

Protective measures against pests of plants

2013/0141(COD) - 27/02/2014 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development adopted the report by Hynek FAJMON (ECR, CZ) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on protective measures against pests of plants

The committee recommended that Parliament's position in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Purpose and scope: Members stressed the great importance of prevention and protection measures and early detection of the presence of pests for timely and effective eradication.

This Regulation laid down: (i) rules regarding phytosanitary inspections and other official measures by the Member State authorities for the purpose of identifying the phytosanitary risks posed by any species injurious to plants or plant products, including invasive alien plant species which are injurious to plants and (ii) phytosanitary measures necessary to prevent the entry of pests from other Member States or third countries.

List of organisms: Members considered that the list of Union quarantine pests **should be contained in the basic act**. Since it was essential to the new regulation, they proposed that the list be annexed to the regulation. The Commission proposal stated that the number of priority pests should not exceed 10% of the number of the Union quarantine pests. Members considered that there should not be an arbitrary limit on the number of pests that might be designated as priority pests.

The report also recommended that **operators should be compensated for carrying out enhanced biosecurity measures** essential for early action related to priority pests.

Notification of quarantine to competent authorities: the amended text stipulated that if anyone became aware of the presence of a Union quarantine pest or had reason to suspect such a presence, that person should notify the competent authority **immediately** and confirm notification, in writing, within ten calendar days.

Information on plant pests to the public: information should be made available to the public on the potential economic, environmental and social impacts of plant pests, on the key principles of prevention and spread, as well as on the responsibility of society as a whole to ensure phytosanitary health in the Union territory.

The Commission should establish and keep up to date **a publicly available list of emerging plant pests in third countries** that may pose a risk to plant health in the Union territory.

Notification of imminent danger: in case of an imminent danger, Member States and professional operators should take **all necessary measures**, as appropriate to the risk involved, to prevent the entry of such pests in the Union territory.

Criteria for to the entry into the Union of plants: Members introduced an amendment setting out a **new preventive and comprehensive strategy for import controls**, and provided for a transition period to take account of the time needed to put this strategy in place.

The report recommended that the Commission should, by means of implementing acts, draw up the **list of third countries** from which entry of certain species and categories of plants, plant products and other objects into the Union should be permitted.

The amendment set out a method for reassessing the phytosanitary risk arising from all type of plants imported, with reference to the third country of origin, and provided for the drawing up of a '**positive**' **list setting out the plants** whose import may be permitted. It set out arrangements for updating and amending the list, as part of a pragmatic approach to dealing with imports into the EU of plant products from third countries.

Requirements for phytosanitary transit: the committee proposed changes to ensure full and effective control and prevent the entry of prohibited goods. For example, **an officially approved phytosanitary seal** could be used, that served to guarantee the original packaging and means of transport (sealed lorry) and prevented the shipment being split up, hence providing official assurance of risk-free phytosanitary transit through the Union.

In the same way, the competent authority of the Member State where those plants, plant products or other objects were introduced into, or for the first time moved within, the Union territory should **inform the competent authorities** of all other Member States through which those plants were to be moved prior to being moved out of the Union territory.

Professional operators: Members proposed to broaden the scope to ensure that all “**distance sellers**” were included.

Plant passport: the Commission shall, not later than 5 years after entry into force of the regulation, submit a report to present the experience gained from the extension of the plant passport system to all movement of plants, plant products and other objects within the Union territory with a clear analysis of costs and benefits for the operators.

No plant passport should be required for the movement of small, as appropriate to the plants, plant products and other objects concerned, quantities of plants, plant products or other objects to a final user, including **home gardeners**.

Delegated acts: in order to take into account the technical progress, scientific developments and changed circumstances in plant health, the power to adopt acts should be delegated to the Commission in respect of rules amending or supplementing the lists of Union quarantine pests, priority pests as well as of Union quality pests and the plants for planting concerned.

In case of a serious phytosanitary risk, the power to adopt acts in accordance with the urgency procedure should be delegated to the Commission in order to list Union quarantine pests as priority pests.

Raising awareness: lastly, Members stressed that it was essential to raise awareness of plant pests among green space workers, local authority officials, garden centres, nurseries, importers, landscape gardeners, arboriculturalists, teachers, researchers, business operators, staff of official agencies, elected representatives and ordinary citizens.