



Food and Agriculture
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Report

Regional Workshop of International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)/ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

05.09 - 09.09 2016

Minsk, Belarus

Regional workshop (RW) took place on 5 – 9 September Minsk, Belarus. Workshop was organized by the Regional and Sub Regional Office FAO for Europe and Central Asia and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), in collaboration with the Main State Inspectorate for Seed Breeding Quarantine and Plant Protection State Plant Quarantine Inspectorate of the Republic Belarus and European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO). EPPO provided the Russian translation of the draft ISPMs. The All-Russian Plant Quarantine Center provided the Russian translation of all other workshop materials. 32 participants from 17 national plant protection organizations (NPPOs), as well as representatives of EPPO, Bureau of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), Standards Committee (SC), Steering Committee of the International Year of Plant Health and Eurasian Economical Union participated in the workshop. List of participants is available in Annex 1.

1. Organizational issues

1.1. Official opening

V.V. Grakun, the Vice-minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus opened the workshop with a welcoming speech and stressed the importance of the workshop for the countries of the region for the development of their phytosanitary services and for the exchange of information and knowledge on the regional level.

Participants were welcomed by Avetik Nersesyan, an agricultural officer of FAO REU, Martin Ward, the Director General of EPPO, Ketevan Lomsadze, an agricultural officer of the IPPC. Participants highly appreciated a video-welcoming message of the Secretary of IPPC, with emphasis on the plant health and importance of food security.

1.2. Organizational issues

Ringolds Arnitis, a resource person from EPPO/Latvia was elected as the chairperson and Svetlana Lungu, National Agency of the Food Safety of Moldova as the reporter of the RW. Leonid Pleshko, Deputy Head of the Main State Inspectorate for Seed Breeding Quarantine and Plant Protection State Plant Quarantine Inspectorate of Republic of Belarus informed the workshop participants on organizational issues.

2. Discussions

2.1 General information

K. Lomsadze gave a short overview of the RW objectives. It was noted that the objective of the workshop is to increase participants' capacity to analyze draft ISPM and formulate constructive comments using the examples of draft ISPMs for the first consultation in 2016, as well as to raise awareness on the IPPC related activities, and to exchange experiences at the regional level.

Corné Van Alphen, the CPM Bureau representative for Europe informed participants on the outcomes of the CPM 11 and different IPPC activities and projects.

M. Ward gave a brief overview of the EPPO activities and structure, seminars and standards. He also briefed the participants on pests, added by the EPPO Council in PM1 EPPO pest lists in 2015 and with some pests that will be considered by the Council in 2016.

A.Nersesyan briefed the workshop on the mandate of FAO and the work carried out in the region, regional and national projects for improving phytosanitary services of contracting countries of the region, as well as on implementation and support for establishing integrated plant protection systems.

A short introduction on the updated International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP) of the IPPC was presented by K. Lomsadze. It was highlighted that all information on IPP is public, except for the information in the work area of the site. During the discussion, the participants expressed the view that it would be useful to have a PQR EPPO link available on IPP. M. Ward noted that countries are invited to provide information to update PQR. The participants raised a concern on the need for translation of IPP into Russian. K. Lomsadze noted that the translation of the site is planned, although the Secretariat does not have sufficient resources and invited FAO REU and all countries to cooperate in delivering of this work.

Participants appealed to IPPC to consider the possibility of translating the site into Russian.

2.2 Draft ISPM

Online Commenting System (OCS) and the revised standards setting procedure were presented by K. Lomsadze. M. Ward has expressed a positive opinion on OCS and webinars meant to help countries to familiarize with OCS, but noted that there are problems in terms of sharing comments.

Nico Horn, SC member for Europe, informed the participants about the draft ISPM under the first consultation in 2016. He also led the discussion of draft standards with the use of OCS. Technical and substantive comments made by countries though the OCS prior to the RW, as well as comments that arose during the discussion were discussed. The following draft ISPMs were considered:

- Draft revision of ISPM 6: National surveillance system (2009-004).
 - 2016 Draft amendments to ISPM 5: Glossary of phytosanitary terms (1994-001).
 - Requirements for the use of temperature treatments as phytosanitary measures (2014-005).
- Comments on which consensus was reached during the discussion were entered in the OCS and sent to the participants.

Countries were invited to enter their comments on draft ISPMs, or enter the general comment in the OCS that they are in agreement with the comments discussed and agreed during the RW.

2.3 IPPC related issues

Information on the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS), the IRSS helpdesk and studies, the Phytosanitary Resources page and IPPC technical resources was delivered by K. Lomsadze. Practical exercise on the use of the Q&A tool of the IRSS helpdesk was completed by the participants. The question on the IPPC Secretariat role in solving phytosanitary disputes was sent for discussion to the Q&A forum. It was noted that in order to ask a question through the Q&A forum, a user should be registered on the IPP. This resource is a forum for discussion and not a tool to get an official position of the Secretariat on various contentious issues. However, the IPPC owns Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool, which assists countries in developing their phytosanitary systems and improving phytosanitary legislation.

Representatives of Ukraine asked how to use the PCE tool to assess a country's phytosanitary capacity and receive services of phytosanitary and legal experts. K. Lomsadze explained that either evaluation takes place within the framework of FAO's projects or the country runs PCE application itself or pays for experts' consultation.

Countries have highlighted that the IPPC Secretariat should actively provide official consultations to contracting parties or give it's official opinion on controversial measures. The participants proposed to establish a regional forum for discussions and exchanging of experience among regional experts. Such a forum already exists for EPPO diagnostics experts.

K. Lomsadze provided information on the new IPPC guide - Import Verification. Challenges of import verification faced by countries were discussed. In some countries, phytosanitary legislation needs to be improved in terms of provisions to import and control useful biological agents, and vesting an NPPO as the responsible authority for the import control system. Issues of national reporting obligations were also considered. M. Ward urged countries to send pests reports to EPPO in any language, to ensure information on changing pest risks is shared rapidly around the region.

O. Lavrentjeva introduced the IPPC guide on delivering phytosanitary diagnostic services, CPM11 recommendation on importance of pest diagnostics, available tools for detection/identification of pests and the IPPC diagnostic protocols. One of the participants noted that the "recommendation" gives space for the different interpretation by individual countries, and there is a need for clearer guidance for further actions. O. Lavrentjeva highlighted that CPM recommendations have an official character. The Latvian representative noted importance of having of equally developed laboratories for establishing trust between partner countries. Ukrainian representatives stressed the importance of the reference laboratories. Participants noted availability of qualified staff, relevant equipment and financial support, as well as independence of laboratories and the possibility to train staff as the most crucial elements for the sustainability of diagnostics services.

Participants noted the importance of translation of the IPPC guides for the development of their phytosanitary services, and decided to prioritize them and to submit an official request to FAO for their translation into Russian.

FAO/IPPC questionnaire on emerging issues for plant health was presented by K. Lomsadze. Countries suggested switching to their presentations containing information on emerging issues. The European and Central Asian Committee on forest invasive species informed the participants on the results of the workshop, held back-to-back with the RW. The workshop laid the foundation for a regional network for the European and Central Asian countries, which plans to cooperate with IPPC and promote the implementation of the ISPM to protect forests from pests. The network will disseminate information on best practices, experts and knowledge available worldwide. Focal points of the network will cooperate with NPPOs.

Presentation on ePhyto was presented by Nico Horn (Chairman of the IPPC Steering Committee on ePhyto). Issues related to bilateral agreements for e-certification, notifications on incoming e-certificates and certification for consignments in transit were discussed.

Participants proposed to organize a regional workshop on ePhyto for countries of the region to discuss in detail issues related to electronic certification since the e-certification is a very topical issue for many countries.

Ralph Lopian (Chairman of the IPPC Steering Committee on IYPH) provided information on the preparatory work at the international, regional, as well as national levels in the preparation of the IYPH. He called for countries to support IYPH through their FAO representatives.

The participants proposed the following topics for inclusion in the provisional program for IYPH: International Conference: plant health and food safety (Azerbaijan), Alternative methods of plant protection and plant health (Turkey). Montenegro has proposed to inform ministers on the national level in order to provide support for the IYPH not only at the NPPO level, but also at a high official level. The importance of raising public awareness through information campaigns was stressed (Latvia). Countries should inform each other on planned activities for IYPH through OCP (Turkey).

FAO officers confirmed their readiness to participate in IYPH activities. Countries were invited to develop detailed suggestions for the IYPH for the next workshop.

The pilot program of the IPPC surveillance was introduced by K. Lomsadze. The pilot aims to help countries to implement surveillance. Based on the results of this pilot program other implementation programs will be developed. IPPC provides technical assistance to countries to organize surveillance of certain pests and countries were asked to actively take part in the pilot.

Slovenia expressed its readiness to engage in the work on Xylella fastidiosa and Bactrocera dorsalis. In 2017, Lithuania starts a surveillance project on Xylella fastidiosa (2017-2018).

3. Emerging pests

Participants presented a short overview of their NPPO and information on emerging pest.

4. Information exchange and emerging issues

Topics discussed in the groups and conclusions:

- ePhyto should be discussed in more details.
- Information on NPPOs on the IPP should be constantly updated and protected.
- The problem of fraud phytosanitary certificates is substantial.
- Possible detection of fireblight on the stone fruit crops.
- A need to develop a draft standard on organizational and operational principles of an NPPO.
- A need for providing by the IPPC arbitration services.
- A need for a regional meeting to identify common actions and priorities related to emerging pests.
- Pests of relevance in the region:
 - Fruit and grapes: PPV virus, *Erwinia amylovora*, *Flavescence dorée* and *Scaphoideus titanus*, fruit flies (*Ceratitis capitata*, *Bactrocera*), *Drosophila suzukii*, *Dryocosmos kuriphilus* and *Xylella fastidiosa*
 - Forests and plantations: *Phytophthora ramorum*, *Anoplophora glabripennis*, *Anoplophora chinensis*, *Bursaphelenchus xylopholus* and *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Russian-speaking participating countries appealed to FAO to translate the following IPPC guides developed and published on the Phytosanitary Resources page in English:

- Establishing a national plant protection organization
- Operation of a national plant protection organization
- Managing relationships with stakeholders
- Plant pest surveillance
- Manual of good practices for CPM participation
- IPPC meeting participation support materials

Translation of the new OCS is priority for Russian-speaking countries. In this regard participants appealed to the representatives of FAO to translate the OCS and relevant training materials in Russian. That would facilitate active participation of Russian-speaking countries in the development and commenting process on draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures.

Opinions were raised to conduct trainings for inspectors to strengthen technical potential in the region. Conducting national PRA trainings was recommended.

Latvia suggested including implementation challenges of the ISPM 12 as a topic for the IRSS study. The challenges to be studied and explored are traceability of origin of certified consignments and products, and fraud phytosanitary certificates. It was highlighted that evolving logistical arrangements make it impossible to identify origin of products and consignments and trace them back. In addition, ISPM 12 does not establish neither clear criteria for recognition of authenticity of original phytosanitary certificates in cases of re-export and changing a consignee, nor sets liability of exporting countries regarding traceability of certified products. Therefore the ISPM 12 needs to be reviewed in this regard.

Participants highly appreciated the RW as very useful and necessary for the development of the phytosanitary services of the participating countries, interaction and coordination of their work.

Proposals for the next workshop should be officially submitted to the IPPC / FAO by April 2017.

Annex 1

List of participants

Armenia	NIKROYAN Artur (Mr)	Head of Phytosanitary inspection of State Service for Food Safety of the Ministry of Agriculture of RA, 39, Mamikonyants str., 375051 Erevan, Armenia Tel: + 37410203856/112, nikoyanartur@gmail.com
Armenia	KHACHATRYAN Gurgun (Mr)	Deputy Head of Phytosanitary inspection, 39, Mamikonyants str., 375051 Erevan, Armenia Tel: + 37410203856/132, gurgenkhachatryan@yandex.ru
Azerbaijan	SHAMIEV Talekh (Mr)	Acting Director of the Republic Quarantine Expertise Centre, State Phytosanitary Control Service, Ministry of Agriculture, R.Aliyev 5, Az1025 Baku, Azerbaijan Tel: + 994504170120, taleshami@mail.ru
Belarus	PLIASHKO Leanid (Mr)	Deputy Director of the Main State Inspectorate for Seed Breeding, Quarantine and Plant Protection of Belarus, 8 Krasnozvezdnaya Street, 220034 Minsk, Belarus Tel: + 376291744061, rasten@tut.by
Belarus	Alexander Pavlovich (Mr)	Deputy Director of the Main State Inspectorate for Seed Breeding, Quarantine and Plant Protection of Belarus, 8 Krasnozvezdnaya Street, 220034 Minsk, Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina	PANDZIC Saša (Mr)	Senior Associate for Risk Analysis Tel: + 38766915237, sasa.pandzic@uzzb.gov.ba
Eurasian Economic Commission	KOLCHANOVA Eugenia (Ms)	Advisor to phytosanitary department Tel: + 74956692400, kolchanova@ecommission.org
Georgia	REKHVIASHVILI Bejan (Mr)	Deputy Head of Plant Quarantine Division, IPPC Contact Point, Shiraki str. 34, Tbilisi, Georgia, 0144 Tbilisi, Georgia Tel: + 9955910914887, bezhan.rekhviashvili@nfa.gov.ge ; bezhan.r@gmail.com
Georgia	SKHVITARIDZE Otar (Mr)	Deputy Head of Phytosanitary Department, Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia National Food Agency, Shiraki str. 34, Tbilisi, Georgia, 0144 Tbilisi, Georgia Tel: +995595226565, otar.skhvitaridze@nfa.gov.ge

Kazakhstan	BISEN Yermek (Mr)	Expert of Division on state inspection for plant quarantine, Committee on State Inspection in Agro industrial Complex, Kievskaya,96B, 720019 Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan Tel: + 77172555772, bisen.ye@minagri.gov.kz
Latvia	KJAGO Kristine (Ms)	Director, State Plant Protection Service, Lielvardes iela 36/38, LV -1981 Riga, Latvia Tel: +37129251606, kristine.kjago@vaad.gov.lv
Latvia	ARNITIS Ringolds (Mr)	EPPO Resource Person/Latvia ringolds.arnitis@hotmail.com
Lithuania	ZITKUVIENE Rasa (Ms)	Head of Phytosanitary Division, State Plant Service Tel: + 37052724675, rasa.zitkuviene@vatzum.lt
Moldova	LUNGU Svetlana (Ms)	National Food Safety Agency Tel: + 37369724441, svetlana.lungu@ansa.gov.md
Moldova	MARDARI Victoria (Ms)	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry Tel: + 37369954670, ica.mardari@gmail.com
Montenegro	PRLJEVIC Zorka (Ms)	Director of the Phytosanitary Administration, Ministry of agriculture and rural development, Bratstva I jedinstva bb, 81000 Podgorica, Montenegro Tel: +38267277201, zorka.prljevic@fu.gov.me
Russian Federation	IAKOVLEVA Vera (Ms)	Deputy Head of Department, Federal State Budgetary Institution “All-Russian Plant Quarantine Center” Tel: + 74952713824, yakovleva_va@mail.ru
Russian Federation	KULINICH Oleg (Mr)	Head, Forest Quarantine Department; Federal State Budgetary Institution “All-Russian Plant Quarantine Center” Tel: + 74992713824, okulinich@hotmail.ru
Russian Federation	NESTERENKOVA Anastasiia (Ms)	Researcher, Forest Quarantine Department; Federal State Budgetary Institution “All-Russian Plant Quarantine Center” Tel: + 74992713824, okulinich@mail.ru

Serbia	Sretenovic Dragan (Mr)	Senior Advisor, Plant Protection Directorate, Plant Protection Directorate, Omladinskih brigada 1, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia Tel: + 381112120464, dragan.sretenovic@minpolj.gov.rs
Slovenia	Knapic Vlasta (Ms)	Secretary, Administration for Food Safety Tel: + 38641354211, vlasta.knapic@gov.si
Tajikistan	Tavarov Nimatullo (Mr)	Head of State Service of phytosanitary inspection and plant quarantine under Ministry of of Agriculture of republic of Tajikistan Tel: + 992372289045, tojikquarantine@gmail.com
Turkey	Bayram Yunus (Ms)	yunus.bayram@tarim.gov.tr
Ukraine	Chelombitko Andrii (Mr)	Deputy Director, Department of Phytosanitary Security, Control. Chief State Phytosanitary Inspector of Ukraine Tel: + 380673736118, andriy.chelombitko@consumer.gov.ua
Ukraine	Chaikovskiy Vadym (Mr)	Head of Division of Plant Quarantine, Department of Phytosanitary Security, Control. Tel: + 380674064959, vadym.chaykovskiy@consumer.gov.ua
FAO REU	Nersisyan Avetik (Mr)	Agricultural Officer Tel: + 36305718677, Avetik.Nersisyan@fao.org
FAO REU	Shamilov Artur (Mr)	International Plant Production and Protection Consultant Tel: + 36618141243, Artur.Shamilov@fao.org
FAO REU	Keresztes Zsuzsanna (Ms)	Plant Production and Protection Junior Technical Officer Zsuzsanna.Keresztes@fao.org
FAO/IPPC	Lomsadze Ketevan (Ms)	Agricultural Officer Ketevan.Lomsadze@fao.org
FAO SEC	Muminjanov Hafiz (Mr)	Plant Production and Protection Technical Officer Hafiz.Muminjanov@fao.org

EPPO	VAN Alphen Corné (Mr)	Coordinating Policy Officer Phytosanitary Affairs, Plant Supply Chain and Food Quality Department, Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2500 EK - The Hague, The Netherlands CPM Bureau member for Europe Tel: + 31618 596867, c.a.m.vanalphen@minez.nl
EPPO	Szabo Lajos	Food Chain Control Department, Ministry of Agriculture, P.O.Box 1, 1860 Budapest, Hungary Tel: +36-17953792 - lajos.szabo@fm.gov.hu
EPPO	Ward Martin	OEPP/EPPO, 21 boulevard Richard Lenoir, 75011 Paris, France Tel: +33-145207794 - mw@eppo.int
EPPO	Horn Nico	National Plant Protection Organization, Geertjesweg 15 Postbus 9102, 6700 HC Wageningen, Netherlands IPPC SC member for Europe Tel: +31-651998151 - n.m.horn@nvw.a.nl
EPPO	Lavrentjeva Olga (Ms)	Ministry of Rural Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, Plant Health Department, Lai 39/41, Tallinn 15056, Estonia Tel: +3726256535, olga.lavrentjeva@gmail.com
EPPO	Lopian Ralf	Senior Adviser, International Affairs, Department of Food and Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Mariankatu 23 A, PO Box 30, Helsinki, FINLAND Tel: +358295162329, Ralf.Lopian@mmm.fi
EPPO	Lucchesi Valerio	OEPP/EPPO, 21 boulevard Richard Lenoir, 75011 Paris, France Tel: +33-145207794 - lucchesi@eppo.int
EPPO	Gushchin Andrei (Mr)	Deputy Head, Division of interaction with international organizations in the field of plant quarantine and seed control, Phytosanitary Surveillance, Seed Control and Grain Quality Directorate, Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Tel: + 74956076266, fitoquarantine@mail.ru

- EPPO Mazurin Evgenii (Mr) Deputy Head, Federal State Budgetary Institution “All-Russian Plant Quarantine Center”
Tel: + 74992713824, zarah@mail.ru
- EPPO Voznesenskiy Ilya (Mr) Deputy Head of Phytosanitary Risks Department; Federal State Budgetary Institution “All-Russian Plant Quarantine Center”, Interpreter