

Recommendation of the Working Group on the Annexes of the Council Directive 2000/29/EC – Section II – Listing of Harmful Organisms as regards the future listing of *Opogona sacchari* (Bojer)¹

Current regulatory status

Opogona sacchari is currently listed as harmful organism known to occur in the Union territory under Annex I, Part A, Section II of the Directive 2000/29/EC.

Identity of the pest

The moth *Opogona sacchari* has a wide host range (see annex to the recommendation) and is mainly known as a pest of tropical and subtropical plants like banana, pine apple and various ornamentals from (sub)tropical origin. Females lay eggs in crevices in plant tissue, in groups of about five eggs. A female lays 50-200 eggs in total. After hatching the larva enters the plant and tunnels in woody or fleshy stems. In woody plants such as *Dracaena* and *Yucca* the larvae live on dead and living portions of the cortex and pith, and infested tissues may feel soft. In some plant species (e.g. *Chamaedorea* palms), the larvae typically feed at the base of the plant where the aerial roots enter the soil. Larval development requires several weeks depending on temperature. The pupae work themselves partially out of the tissue to allow emergence of the adult. See EPPO (1997) for a full datasheet.

Distribution of the pest

It is currently reported in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal (Madeira and Azores), Spain (Canary Islands) and Switzerland. The exact distribution of *Opogona sacchari* remains nevertheless unclear, especially outdoor.

Potential for establishment and spread in the PRA area

O. sacchari has been intercepted and found many times on plants in the EU. The pest has been reported from greenhouses in many EU-countries. The interceptions notified in Europhyt likely underestimate the number of infested plants/consignments moving in trade. Probability of spread by EU-internal trade of plants for planting is very high. The number of interceptions despite the current quarantine status indicates the very high probability of spread. The pest will often go undetected upon visual inspection. It will be detected after 6-7 weeks in the greenhouse.

O. sacchari is potentially a major pest of bananas and pine apple. In the PRA area, banana plantations (for the production of fruit) are present on a very limited scale in Madeira and Azores (Portugal) where *O. sacchari* is already present. Some small plantations of bananas are also produced in Italy and Cyprus. Also sugar cane and pine apple are minor crops (or not present at all) on mainland Europe.

Potential for consequences in the PRA area

Once found on the plant, it is no longer possible to market it due to its visible impact. Affected plants can also die. Without any control measures and under suitable climatic conditions (e.g. in botanical gardens, zoos or tropical holiday worlds like the “Tropical Islands”), the economic impact

¹ Scientific basis for the recommendation: Pest Risk Assessment prepared by the Netherland NPPO.

is expected to be major for various ornamental plant species (major impact). Targeted measures (e.g. intensive monitoring, removal of infested and damaged plants and/or application of insecticides if possible) are needed to reduce the impact.

Recommendation

The Working Group believes that the quarantine status is no longer justified, taking into account its current distribution in the EU. Nevertheless, considering that plant for planting is the main pathway of spreading, and its considerable economic impact on the intended use of the relevant plants for planting, the Working Group suggests listing *O. sacchari* as a Regulated Non-Quarantine Pest.

Specific requirements are nevertheless needed to ensure as low as possible prevalence of the pest in the area of production and plants for planting free from the organism on import and movement within the Union territory.