Council of the European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB item for the meeting of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of 17 November 2025: The plant health risks threatening European grapevine production *- Information from Hungary, supported by Czechia, Italy and Slovakia*

Hungary, with the support of Czechia, Italy and Slovakia would like to draw the attention to certain plant pests that pose significant danger to the EU by causing devastating damage to crops and natural habitats.

According to FAO estimations up to 40% of world crops is lost every year due to different pests and diseases. Plant health is crucial for agriculture, forestry, and biodiversity. Plant health decline directly leads to reduced food availability and greater food insecurity.

The EU's Plant Health Regulation establishes a comprehensive framework to protect plants against Union quarantine pests and regulated non-quarantine pests. However, maintaining healthy crops is more and more challenging since warmer temperature is helping plant pests and diseases survive and spread into new areas. Globalization and trade routes provide a means for pests to be transported across borders. These factors are leading to more frequent and intense pest outbreaks.

On the other hand the number of approved active substances has been drastically reduced in the last decades. In the same time there are no available and affordable alternative options on the market for farmers to protect their crops. In the face of the increasing pest pressure, it is essential to find solution as the lack of efficient plant protection products can result in serious crop damages. The reduced availability of insecticides has become especially a major concern for farmers making it more difficult to manage insects.

Flavescence dorée is a serious quarantine disease of grapevines, transmitted by an insect vector. It is affecting several Member States and is subject to quarantine and mandatory control measures across the EU. In 2025 this plant disease become more prevalent in Hungary, causing huge damages to the grape and wine sector. A comprehensive approach that includes monitoring, sanitation and an integrated pest management (IPM) strategy is crucial for managing the pest. Early detection of the presence of the quarantine pest is a key factor for effective eradication. However the control of the vector through targeted insecticide treatments is also essential.

It is of utmost importance that the eradication measures, such as the destruction of infected or symptomatic plants and the protection against the vector insects are being done properly in all the affected Member States.

European vineyards are also exposed to other dangerous plant diseases such as *Xilella fastidiosa*, which is also transmitted by insects.

In order to properly implement the plant health measures appropriate instruments are needed.

Therefore, we are asking the European Commission:

- to take into consideration the availability of viable alternatives when deciding on approval/withdrawal of active substances;
- to provide longer transitional period during the withdrawal of active substances especially which have a crucial role in the protective measures against quarantine pests and their vectors;
- to make every effort to widen the availability of alternative active substances, especially in the protection of plants against insects;
- to consider making available for the Member States high-resolution satellite images to help them detect infestations of vineyard areas and to monitor the implementation of eradication measures;
- amending support rules to be more flexible for those farmers who apply protection measures (e.g. insecticide use, grubbing-up) in order not to lose eligibility for supports (in particular agri-environmental scheme or eco schemes) or to receive replanting subsidies as quickly as possible (potentially multiple times).