

## Xylella fastidiosa in the framework of the EU plant quarantine law

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# *Xylella fastidiosa* in the framework of the EU plant quarantine law

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*Xylella fastidiosa* is regulated in the EU as quarantine organism under Council Directive 2000/29/EC (“plant health directive”) on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community. As such, the introduction of this organism into, and spread within all Member States, shall be banned. The plant health directive provides Member States with the legal obligations to take, once the organism is known to be present and irrespective of the symptoms, all necessary measures to eradicate it, or if that is impossible, inhibit its further spread.

Following the first outbreak of *Xylella fastidiosa*, subspecies *pauca*, notified by the Italian Authorities in the region of Puglia, in October 2013, preliminary EU emergency measures were taken in February 2014, detailed in July 2014 and further strengthened in May 2015 with the aim to prevent the further spread of the bacterium within the EU. Current emergency measures have been updated in November 2015 and April 2016 to ensure that they are well targeted and based on latest scientific evidences. Most particularly, the latest revision enlarged the demarcated area in Puglia taking into account latest spread of the bacterium outside the province of Lecce and the pest free area declared by the Italian Authorities.

Four audits were carried so far by the Commission’s Food and Veterinary Office in Puglia, confirming the limited implementation of the eradication/containment measures (e.g. removal of infected plants) and the further spreading of the bacterium out of the province of Lecce. No movement of specified plants is so far authorised to be moved within and out of the demarcated areas established in Puglia.

In July 2015, French Authorities notified the first outbreak of *Xylella fastidiosa*, subspecies *multiplex*, in Corsica. Numerous outbreaks have been reported since then in the area, including some outbreaks reported in the PACA region (France mainland). *Polygala myrtifolia* is the main host plant, although other numerous host plants have been also confirmed to be infected (e.g. *Prunus cerasifera*, *Quercus suber*). No positive cases have been reported so far on *Olea europaea*. Trace-back activities are ongoing to confirm the source of infection. EU emergency measures are being taken. A Commission’s audit was carried out in February 2016 and the official report will be published soon.

Lastly, EU co-financed survey activities were carried out across Member States during the 2015 growing season and no further findings were reported. EU guidelines have been made also available with the aim to harmonise survey activities across Member States.