

Control of *Pseudomonas solanacearum* (Smith)

Smith

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The committee adopted the report by Mrs Encarnacion REDONDO JIMENEZ (PPE, E) on combatting *Pseudomonas solanacearum* (Smith). This is a pathogen which attacks potatoes and tomatoes, causing brown rot in potatoes and bacterial wilt in tomatoes. Until the 1990s, it was believed that this pathogen was to be found in tropical, sub-tropical and temperate regions. However, following the discovery of a number of outbreaks in certain countries of the European Union (Netherlands, United Kingdom, Belgium), the European Commission presented a proposal for a directive on the matter this year. On 9 September last year it adopted a decision defining a provisional system of tests to diagnose, detect and identify this pathogen in potatoes. The method of diagnosis is provisional because there are aspects of the epidemiology and biology of the pathogen which are still little known. Hence the need for continuing research. The general principle is to locate the disease and prevent it from spreading on the internal market. Provision is therefore made for systematic inspections and precautionary measures which can be taken at Community level (without becoming arbitrary measures which obstruct free competition). Responsibility is incumbent upon the Member State which detects the disease. The rapporteur considers that the directive proposed by the European Commission responds to this need and can therefore be approved subject to certain amendments: - certain amendments make provision for tomatoes to be treated differently from potatoes in that contaminated tomatoes do not transmit the bacterium; - the plant health standing committee should be informed of cases of contamination in the various Member States; - precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the disease should be extended both to plant material and to movements of seed potato lots; - as far as additional, more stringent measures are concerned, the Member States may adopt such measures without being required to explain them as demanded by the European Commission; - the legislative text should emphasize the need for maximum cooperation between Member States when an outbreak is suspected.