

EU negotiates overhaul of plant pest regulations



Earlier this week, the European Parliament and the EU Council reached an agreement on the revision of complex regulations aimed at preventing the entry of new plant pests into Europe and mitigating the spread of existing ones. This development comes in response to the challenges posed by non-native pests, including the *Xylella fastidiosa*, which has significantly impacted olive trees since its accidental introduction in the 2000s, and is projected to cost over €20 billion in damages over the next five decades. The agreement also addresses the spread of pests like the false codling moth to Spain's citrus crops and the persistence of the Asian long-horned beetle in France, Germany, and Italy.

On March 5, during the negotiations, a decision was made to establish a Union Plant Health Emergency Team, a proposal not initially included in the legislative draft presented last October. Clara Aguilera, the European Parliament negotiator, explained, "Its task will be to assist member states, at their request, in the event of a pest that exceeds their means of control and eradication." This team, mirroring a similar framework for animal health, will also offer support to third countries to safeguard EU territories against potential outbreaks. The appointment of team members will be conducted by the commission upon recommendations from member states or the concerned third countries.

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