REPORT OF A MISSION
CARRIED OUT IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
FROM 20 TO 24 NOVEMBER 2006
IN ORDER TO EVALUATE
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLANT PASSPORT SYSTEM
Executive summary

The report describes the outcome of a mission which took place in the Slovak Republic from 20 to 24 November 2006. The objective was to evaluate the implementation of the Plant Passport System and internal market checks, with particular reference to the registration of establishments, authorisation to issue Plant Passports, and official controls.

The Plant Passport System is in place. The clear division of responsibilities among the departments of the CCTIA, the computer software for registration and the good cooperation with producers and a network of laboratories ensure the efficiency of the system. Some improvements, however, are necessary, in particular with regards to registration, the format of the Plant Passport for Protected Zones, and checks of Plant Passports received from other Member States. Furthermore, stronger measures should be taken if PPV or ACLM disease is found.

Recommendations are made in the report to address the shortcomings found during the mission.
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ABBREVIATIONS

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<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACLM</td>
<td>Apricot Chlorotic Leafroll Mycoplasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTIA</td>
<td>Central Controlling and Testing Institute in Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FVO</td>
<td>Food and Veterinary Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPV</td>
<td>Plum pox virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPP</td>
<td>Section of Plant Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSPM</td>
<td>Section of Seeds and Planting Materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>RP</td>
<td>Replacement plant passport</td>
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<td>ZP</td>
<td>Zona Protecta – Protected Zone</td>
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DEFINITIONS

*Plant Passport System* - the system based on registration of establishments, authorisation for preparing, storing and issuing plant passports and the regime of controls.

*Internal market checks* - the regime of controls for the Plant Passport System within the Community.

*Regulated articles* - those items (plants, plant products and other objects) which require a plant passport, or a registration number, in order to circulate within the Community.

*Registered establishments* - producers, traders and importers of regulated articles.

*Single Authority* - according to Article 1(4) of Council Directive 2000/29/EC, authority designated by each Member State, responsible for co-ordination and contact with the Commission and the other Member States in relation to matters covered by the above Directive.
1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in the Slovak Republic from 20 to 24 November 2006, as part of the Food and Veterinary Office's (FVO) planned mission programme. The mission team consisted of two inspectors from the FVO and one National Expert from a Member State. A representative of the Single Authority accompanied the team for the majority of the mission. Representatives of the Central Controlling and Testing Institute in Agriculture (CCTIA) headquarters accompanied the team throughout the mission. A pre-mission questionnaire was sent by the FVO to the Single Authority, which was completed and returned providing an overview of the plant passport system ahead of the mission.

An opening meeting was held in Bratislava on 20 November 2006 with representatives of the Single Authority and CCTIA. During this meeting, the inspection team confirmed the mission’s objectives and itinerary.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE MISSION

The main objective of the mission was to evaluate the implementation of the plant passport system and internal market checks, with particular reference to the registration of establishments, authorisation to issue plant passports, and official checks.

Two secondary objectives were to assess certain responses made by the Slovak Authorities to the conclusions and recommendations made in the reports DG(SANCO)/7769/2005 on plant health in the potato sector, and DG(SANCO)/7771/2005 on Erwinia amylovora.

In pursuit of these objectives, the following sites were visited:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENT AUTHORITY VISITS</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>1 CCTI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Inspectorate</td>
<td>3 Nitra, Trnava, Liptovský Mikuláš</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANT HEALTH CONTROL SITES</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seed producer</td>
<td>1 Lucerne, cereals crops, rape, clover, vegetables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer of ornamentals</td>
<td>1 Major part of the production is used by the same company for its landscape gardening activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapevine plant multiplier</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit and ornamental plant multiplier</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit plant multiplier</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed potato producer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest plant multiplier</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **LEGAL BASIS**

The mission was carried out under the general mandate of Article 21 and 27a of Council Directive 2000/29/EC\(^1\) on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community.

4. **RELEVANT COMMUNITY LEGISLATION**

The following Community legislation was of particular relevance to this mission\(^2\):


- Commission Directive 92/90/EEC\(^3\) establishing obligations to which producers and importers of plants, plant products or other objects are subject and establishing details for their registration.

- Commission Directive 92/105/EEC\(^4\) establishing a degree of standardisation for plant passports to be used for the movement of certain plants, plant products or other objects within the Community and establishing the detailed procedures related to the issuing of such plant passports and the conditions and detailed procedures for their replacement.


- Commission Directive 93/51/EEC\(^7\) of 24 June 1993 establishing rules for movements of certain plants, plant products or other objects through a protected zone and for movements of such plants, plant products or other objects originating in and moving within such a protected zone;

- Commission Directive 2001/32/EC\(^8\) of 8 May 2001 recognising protected zones exposed to particular plant health risks in the Community and repealing Directive 92/76/EEC.

- Commission Decision 2002/757/EC\(^9\) of 19 September 2002 on provisional emergency phytosanitary measures to prevent the introduction into and the spread within the Community of *Phytophthora ramorum* Werres, De Cock & Man in ‘t Veld sp. nov.;

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\(^1\) OJ L 169, 10.07.2000, p.01

\(^2\) Community legislation cited in this report refers, where applicable, to the last amended version.

\(^3\) OJ L 344, 26.11.1992, p.38

\(^4\) OJ L 004, 08.01.1993, p.22

\(^5\) OJ L 205, 17.08.1993, p.24


\(^7\) OJ L 205, 17.08.1993, p.24

\(^8\) OJ L 127, 09.05.2001, p.38

5. **BACKGROUND TO PRESENT MISSION**

This mission was the 16th in a series of missions to Member States in order to evaluate control systems and operational standards in the plant passport sector. Previous missions carried out in the Slovak Republic by the FVO include DG(SANCO)/7769/2005, on plant health in the potato sector, and DG(SANCO)/7771/2005, to evaluate the current situation of *Erwinia amylovora*. They were combined and took place from 7 to 11 November 2005. The reports can be found at: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ir_search_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ir_search_en.cfm).

Commission Directive 2006/36/EC of 24 March 2006 amending Directive 2001/32/EC recognising protected zones exposed to particular plant health risks in the Community and repealing Directive 92/76/EEC, recognises the territory of the Slovak Republic as a Protected Zone for *Erwinia amylovora*, except the communes of Blahová, Horné Mýto and Okoč (Dunajská Streda County), Hronovce and Hronské Kľačany (Levice County), Veľké Ripňany(Topoľčany County), Málinec (Poltár County), Hrhov (Rožňava County), Kazímír, Luhyňa, Malý Hornica, Svätuše and Zatín (Trebišov County).

6. **MAIN FINDINGS**

6.1. **Legislation**

CCTIA provides the mission team with the following information about national legislation.

Act 193/2005 of 16 March 2005 of the National Council of the Slovak Republic is the main legal act governing Plant Health, and provides legal power to the responsible official bodies to conduct their duties. It transposes one part of Directive 2000/29/EC.


Decision 2002/757/EC on phytosanitary measures against *Phytophthora ramorum* is implemented by way of “Protective Measures to contain the spread of *Phytophthora ramorum* Werres et al. within the territory of the Slovak Republic” of the CCTIA on 20 June 2006. The mission team was informed that the Decision was directly implemented prior to the adoption of the protective measures.

Article 5 of Act 193/2005 gives the inspector legal power to enter establishments and to carry out checks. Article 8 of Ordinance 199/2005 and Article 4 of Act 193/2005 allow CCTIA to take measures in the event of non-compliance.

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10OJ L 88, 25.03.2006, p.13
6.2.  Competent authority performance

6.2.1.  Structure and responsibilities

The Ministry of Agriculture – Department of Plant Commodities – of the Slovak Republic is the Single Authority, within the meaning of Article 1(4) of Council Directive 2000/29/EC, responsible for co-ordination and contact with the Commission and the other Member States.

The Central Testing Institute of Agriculture (CCTIA), is the Responsible Official Body for the protection of the territory against the introduction and spread of harmful organisms, and in particular for the Plant Passport System. CCTIA operates at three levels:

- the national headquarters in Bratislava;

- the regional headquarters in Zvolen and Košice for the central and eastern parts of the Slovak Republic respectively; the western part is managed directly from Bratislava;

- local units set up for a county or a group of counties, under the direct supervision of the national or the regional headquarters.

The Plant Protection Section of CCTIA (SPP) is responsible for the Plant Passport System. However, it has completely delegated to the Section of Seeds and Planting Materials of CCTIA (SSPM) its authority to conduct controls for the issuing of Plant Passports for beet and hops and on seeds of potato, alfalfa, sunflower, tomato, bean, shallot, onion and chives. The SSPM co-operates with SPP for the registration of producers and importers of the same crops, plus grape and fruit plants. SPP has also delegated controls on forest plants to the National Forestry Centre, which is a part of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic.

The CCTIA Diagnostics Section is responsible for official laboratory testing.

6.2.2.  Human resources

There are 84 inspectors in charge of internal market checks: 59 are agents of SPP, 25 are agents of SSPM. The proportion of working time spent on internal market checks is estimated at 20%.

The total number of officials in SSP is 87. In addition to the inspectors in charge of internal market checks, there are 12 inspectors in charge of controls at the points of entry into the customs territory of the European Community. The rest of the officials are employed at headquarters or have other special tasks. The total number of officials involved in plant health matters in SSPM is 30.

The minimum educational requirement for all the inspectors is an university degree in agriculture. Training on the Plant Passport System was given to all the inspectors of SPP prior to accession to the European Community, under a twinning programme with Germany. Since accession, these inspectors have attended 1 to 3 days training a year, on the Plant Passport System and diagnosis of harmful organisms. Inspectors of SSPM spend 3 training days each year on legislation and the inspection process. The Diagnostics Section participates in SPP and SSPM training measures.
6.2.3. Financial resources and fees

The financial resources of all responsible bodies come from the Government. Fees are charged for the registration and issuing of Plant Passports. All revenues are transferred to the National Budget, which allocates 10% to the CCTIA.

6.2.4. Co-ordination, work planning and policy

Inspections are carried out according to the objectives defined each year by the CCTIA headquarters. For each kind of production, CCTIA specifies the number and the periodicity of inspections to be carried out. Local inspectors are issued with a copy of this plan at the beginning of each year and have to apply it to the establishments in their area. Declared priorities are seed potatoes, fruit crops, grape vine, and all host plants of fireblight (Erwinia amylovora) and powdery mildew (Mycosphaerella dearnessii and Mycosphaerella pini).

Inspectors of SPP attend monthly meetings at their regional headquarters. Four to five times a year, representatives of national headquarters are also present. Once a year, there is a meeting with representatives of the national and regional headquarters. Inspectors of SSPM also attend monthly meetings at their regional headquarters.

All the local units are connected to the CCTIA intranet. This gives inspectors easy access to legislative, administrative and technical information. Technical guidance for the main cultivated species has been issued to inspectors, who can also refer to illustrated books and brochures describing plant pests and diseases.

Inspection reports are filed in the local units and at national level.

6.2.5. External Communication and co-operation

The mission team noted a close co-operation between inspectors and establishments. For this reason, communication of new official or technical information to stakeholders is facilitated. Usually, this takes place during inspections. General information on the Plant Passport System is circulated by articles in newspapers at the beginning of each year, and the legislation can be found on the website of CCTIA (http://www.uksup.sk).

CCTIA organise training for stakeholders. In 2006, one 2-day course was organised by SSPM and SPP. It concerned legislation on seed production and codes of good practice.

Inspection on the spot also enables stakeholders to communicate information to the inspectors, although there is no obligation for stakeholders to notify the arrival of regulated articles which are not in line with the Plant Passport System.

6.3. The Plant Passport System

6.3.1. Registration

SPP is responsible for registration of importers and producers, in close co-operation with SSPM. The headquarters of CCTIA handle a common Registration Information System, using computer software.

An applicant for registration must submit an official application to the headquarters of CCTIA with, among other documents, an inspection report issued by the local
phytosanitary inspector. The applicant must pay a fee of 500 SKK (approximately 14.50 € on 20/12/2006). If the dossier is complete CCTIA headquarters enter the producer or the importer in the Registration Information System and send him/her a certificate. Each establishment has a unique number. In the event of a change in the scope of his/her activities the applicant must submit a special application for updating his/her registration. The validity of registration is not time-limited.

A visit, carried out on site by the local inspector, is compulsory prior to registration. Following the visit, the local inspector draws up a report describing the premises and the production of the establishment. If the establishment is split over several sites, there is a separate report for each site. Local inspectors have access to the registration dossier of the establishments of their area, via the CCTIA intranet.

The number of registered establishments is 2122 (538 producers, 864 producers/traders, 422 traders, 298 importers), of which 956 deal with regulated articles. CCTIA explained that the substantial difference between these two figures comes, first, from the large number of establishments which were registered according to the national rule in force prior to accession, but do not now deal with regulated products, and second, from some others which have ceased activity without cancelling their registration.

The mission team found that some dispatching centres of seed potatoes were not registered.

Also some registered establishments said that all or part of their production was bought from contractors which are not individually registered. This was the case of a Lucerne seed distributor, a grapevine plant multiplier and a seed potato producer. However, these contractors are regularly checked by inspectors of CCTIA.

6.3.2. Plant passport

6.3.3.1. Authorisation to issue plant passports

CCTIA does not issue Plant Passports directly. It delegates the issuing of Plant Passport to registered establishments which have submitted an application for authorisation to issue Plant passport. Each year, authorised establishments have to ask for a Systematic Phytosanitary Control before a specified deadline (e.g. 15 May for non-forest crops in open air, 31 August for forest crops) to SPP, SSPM or the National Forestry Centre, which then forward a copy to the local inspectors, who in turn carry out controls according to the work plan (see 6.2.4).

Any establishment which does not apply for a Systematic Phytosanitary Control is not allowed to issue Plant Passports that year. CCTIA stated that because the inspectors have a good knowledge of the situation within their area, it is unlikely that an establishment can issue Plant Passports without asking for the Systematic Phytosanitary Control. The authorisation does not expire, but CCTIA can withdraw the authorisation in the event of repeated infringements. In 2006, 208 establishments have been authorised to issue Plant Passports.

6.3.3.2. Issuing plant passports

The Plant Passports are produced, printed and stored by the authorised establishments. They take the form of a label attached to the plants or homogenous group of plants.
The mission team noted that labels were printed on suitable material. The mention “Rastlinný Pas”, which means Plant Passport in Slovak, was sometimes abbreviated to “RP”. In one situation, “EC-Plant passport” was not clearly indicated: at the top of the label was the acronym “ES”, which means European Community, at the bottom was “Číslo RP”, which means number of Plant passport.

6.3.3.3. Replacement plant passports

Replacement Plant Passports can theoretically be issued, but this does not happen in practice. In the situations where a Replacement Plant Passport is necessary, the mission team noted that CCTIA allows authorised establishments to issue new plant passports, provided they keep a record of the origin of each commodity, for the purposes of traceability.

6.3.3.4. Protected zones plant passport

Any person applying for authorisation to issue Plant Passports must specify in the application form his/her intention to issue Plant Passports for Protected Zones.

Most of the Plant Passports are used for movements within the Slovak Republic, the whole territory of which is a Protected Zone for *Globodera pallida*, and almost all of which is a Protected Zone for *Erwinia amylovora*. All the Plant Passports issued by the establishments visited by the team lacked the mark “ZP” and the special code for *Globodera pallida*. Also, some Plant Passports on host plants of *Erwinia amylovora*, as described in point 2 (b) of part B, Annex II of Council Directive 2000/29 EC, lacked the mark “ZP” and the specific code for this disease.

The mission team noted that some plant passports received by establishments from other Member States lacked the mark “ZP” for *Globodera pallida*.

6.3.3. Imports from third countries

The Single Authority stated that there have been no imports of regulated articles which require a plant passport to enter the internal market.

6.3.4. Internal market checks

6.3.4.1. Official examinations

All establishments authorised to issue Plant Passport are inspected at least once a year, and in some cases more often, depending on the work plan (see 6.2.4). A report is produced for every inspection and is signed by the inspector and the contact person for the establishment.

In 2005, CCTIA conducted 1223 inspections (669 at producers, 313 at producers/traders, 101 at traders, 140 at importers).

During their visits to the local offices, the mission team observed that the inspectors have technical guidance available for control and sampling, and also adequate equipment. By using the CCTIA intranet, inspectors have easy access to the basic data of the authorised establishments they deal with, like the type of production or the name of the contact person. Inspectors were found to be well aware of the characteristics of *Phytophthora ramorum* and the phytosanitary measures against this disease, in particular recent national measures (see 6.1).
During their visits to the establishments, the mission team observed that the number of inspections per year is at least one. In some of the largest establishments it is far beyond that: more than 30 per year. Records of activities were kept and maps were present, so that it is possible to trace back the specific location of a perennial plant from its Plant Passport. The mission team noted also that some irregularities had not been spotted by the local inspector: some Plant Passports were received or issued without the relevant “ZP” marking, and in one case Plant Passport labels were received by mail separately from the plants.

Samples are taken during the inspection. On some cultures they are taken systematically each year (e.g. lucerne seeds, seed potatoes). In all cases, the inspector takes a sample if suspicious symptoms are found.

6.3.4.2. Occasional checks

Non-registered establishments are also checked occasionally, e.g. potato ware producers, for the presence of harmful organisms. These checks are unscheduled.

6.4. Exemptions from the system

6.4.1. Small quantities, small producers or processors and local movement

These establishments are not registered.

6.4.2. Plants, plant products and other objects prepared and ready for sale to the final consumer

CTIA stated that producers of plants, plant products and other objects listed in Annex V, Part A, Section I, points 2 and 3 of Council Directive 2000/29/EC are very few, and that they are all inspected.

6.5. Enforcement of the system

In the event of sampling, the plants under investigation cannot be sold pending the receipt of results from the laboratory. In the event of a harmful organism being found, CCTIA headquarters are informed, decide on official measures and send instruction to the grower with a copy to the local inspector. The local inspector is responsible for verifying execution of these measures on site.

In 2006, two samples of mother plant of Prunus were positive for the Plum Pox Virus (PPV) in one establishment visited. In another establishment, samples of Prunus were positive for Apricot Chlorotic Leafroll Mycoplasm (ACLM). Table 1, below, shows that for these two outbreaks, the delay between sampling and the official result was 38 days maximum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Sampling</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Date of first official result</th>
<th>Verification of measures of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPV</td>
<td>22/05</td>
<td>06/06</td>
<td>29/06 (1)</td>
<td>06/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACLM</td>
<td>18/07</td>
<td>27/07</td>
<td>28/07 (2)</td>
<td>Before 31/10 (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) report of the laboratory (2) report of inspection.
For PPV, verification of measures to be taken by the grower was done within less than two months of sampling. The measures were to destroy the two symptomatic trees found positive and test the other mother plants. These were subsequently found to be free from PPV. Local inspectors will carry out targeted monitoring in 2007 at the outbreak site. The establishment will be authorised to issue Plant Passport on *Prunus* in the following years from this place of production.

For ACLM, verification was not done before three months were up because measures to be taken by the grower were to uproot the trees and burn them. But burning was forbidden by the Fire Official Services during the dry period, for safety reasons. The establishment will be authorised to issue Plant Passport on *Prunus* in the following year from this place of production.

CCTIA stated that no shortcomings in respect of Systematic Phytosanitary Control have been found so far. However some establishments made mistakes in filling in issued Plant Passports. Remedial measures taken were to reinforce the communication on the Plant Passport System. No fines had been imposed.

The other Member States have not notified any interception concerning Slovak produce to the Community standardised information system EUROPHYT in 2006.

The Slovak Republic has not notified any interception concerning another Member State to EUROPHYT in 2006.

### 6.6. Laboratories

Analyses for the Plant Passport System are carried out by the CCTIA Diagnostics Section, which consists of 5 laboratories, with the specialisation described in the table 2. Inspectors address the samples according to the laboratories' specialities.

Table 2 : The laboratories of CCTIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Area of activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bratislava</td>
<td>General diagnostics, Virology, Bacteriology, Mycology, Nematology, Entomology, Molecular Diagnostics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zvolen</td>
<td>General diagnostics, Mycology, Nematology, Entomology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Víglás</td>
<td>Mycology (Potato wart disease), Nematology (Potato cyst nematodes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Košice</td>
<td>General diagnostics, Mycology, Nematology, Entomology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haniska</td>
<td>Post-harvests tests of seed potatoes, Bacteriology (Brown rot &amp; Ring rot, <em>Erwinia amylovora</em>), Nematology (molecular methods)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The laboratory in Bratislava co-ordinates the work of the other laboratories. It is well equipped. The samples are investigated by experts and given an anonymous number. The laboratory is preparing for accreditation by reference to the ISO 17025 standard, in particular for potato bacteria tests. The initial audit for accreditation will be carried out before the end of 2006.

Diagnostics methods used in the laboratory are modern and sensitive. However, a single protocol is used for detection and identification of *Erwinia amylovora*, regardless of whether samples are with symptoms or asymptomatic, although two different protocols have to be used according to EPPO standard PM 7/2011.

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11 EPPO Bulletin 34, 155-157
International contacts have been developed, including participation in ring-tests organised within the European Union for the potato bacteria *Clavibacter michiganensis* spp sepedonicus and *Rasltinia solanacearum*.

The experts are involved in providing training (see 6.2.2), the preparation of manuals, technical guidelines and any other material useful for the inspector’s activities.

### 6.7. Follow up of previous missions

#### 6.7.1. Mission DG(SANCO)/7769/2005, on plant health in the potato sector

The responses of the Single Authority in their action plan following the above mission did not address two of the recommendations in the report.

Recommendation 2 was to ensure that “investigations for clonally related contamination include, where appropriate, lots with a link more than one generation back”.

Recommendation 3 was to ensure that “where a clonal link is the most likely cause of the contamination, at least all sister lots are designated as “probably contaminated” – or, if test results are positive, “contaminated”. The farms where this designation has been done – regardless of test results – should be included in the “demarcated zone” with the corresponding requirements for surveys, renewal of seed etc., stipulated in point 4.2 of Annex IV of Council Directive 93/85/EEC or point 4.2 of Annex VI of Council Directive 98/57/EC.”

A discussion between the mission team and the official bodies clarified the situation. CCTIA explained that it had misunderstood the recommendations because there was no provision for the stipulated measures in their legislation currently being in force. The official bodies stated that the recommendations will be addressed in the new legislation which is now under revision.

#### 6.7.2. Mission DG(SANCO)/7771/2005, to evaluate the current situation of *Erwinia amylovora*

The response of the Single Authority in their action plan following the above mission did not address one recommendation in the report.

Recommendation 3 was to ensure that “the movement of beehives from the infected spots and their vicinity to the safe areas is controlled”.

A discussion between the mission team and the official bodies clarified the situation. CCTIA explained that it thought it not possible to ban movements of beehives, and so could only issue a recommendation. The mission team replied that controlling the movement of beehives did not mean banning it totally, but, under EU legislation, this control must be covered by mandatory measures. After that, the official bodies stated that the recommendation would be taken into account in future official instructions.

### 7. Conclusions

#### 7.1. Legislation

CCTIA explained that relevant Community legislation has been transposed. According to this legislation, the inspectors have the legal power to carry out their tasks.
7.2. Competent authority performance

CCTIA has a clear structure and division of responsibilities, with good work planning, coordination and communication. The inspectors are supported in their tasks by direct access to the CCTIA intranet, by inspection manuals on plant passport activities, and by standardised forms and recent training. There is excellent cooperation between the local inspectors and the establishments.

7.3. The Plant Passport System

7.3.1. Registration

A National Registration System is in place, using computer software, in which each establishment has a unique number. The database is accessible to local inspectors. New applications are verified on document and on site before being accepted and registered.

However, the registration is not fully in compliance with Article 1 of Directive 92/90/EEC, because some seed potato dispatching centres, and some producers under contract, are not registered. Also, by continuing a former system of registration which existed before accession to EU, the system registers a large number of establishments which either do not have to be registered under Commission Directive 92/90/EC, or have ceased their activities. This could make it difficult to manage establishments whose activities have to comply with the above Directive.

The establishments visited by the team were aware of their obligations as laid down in Article 2(2) of Directive 92/90/EEC and in Article 6 (5), 4th subparagraph of Directive 2000/29/EC.

7.3.2. Plant Passport

CCTIA authorises establishments to produce, print and/or store Plant Passports, following a control procedure which requires a Systematic Phytosanitary Control on site. The passport, as a label, is attached to the plants in compliance with Article 3 (2) (h) of Directive 92/105/EEC.

The acronym “RP” is used to mean Plant Passport, although it is the distinctive marking for a replacement Plant Passport as specified in the Annex to Directive 92/105/EEC. This might cause confusion in the other Member States.

Replacement Plant Passports are not issued, but in each situation traceability of the movement is ensured.

Plant passports contain the information required in the Annex to Directive 92/105/EEC, except for, in the majority of the examples observed, marking of the relevant Protected Zone. This does not comply with Article 1(3) and 3 of Commission Directive 92/105/EEC.

7.3.3. Internal market checks

Establishments authorised to issue Plant Passports are inspected at least once a year, as required by Article 6 (5), second subparagraph, point (c) of Directive 2000/29/EC and by Article 4 of Directive 92/90/EEC.
Some irregularities in Plant Passports from other Member States have not been spotted by the Official Authorities. This does not comply with Article 4 of Commission Directive 92/90/EEC.

### 7.4. Exemptions from the system

Exemptions for small producers and local movements are applied under Article 6(7) of Council Directive 2000/29/EC.

### 7.5. Enforcement of the system

The detection of outbreaks of harmful organisms is efficient. Measures are quickly taken to manage the situation.

However, in the event of an ACLM or PPV outbreak, the measures do not comply with Article 11(1) of Directive 2000/29/EC: Establishments are allowed to issue Plant Passports the year following an ACLM outbreak and during the 3 years following a PPV outbreak. This is in contradiction with points 12 and 16, respectively, of Section II, Part A, Annex IV of Directive 2000/29/EC. Article 11(2) of the same Directive offers the alternative option of establishing, taking into account the nature of the findings made in the examination, that the plants concerned cannot present any risk of spread. However, the measures taken for the two diseases do not comply with this Article either, as no pest risk assessments were carried out.

### 7.6. Laboratories

A network of laboratories has been set up. It provides effective support for the Plant Passport System. Efficiency is reinforced by the accreditation process and by international collaboration. However, the method used to detect *Erwinia amylovora* on asymptomatic samples does not follow the EPPO standard PM 7/20.

### 7.7. Follow up to the previous missions

Previous recommendations have been explained, understood, and accepted. The CCTIA has undertaken to address the issues.

### 7.8. Overall conclusion

The Plant Passport System is in place. The clear division of responsibilities among the departments of the CCTIA, the computer software for registration and the good cooperation with producers and a network of laboratories ensure the efficiency of the system. Some improvements, however, are necessary, in particular with regards to registration, the format of the Plant Passport for Protected Zones, and checks of Plant Passports received from other Member States. Furthermore, stronger measures should be taken if PPV or ACLM disease is found.

### 8. CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held with representatives of the Single Authority and CCTIA in Bratislava on 24 November 2006, during which the main findings and preliminary conclusions of the mission were presented. The representatives of the Single Authority and CCTIA provisionally accepted the conclusions.
9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The competent authorities in the Slovak Republic are recommended to ensure that:

1) all producers or dispatching centres are registered to comply with Article 1(1) of Directive 92/90/EEC;

2) the relevant Protected Zone is mentioned on any Plant Passports issued, to comply with Article 1(3) and Article 3 of Directive 92/105/EEC;

3) the examination of records and related documents is done adequately, to fully comply with Article 4 of Directive 92/90/EEC;

4) in the event of a PPV outbreak, the measures taken comply either with Article 11(1) and point 16 of Section II, Part A, Annex IV of Directive 2000/29/EC or with Article 11(2) of the said Directive;

5) in the event of an ACLM outbreak, the measures comply either with Article 11(1) and point 12 of Section II, Part A of Annex IV of Directive 2000/29/EC or with Article 11(2) of the said Directive.

The competent authorities in the Slovak Republic are also advised to

6) update the registration system in order to, first, eliminate any establishments which have ceased activities; second, to clearly spot establishments for which registration, and/or inspections, are compulsory under Commission Directive 92/90/EEC and Commission Directive 93/50/EEC;

7) to apply the EPPO standard PM 7/20 as laboratory methods for detection and identification of Erwinia amylovora on asymptomatic samples.

10. SINGLE AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The Single Authority's response to the recommendations can be found at the following link: