

## **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 *Parasaissetia nigra* Nietner<sup>1</sup>**

### **Current regulatory status**

*Parasaissetia nigra* is regulated in Annex II, Part A, Section II of Council Directive 2000/29/EC as organism known to occur in the Union territory. Its introduction into and spread within the Union shall be banned if present on plants of *Citrus* L., *Fortunella* Swingle, *Poncirus* Raf., and their hybrids other than fruit and seeds.

Import prohibitions are in place (Annex III A16) for plants of *Citrus* L., *Fortunella* Swingle, *Poncirus* Raf., and their hybrids, while Annex IV requirements (AII 17) are listed for the introduction and movement into and within the Union of plants of *Citrus* L., *Fortunella* Swingle, *Poncirus* Raf., and their hybrids, other than fruit and seeds.

### **Identity of the pest**

The valid scientific name is *Parasaissetia nigra* (Nietner). Adult female scale insects are neotenic (larviform) and wingless. The adult females are scale-like, elongate-oval, somewhat narrowed in front, flat to moderately convex, sometimes hump-backed in the middle, and up to 5.5mm long and 4.0mm wide. They darken with maturity, often becoming shiny and dark-brown. Males are unknown. In the field, mature *P. nigra* specimens are similar in appearance to mature *Saissetia* species, but lack the raised dorsal “H” pattern.

*P. nigra* is a polyphagous pest, feeding on more than 400 species from 94 families some of which are also present in parts of the risk assessment area. *P. nigra* is mainly found on perennials, and only occasionally on annual plants. It favours ornamental plants of tropical and sub-tropical origin, e.g. *Abutilon*, *Codiaeum*, *Ficus*, *Hibiscus*, *Nerium*, and *Plumeria*, but also attacks several agricultural crops growing in Europe, including avocado (*Persea americana*), custard apple (*Annona cherimola*), *Rutaceae*, cotton (*Gossypium* spp.), mango (*Mangifera indica*), papaya (*Carica papaya*), and pomegranate (*Punica granatum*).

*P. nigra* usually infests stems, twigs and foliage, but may also be found on fruit. The scales excrete honeydew, which coats the plant surfaces and serves as a medium for the growth of sooty moulds. Heavily infested plants may exhibit defoliation and stunted growth. This pest typically exhibits a clumped distribution and is frequently attended by ants that feed on the honeydew. Trails of ants may in fact help locating in field conditions the presence of infestations of this pest.

### **Distribution of the pest**

*P. nigra* is currently present in several EU countries, (Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Hungary and UK). However its presence is quite rare.

### **Potential for establishment and spread in the PRA area**

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<sup>1</sup> Scientific basis for the recommendation: EFSA PLH Panel (EFSA Panel on Plant Health), 2013. Scientific Opinion on the risk to plant health posed by *Parasaissetia nigra* (Nietner) in the EU territory, with the identification and evaluation of risk reduction options. EFSA Journal 2013;11(7):3318, 73 pp. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2013.3318 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2013.3318/epdf>

*P. nira* is already established in five Member States, (Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Hungary and UK). Based on its physiological characteristics and climatic conditions, it is most likely for it to be established in outdoor conditions in southern Europe, in warm areas and, in indoor conditions, in the rest of Europe.

Entry through the principal pathways is assessed as moderately likely for plants for planting and very unlikely for living parts of plants, such as fruit and cut flowers with foliage, the discrepancy being mainly due to the difference in probability of transfer to a suitable host. Establishment is rated as very likely outdoors in Mediterranean areas and indoors in the whole risk assessment area. The pest can readily be moved with plant material but is limited by climatic conditions. The magnitude of the potential consequences is rated as minor.

### **Potential for consequences in the PRA area**

Impact is rated as minor as crop production is rarely reduced or at a limited level and additional control measures are rarely necessary, mainly because of the control provided by natural enemies already present in the risk assessment area and/or by biocontrol agents released for the control of other pests. In addition, chemical control targeted to other species can effectively limit the populations of *P. nira*. However, the most relevant consequence is the cosmetic damage to ornamental plants. In areas where the pest has been present or has been introduced no significant damage has been reported. It seems like is mainly under natural control in its area of origin and in the introduced areas in Europe

### **Recommendation**

*P. nira* is already present in several EU member states, with a very slow spreading capacity. Its impact is considered as minor. The regulated *Rutaceae* species constitute only a very small proportion of the potential host plants of *P. nira*, confirming that the current phytosanitary measures are mostly ineffective in preventing the further introduction and spread of *P. nira* in the EU.

Surveillance at the production site and treatment of the consignment as the most effective and technically feasible risk reduction options, particularly when in combination.

The Working Group proposes to deregulate *P. nira*.