use of pesticides provides favourable conditions for resistant bacteria to emerge, spread and persist due to antimicrobial properties, and leaves agro-ecosystems susceptible to the next wave of invasive pest attack;
- I. whereas insecticide resistance is a phenomenon which clearly has cross-border implications, which would most probably not be manageable with the current resources and scientific knowledge, cannot be excluded and can have unpredictable medical, social and economic setbacks;
- J. whereas the use of pesticides, even in small quantities, threatens the 'biologic label' owned by a number of Italian and European olive oil producers;

¹ EFSA Journal 2015;13(1):3989

- K. whereas strong concerns on eradication of the trees and large-scale use of pesticides have been expressed by a number of Italian and European environmental organisations and trade associations;
- L. whereas ISPM No 9 of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), quoted in the above-mentioned implementing decision, states that ‘one of the first actions to be taken is the preparation of a list of the most feasible eradication techniques. The total cost and the cost-benefit ratio for each strategy should be estimated over the short and long term. The option to take no action, or to take a pest management approach, should be considered as well as eradication options. All feasible options should be described or discussed with decision-makers. Anticipated advantages and disadvantages, including cost-benefit should be outlined to the extent possible. One or more options should be recommended, recognising that the ultimate decision requires consideration of the technical options, cost-benefit, the availability of resources, and political and socio-economic factors’;
- M. whereas, according to Krugner et al., ‘Evaluation of pathogenity and insect transmission of *X. fastidiosa* strains to olive plants’ (California Olive Committee), RAPD analysis showed that the *X. fastidiosa* population infecting olive trees belonged to the A genotype group, which is known to cause leaf scorch disease in almond but does not cause Pierce’s disease in grapevine;
- N. whereas the agri-food sector in Puglia is one of the most important industries of the region; whereas the trade unions estimate that 8 000 workers in the olive culture sector risk losing their jobs;
- O. whereas it is of paramount importance to find solutions that safeguard the competitiveness and the excellence of the olive sector in Puglia, and to support the employment levels and the income of the workers affected;
- P. whereas there is an ongoing police inquiry into management of the *Xylella* emergency, for which documents and PCs from the CNR (National Research Council) and the University ‘Aldo Moro’ have been confiscated; whereas the Regional Administrative Court of Lazio accepted the complaint filed by a cooperative company against the implementation of regional measures against the *Xylella* emergency;
1. Expresses concerns about the current wide-scale eradication programme adopted by the Commission owing to risks of desertification and destruction of agricultural heritage, without clear scientific evidence of its effectiveness in preventing the spread of the pathogen; calls on the Commission to consider alternative solutions that will also safeguard the agri-food sector and the environment in the region;
 2. Calls on the Commission to conduct a cost-benefit analysis for the eradication strategy to be estimated over the short and long term;
 3. Calls on the Commission to revise the above-mentioned implementing decision, in particular regarding Article 6 on the radius of 100 m around the infected plants where priority should be given to surveillance and isolation rather than eradication, and also to revise Article 5 in order to allow the planting of potential host plants that must be tested

to ensure they are free of the pathogen and monitored – this should be complemented with appropriate agricultural practices (e.g. weeding, pruning and correct terrain management in full respect of its biological balance) and adequate and sustainable phytosanitary treatments;

4. Calls on the Commission to consider different measures to be implemented depending on the scope of the spread of the bacterium, the plants affected and the bacterial strain;
5. Calls on the Commission to limit the large-scale use of pesticides and implement Directive 2009/128/EC establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides;
6. Calls on the Commission to also include in the implementing decision scientific publications and analyses showing that the strain of *X. fastidiosa* in question does not cause Pierce's disease in grapevine, and thus exclude *Vitis* from the list of plants known to be susceptible to the European and non-European isolates of *X. fastidiosa* (Annex 1);
7. Calls on the Commission to ensure that sufficient financial and human resources are made available to implement the relevant strategies, including financial support for farmers to apply appropriate agricultural practices for the fight against *X. fastidiosa* and its vectors, as well as ensuring adequate compensation for loss of trees, livelihood and income in the case of eradication of olive trees and other potential hosts;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Italian Government to support the income and employment levels of the small and medium-sized enterprises affected by the *Xylella* disease;
9. Calls on the Commission to provide, for example under the Horizon 2020 programme, adequate funding for research, analysis and remedies on *X. fastidiosa* and its vectors;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.