



Italy expanding containment area for "Xylella fastidiosa"

The European Commission has decided to expand the demarcated area for the containment of the bacterium "Xylella fastidiosa" in Italy due to the "high risk of continued propagation to the north of the Apulia region," which is the area of the so-called "heel of the boot" of the peninsula.

The Official Journal of the European Union has published the EC Implementing Decision 2018/927 amending Decision 2015/789 on the means to prevent the introduction and spread within the European Union (EU) of this bacterium, which already affects a large area of Italian olive groves.

The regulation specifies that on 12 March 2018, the Italian authorities notified the detection of outbreaks of "Xylella fastidiosa" in different parts of the containment area, with many in the last 20 kilometres of the infected zone, adjacent to the containment area, in southern Apulia.

It states that "the number of these outbreaks has led to the conclusion that it is no longer possible to eradicate the organism from the current containment area."

It also warns that given the significant delays in the elimination of plants infected by Xylella, "there is a high risk of it spreading to the north of the Apulia region, due to the fact that the current containment area no longer serves its purpose."

It claims that the expansion of the containment area "must be carried out without delay," since the risk of the Xylella spreading across the EU territory "increased with the start of the vector insect's flying season at the start of spring."

It believes that, from now on, the containment area should include "the municipalities of the provinces of Brindisi and Taranto, where outbreaks have been detected, and cover the part of the province of Bari where it is probable that this organism has already spread and become established."

In an annexe, it states that the area of Italy that is already infected by the "Xylella fastidiosa" now occupies the provinces of Lecce and Brindisi, 22 municipalities of the province of Taranto and the one of Locorotondo, in the province of Bari, all of them belonging to the Apulia region.

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