

**Minutes of the ENA Secretaries Meeting** held at 12h30 on Monday **3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018** at Confindustria - ANVE office, Avenue de la Joyeuse Entrée 1, **Brussels**.

**Present:**

Emmanuelle Bougault (Val'hor, France), Alistair Yeomans (HTA - United Kingdom), Anneke van Dijk (LTO – Netherlands), Edoardo Sciutti (ANVE – Italy), Lucien Verschoren (AVBS - Belgium), Markus Guhl (BdB - Germany), Miet Poppe (AVBS - Belgium), Patrick Farrell (IHNSA – Ireland), Harm Horlings (ANTHOS - Netherlands, Certifications and Labels WG Chairman), Leon Smet (Anthos – Netherlands, Promotion WG Chairman), Henk Raaijmakers (LTO – Netherlands - ENA Vice-President), Jan-Dieter Bruns (BdB – Germany – ENA President) and Josep M. Pagès (ENA Secretary General -SG in the text-).

**1. President's Welcome.**

President Bruns welcomed the Secretaries and shared his positive outlook for the next season. He explained that German nurseries are changing the system of delivery and instead of free of charge (price included in the plants) they are charging the transport as extra.

**2. Apologies for absence.**

Maja Persson (SE), Caroline Föllmi (CH), Nikos Thymakis (GR), Dragana Skočajić (RS) and Alba Ridao-Boulumié (ES) had sent apologies.

**3. Adoption of Agenda.**

The agenda was agreed on without changes.

**4. Minutes: approval of the minutes of the previous Secretaries meeting held on 7 June 2018.**

The minutes were agreed on.

**5. Matters arising from the minutes.**

There was a question about the IAS sales through the internet -answer unknown by now- and it was explained that SG was representing ENA at the last meeting of the EU Expert Group on Plant Health Awareness Raising. A platform will be set up to share the information between the EC, official services in MS and stakeholders, mainly focused on avoiding the general public -tourists- to bring plants from non-EU countries in their luggage.

**6. ENA Articles of Association and Domestic Regulations: Addition of article 4bis to chapter IV. Budget and Financial Management of the Domestic Regulations, as agreed by the General Assembly on 27-06-2018: update.**

The modifications of the Articles of Association approved by the GA are in process to be published in the Belgian Official Journal. The modification of the Domestic Regulations to add article 4bis was not accepted by the Belgian law, and the ENA advisor asked to reverse the agreement. The ENA financial consultants confirmed that they might have the financial statements of the previous year for the GA in January and, therefore, the change is not necessary.

**7. Project Proposal Grow4Green (H2020 RUR-15-2019: Thematic Networks compiling knowledge ready for practice). Presented by Dr Sandy Adriaenssens.**

Grow4Green aim is to share information on growing ornamentals for green infrastructure. PCS (ornamental plant research, Belgium) is leading the project. An Operational Group at Belgian level (EPI-AGRI project Green Air) was the start of this proposal, which identified some gaps: plant choice for different types of ecosystems and soil conditions, the impact of green infrastructure on health, how to integrate green infrastructure in projects. They are going to apply in the call RUR-15 (H2020). Collecting knowledge and best practices, transform it in practical information and making it available to all, will be done through workshops, showcases, exchange visits and educations training if possible. It's not a research project but an information transference project. A Consortium will be organized in which every partner (i.e. ENA) is responsible for its part, technically and economically. It's 100% funded, and no economic contribution is necessary from partners; the costs are in time, preparing publications and travelling time. ENA could participate in the WP 5.0. The application must be presented by the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2019, although most of the application should be ready before Xmas, and, if approved, the project could begin in October 2019.

PowerPoint Presentation to be distributed to ENA members.

**a. Discussion about ENA joining the project.**

The participants considered that ENA's participation in the project would be positive. This project might be a good complement of the Green Cities project, as a source of information. ENA members should fully cooperate collecting information to add to the project and sharing the outcome of the project. ENA would act more as a platform than doing the whole thing because there is no capacity as an organisation. ENA members might act as subcontractors.

Two ENA representatives should participate in each project meeting (5 per year). Miet Poppe (BE), the President and the Vice-president volunteered to participate in these meetings.

Dr Adriaenssens will send the information specifying what they would like to receive from ENA and an estimate of the budget (in time, effort and costs).

It was agreed on sending to all ENA members the proposal that ENA will participate in this project, asking for their approval (because the deadline is before the next GA meeting).

**8. "Green Cities" promotion project**

**a. short update on the current project**

Promotion WG Chairman gave an update on the project development: activities are held in all seven participating countries, the website ([www.thegreencity.eu](http://www.thegreencity.eu)) is online and alive, the VAT issue had been solved, and the team is now working mostly in preparing the Year 1 reports for CHAFAE.

**b. idea for the next proposal 2021-2023**

It was agreed on making a presentation of the project for all ENA members and to have a meeting with the potential participants.

**9. Environmental and sustainable certifications and labels.**

WG chairman recapped the process and the last meeting in June. He had been in contact with FSI (<http://fsi2020.com/>). As FSI respects all labels that are benchmarked, the cooperation with FSI might be a good option for the members to work with sustainability.

The participants were asked if this option might be of interest for them and, if positive, to bring to the ENA GA the proposal to join FSI. The precise cost was unknown (€1500 to €4500), but it might be negotiated. The main question from the Chairman was if the nurseries need or want to be sustainable. If ENA would join FSI, it might work on deciding on the 2020-2025 program. Influence the renewing of the standards would be an advantage if the ENA members can cooperate in it. It was pointed out that a negotiation to get better prices for the certification of ENA members' nurseries might be opened.

It was agreed on:

- To ask FSI about the advantages for ENA and the added value for ENA members.
- To discuss and conclude it at the next GA meeting.
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**10. EU Legislation Working Group:**

**a. Election of the new chairman of the WG**

Marc van Hulle had been the Chairman of the WG but, still ill, he is not going to return to ENA meetings. The President proposed Henk Raaijmakers (ENA Vice-President) as Chairman.

It was agreed to inform all members and renew the members of this WG.

**b. IAS Invasive Alien Plants**

There was no news since the last Meeting. The EC Working Group IAS had not planned to meet again soon. The list of species being studied was sent out to ENA members and the information studied by Marco Hoffman. It was concluded that it was not necessary to act.

WG Chairman suggested influencing the list of IAS plants, if necessary, using four contacts, Dr Marco Hoffman, Copa-Cogeca policy officer, LTO representative and the Dutch NPPO representative, trying to keep the IAS list short and not including plants already in the market.

**c. *Xylella fastidiosa***

SG participated in the joint annual meeting of POnTE and XFactors projects in October in Valencia and sent a report to the ENA members.

EFSA is preparing a new update of the Scientific Opinion on *Xylella fastidiosa* for the EC, and they will include the potential impact on nurseries. A web meeting with the SG was planned.

**i. VSPP status**

The last draft of the VSPP (Voluntary System Preventing Pests - Certification Standard focused on *Xylella fastidiosa*) was sent out after the meeting in Valencia,

and no comments had been received at ENA. There is a next meeting scheduled for February 8, 2019, to finish the standard.

Italy defended that nurseries in DA should be able to get certified under this scheme after the authorization of art.9 of Decision 789. Nurseries could have higher requirements in infected areas or the containment areas. Italy also asked for no obligation of insect-proof in free areas to give the certification to large trees growers, although nurseries should have higher requirements in the pest risk management.

All nurseries must strictly follow the Regulations, and this certification would be an extra. This standard might also be used to ensure the plant health against other pests (i.e. *Anoplophora*, etc.).

A further discussion should be held at the General Assembly.

**ii. Insurance schemes for plant health.**

Spain tried to include pests in the agricultural climatic insurances scheme, but it was not possible. Italy is beginning to cover the pest's risks in the climatic insurances. There are now around 20 nurseries covered, and they are working on improving it.

**iii. Public communication policy about *Xylella***

At ENA we received complaints from a few ENA organisations regarding the information released. The President stressed that we all must be very careful about how we officially inform and to look for the best way to inform the industry and all the public to minimise the impact on the nurseries trade.

**1. Proposal from FEPEX (ES)**

The letter from the Spanish organisation had been distributed to ENA members. Italian organisation had also been in contact in spring with Fepex regarding the *Xf* communications and defended the Spanish position. Regarding the trees found infected in Belgium, there was a discussion regarding the possible origin of the infection. Spanish Ministry denied that plants were infected in Spain and the Belgian authorities are finishing a report. It was stated that sharing information is necessary, and if a nursery/zone has been officially proved to be clean, the fact might be shared. It was also identified that gossip talks between professionals could be dangerous. The fact that the name of some nurseries was published should be prevented to happen again. It was proposed to ask official authorities to use the nursery registration number only, instead of the names. Communication is necessary when there is a risk, but after solving the situation, it has to be communicated too. Information must be based on facts.

It was agreed on asking Fepex for the report of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture sent to the EC confirming that all samples tested in the Spanish nurseries had been negative, and to send it out to all ENA members to prove that Spanish nurseries are free from Xylella. It was also agreed on distributing to ENA members the official Belgian report when finished. It was not agreed on sending a letter to the EC in the terms asked by Fepex, because it's the EC who decides what to communicate to the MS and they have the official information and the evidence of the origin of the plants, while ENA does not have it. However, EC should be advised not to use the nurseries name but the registration number in their communications.

It was agreed on discussing further at the General Assembly.

Italy gave an update on the Xf status in their country.

The WG Chairman concluded thanking the Italian efforts to control Xf and expressed his concerns for the lack of Plant Protection Products to control vectors, a fact that should be reminded to the EC.

**d. EU Plant Passport (since December 2019)**

**i. Issuing Plant Passports concerns**

ENA had received the concerns from some member about the practical passport issuing process. SG had spoken to the EC Plant Health Unit, and they are open to fixing a bilateral meeting to discuss all these issues.

**ii. Smallest packaging unit**

Discussions about the smallest packaging unit, how many species may fit within one Plant Passport label and other practical details had been discussed in some countries, and the opinions were shared.

**iii. Country of origin**

UK expressed their concerns regarding the addition of the Country of Origin to the Plant Passport in the new legislation. The legislation reads "where applicable" and, therefore, it is open to interpretation; even which country of origin should be written if plants were grown in more than one country.

**iv. Traceability (guidelines / automatization)**

The traceability code will be very difficult to document and store in the nurseries if there are no common rules.

Regarding all these aspects of the Plant Passport, it was agreed on preparing a guideline to share among nurseries and with the EC. NL volunteered to prepare a first draft that will include their knowledge and the UK concerns. It will be shared with all ENA members for comments.

**11. Political table (Brussels, 09-10-2018)**

Markus Guhl summarised the “political table” organised in Brussels. Regarding the participation of the EC Plant Health officer, he highlighted the discussion about the Plant Passport and the big retailers like IKEA. With the MEP Mr Herbert Dorfmann the discussion was about the CAP and the possibility to include container-grown plant production in the CAP. It is necessary to find a good definition of this type of production in order to use it as a legal term. Italy will check how this production is defined if they can receive CAP funding, although the paperwork is costlier than the money to receive. NL mentioned that the funds would better be used to help insurances or to fund risk management measures while DE nurseries would prefer to receive the money directly. The meeting with the MEP Mr Pavel Poc was short, and he asked to meet again in Bad Zwischenahn (DE) to visit nurseries.

**12. German new Packaging act “Verpack G”.**

Markus Guhl explained the new legislation: any company that wants to import plants in pots or containers into Germany has to register, starting next January 2019, and pay for the plastic. The cost is about €700/tonne of plastic and the German nurseries are very angry with it. It’s a renewed legislation, and DE will send further information to ENA.

**13. “Direction of ENA” discussion in a future General Assembly.**

It was agreed on establishing a small commission (ENA President, Vice-president, past President and SG) to prepare a proposal before the next GA. This commission might meet on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, at 2 pm in Essen (IPM).

**14. ENA Summer meeting 2019 – Ukraine; final program.**

The participants were very happy with the proposal.

**15. Date of Next Secretaries Meeting.**

The next Secretaries meeting will be scheduled in spring 2019 in Bad Zwischenahn (Germany), with the participation of the MEP Mr Pavel Poc.

**16. AOB**

- UK gave a short update on the BREXIT and delegates showed their concerns because of the uncertainty.
- SG asked if ENA might consider Dubai as a member and it was clearly discarded because it is not a European country.
- SG reminded that we need to update statistics of each country, that will be presented at the GA meeting in January.
- NL reported that the annexes of the EU plant health Directive 2000/29/EC are being amended and it’s changed in a way that importing plants with soil into the EU won’t be possible. Non-EU members should contact their authorities and try to influence the WTO consultation that is going to open soon.



- Regarding the wood used in boxes to transport plants, it is currently mostly imported from 3<sup>rd</sup> countries like Belarus and China. As this wood must be treated, it is foreseen a 90% price increase.

The Vice-President thanked Edoardo Sciutti and his organisation ANVE for the meeting room and for taking care of all costs, thanked all Secretaries for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 17h10.

*Note: the items were discussed in a different order than the Agenda, however, and for better clarity, the minutes keep the same structure of the original Agenda.*