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HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
Directorate E - Safety of the food chain  
E1 - Biotechnology and plant health

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**Standing Committee on Forestry - 17.12.2008**

**SITUATION OF PINWOOD NEMATODE IN THE EU AND THE  
CONSEQUENCES FOR TRADE**

**Information document**

The objective of this document is to present an update of the situation of pinewood nematode (PWN) in the Community and of the strategies for its control and for the movement of related wood products, including wood packaging material (WPM).

**1) Background: importance of pine wood nematode**

- PWN is a microscopic worm which is regulated in the EU as a harmful organism to pine trees. The pest is transmitted by a vector insect, which is naturally present in continental Europe. It is native to North America, where the native pine trees are generally resistant. European pine species are highly susceptible and entry and spread of the pest in Europe could have devastating effects for European pine forests (natural environment conservation, forestry). PWN has caused great damage in Asiatic countries to which it was introduced and at world level is seen as a very important pest. The EU has a quarantine status as 'free from PWN, with exception of continental Portugal, where it is under strict control'.
- PWN may be disseminated with wood. Therefore the import and movement of susceptible wood as a commodity is regulated. However, wood packaging material (WPM) is a special case as it accompanies consignments without being referred to on the commodity documents and because of its multiple use. Because of the risk that PWN and other quarantine pests are spread in global trade through pallets and crates made from infested trees, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) developed International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures No. 15 (ISPM 15). This standard has an important impact on global trade because WPM is used for shipments

of almost all commodities. Losing the PWN-free status could lead to lifting of some EU *import* requirements, with trade consequences for the forest industry, and could generate import restrictions for the *export* of wood products from MS to third countries.

## **2) Situation of PWN in Portugal**

- PWN was first detected in Portugal in 1999 in the Setubal region. Community emergency measures were taken since 2000 to eradicate the pest or as a minimum stop it from spreading. The measures were regularly updated (Decision 2006/133/EC as amended).
- When eradication failed, it was tried to contain the pest to the Setubal area by a major effort including the felling of 1 million trees, a 20 km wide buffer and, since 2007, surrounded by a 3 km wide and 300 km long clear-cut belt. Globally, the Community supported Portugal for the total expenses with approx. 9 million euro.
- Since April 2008, about 65 outbreaks occurred outside the demarcated Setubal area, mainly in the centre and the north of Portugal, in areas that were previously known to be free from it. In June, Portugal declared the entire territory of continental Portugal to be PWN infested. The Commission took supplementary measures to stop the spread of PWN to the rest of Europe. Strict measures, updated several times, are in force in the whole of continental Portugal. A map in Annex to the document displays the latest situation of PWN in Portugal. The measures should stop the spread via the transport of infested wood as well as natural spread. All movements of susceptible material, i.e. plants, wood, bark, cutting waste, processing waste and WPM within continental Portugal are subject to strict treatment and control requirements. The same for movements out of Portugal. A summary of the existing emergency measures (Annex 1):
  - Susceptible material includes plants of *Abies*, *Cedrus*, *Larix*, *Picea*, *Pinus*, *Pseudotsuga* and *Tsuga* as well as all coniferous wood + bark, except that of *Thuja*.
  - Compulsory survey for infestation of trees in poor health in the territory of continental Portugal.

- Removal and destruction of PWN infested or declining – for whatever reason - trees/susceptible wood in continental Portugal. Alternatively, processing with appropriate heat treatment or fumigation, or burning or chipping for industrial purposes. During summer, this needs to take place immediately after the finding of symptoms of poor health; during winter, all actions linked to a finding need to be finalised by 1 April.
- The requirements in a buffer zone of 20 km wide along the border with Spain are the strictest ones: in case of PWN findings, compulsory cutting of all infested trees and all host trees within a 50 m radius, repeated official inspections and the same movement requirements as for export.
- For movements, all susceptible plants have to be accompanied by a plant passport, and found free from symptoms of the disease, including at their place of production or in its immediate vicinity.
- Wood material, as well from healthy as from declining trees, must be submitted to appropriate treatment requirements (heat treatment, fumigation) and accompanied by a plant passport. However, roundwood and sawnwood from healthy trees that has been sampled and tested negative, can be moved and used as construction timber within continental Portugal without having undergone a treatment.
- All WPM (pallets, crates, load boards,...) newly produced from Portuguese wood must be heat treated or fumigated and marked in accordance with ISPM 15.
- All Member States are required to carry out an annual monitoring on the situation of PWN in their territory. An overview is presented and discussed in the Standing Committee on Plant Health (SCPH).

### **3) Recent events**

- In the past months, and also after the adoption of the emergency measures, PWN has been intercepted by Sweden and Finland in wood material coming from Portugal. Sweden took national emergency measures, to be implemented from 27 October 2008 onwards, banning all non-marked wood packaging material coming from Portugal. In November 2008, Spain notified several cases of non compliant movements of

susceptible wood from Portugal to Spain, including some cases where PWN was identified. Further strengthening of the existing Community emergency measures to better secure that PWN is not spreading from Portugal to the rest of the Community seemed necessary. An amendment to the existing measures was voted on 25 November 2008 - adoption expected in December 2008 (Annex 2). The draft Decision provides that the existing requirements for movements of susceptible material from the infested part of the demarcated area into other parts of the Community would be strengthened as follows:

- A general prohibition to move untreated susceptible wood out of the demarcated area (=continental Portugal) is introduced. Exception from this prohibition is only possible for wood that has been treated and marked in *specially authorised* processing facilities, *under continuous official control* for the verification of the correct and *effective* application of the treatment and *traceability* of the wood. The Commission will compile a list of such authorised facilities and keep it updated, taking into account monitoring and interception data. The list shall be conveyed to the Standing Committee on Plant Health and Member States;
  - Instead of the limitation of the treatment and marking obligation to packaging material produced from newly produced susceptible wood, this obligation would now be applicable to *all* packaging material from *Portuguese* susceptible wood. NB: packaging material, *originating in other Member States* and thus not marked, would *not* fall under these requirements when moving from Portugal to other Member States.
- On 6 November 2008, the Commission received a notification of the first outbreak of pine wood nematode in Spain. Spain is taking appropriate measures.

### **3) Implementation by Portugal of the emergency measures**

Portugal has set up a National Action Plan for PWN control. The action plan comprises (i) phytosanitary measures and support to scientific research; (ii) an awareness campaign; (iii) support to the industry; and (iv) support measures to forest owners. As for the phytosanitary measures. Recent Portuguese legislation already contains some elements of the recent draft Commission Decision. Portugal is not monitoring for the PWN vector in the crown of trees as required. Eradication efforts around isolated outbreaks might need to be increased. Currently,

Portugal also has insufficient capacity for the required heat treatment of the wood materials that it produces. However, Portugal is putting much effort in stepping up such facilities as well as certification of such facilities, which moreover are no longer allowed to treat and mark wood unless government inspectors are permanently supervising the activities. Portugal has involved the National Republic Guard in road controls for enforcing compliance to the legislation. The Portuguese action plan will be analysed by a Commission technical working group prior to approval by the Standing Committee on Plant Health.

#### **4) Further review of PWN control strategy**

A further review of the PWN control strategy as laid down in the existing Commission emergency measures and implemented through the Portuguese action plan may be considered, based on the following elements:

- An international seminar in Lisbon from 7 to 9 October 2008, organised by the Commission and Portugal, with the world's top experts on PWN to analyse the existing scientific intelligence and their applications to the Portuguese case to investigate the possibilities to stop PWN from spreading further into Europe. The seminar involved experts from China, Korea, Japan and Taiwan, countries that suffered from PWN invasion in the past, as well as Canada, the USA and Europe. The conclusions from the seminar (see Annex 3) need to be taken account of, in particular as concerns the technical aspects of monitoring, surveys and eradication in Portugal and Spain as well as well as contingency planning and surveillance in the other Member States.
- A recent study to examine the economical, social and environmental impacts of banning or not banning the movement of all susceptible wood from out of Portugal.
- The Commission will verify the suitability of the existing legal framework to control PWN in the EU under the current conditions, taking account of any future developments concerning the spread of PWN in the Community.

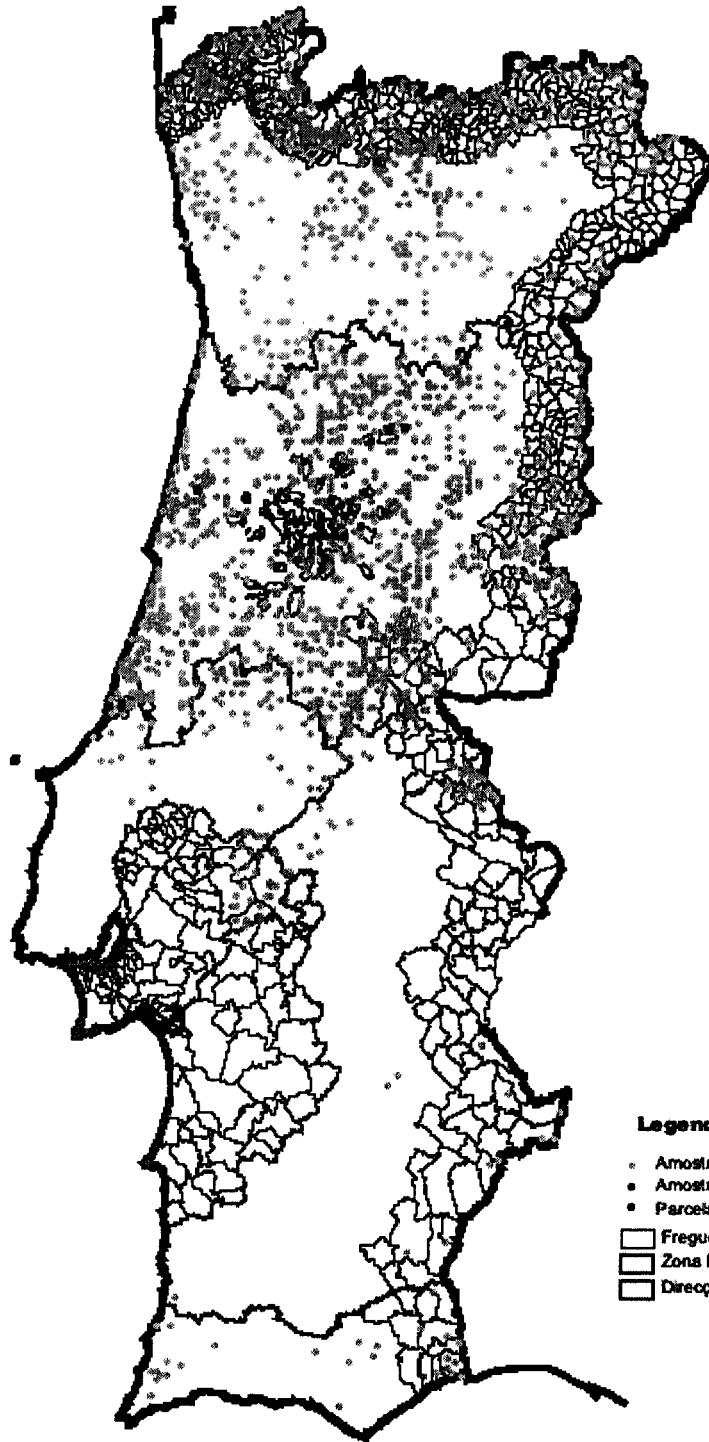
#### **5) Wood packaging material (WPM)**

- Overall EU WPM requirements, in place since March 2005: imported WPM has to meet the ISPM 15, namely it has to be appropriately heat treated or fumigated and marked when imported into the EU. Such requirements are, so far, not applicable to internal movements within the EU as the main phytosanitary risk of wood, i.e. PWN in coniferous wood, was at that time not present within the EU with

exception of a small well demarcated and controlled area in Portugal. As a consequence of the latest events, all Portuguese WPM is to be treated and marked now, whereas WPM from the other 26 MS, moving around within the EU is not treated and marked. This situation hinders a reliable traceability and control. Therefore, DG SANCO is currently considering the possibility to extend the WPM requirements imposed currently on imports to the internal market as well. Consultation with relevant stakeholders is organised.

- Implementation of an EU additional debarking requirement for WPM that was to enter into force by 1 January 2009: the international standard ISPM 15 does not contain a debarking requirement as present in the Community legislation and some trading partners (US mainly) have always questioned our technical justification. Directive 2008/109/EC of 28 November 2008 has amended the existing EU import requirements for WPM (Annex 4). From 1 July 2009 onwards, WPM at import must be free from bark. However, small pieces of bark, not broader than 3 cm or not covering more than 50 cm<sup>2</sup>, will be tolerated. The technical justification, based on the impossibility of harmful insects to complete their life-cycle in such small pieces of bark, is broadly supported. This justification has been developed by an international panel including leading wood experts from the EU and US.

Annex: situation of PWN in Portugal as of 17 September 2008



**Legenda:**

- Amostras Negativas NMP (2378)
- Amostras Positivas NMP (65)
- Parcelas inventário
- Freguesias
- Zona Restrição- Sul
- Direcções Regionais de Florestas

40 0 40 80 Kilometers

Data de elaboração: 17-09-2008