

## ITC CONFERENCE GRANT SCIENTIFIC REPORT

This report is submitted for approval by the grantee to the MC Chair.

**Action number: CA16107**

**Conference title:**

**European conference on *Xylella fastidiosa*: finding answers to a global problem**

**Conference start and end date: 13/11/2017 to 15/11/2017**

**Conference attendance start and end date: 13/11/2017 to 15/11/2017**

**Grantee name: Milan Ivanovic**

### ACTIVITIES DURING YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THIS CONFERENCE:

The conference “European conference on *Xylella fastidiosa*: finding answers to a global problem” was held at the University of the Balearic Islands, Palma de Mallorca, Spain. It was organised jointly by European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the University of the Balearic Islands, the Euphresco network for phytosanitary research coordination and funding, the EU Horizon 2020 projects POnTE and XF-ACTORS, and the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD).

On the first day, before the beginning of the conference, all participants have registered and handed their poster in the hall of the venue. The conference was attended by more than 250 scientists, extension officers, olive producers and students all around the world. Some of the participants were from countries where *Xylella fastidiosa* was established for a long time in the past, such as USA, Brasil or Costa Rica. Others were from countries where this bacterium is not yet discovered, such as Great Britain, Canada, Germany, Serbia, Greece etc. Welcome and introduction to the event was held by the representative of the local organizer University of the Balearic Islands (UIB) and Instituto de Investigaciones Agroambientales y de Economía del Agua (INAGEA), as well as the member of the EFSA. The working part of the first day of the conference was divided into sections: Session 1: *Xylella fastidiosa*: a global threat; Session 2: *Xylella fastidiosa*: biology and genetics; Session 3: *Xylella fastidiosa*: host plants and resistance; Session 4: *Xylella fastidiosa*: pathogen and disease control in the host plants. After these four sessions a Poster session & Networking reception was organized in the hall of the conference venue. The second day started with Session 5: Vectors and epidemiology; followed by Session 6: Detection and identification; and Session 7: From field detection to disease dynamics. The second day finished again with Poster session & Networking reception in the same place. Third and the last day of the conference started with Session 8: Surveillance and control: from modelling to stakeholders analyses followed by the final session. During the final session chaired by Mike Jeger a feedback from stakeholders was presented on achievements and needs on *Xylella* research: from a farmer perspective, from a nursery perspective and from a risk manager perspective. At the end of the conference some agriculture and plant health related topics were presented such as: agricultural research and innovation in Horizon 2020: Plant health in the SC2 Work Programme 2018 – 2020; Microbiome under FOOD 2030 strategy and 2017-2022 Euphresco strategic research agenda. The conference was ended with Concluding remarks held by Alexander Purcell & Mike Jeger. It has been pointed out that *X. fastidiosa*, although been officially reported in Italy, France and Spain in last few years, is probably present for as long as 20 or more years in these regions. It’s elusive nature, dissemination and overall biology kept it undercover for a long period.

**IMPACT ON YOUR RESEARCH AND FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)**

The conference provided a platform for in-depth discussion on the results of research into *X. fastidiosa* and its vectors, in support of on-going efforts to control the European outbreaks. From scientific experts where *X. fastidiosa* has been present for many years we had an opportunity to hear how to deal with this dangerous bacterial disease, how to contain its spread and how to live along with it. Recent detection of *X. fastidiosa* in Italy, France and Spain represents an important change in the geographical distribution of this dangerous plant pathogen, which now poses a serious threat to the agriculture and environment of Europe and the Mediterranean region. Fortunately, *X. fastidiosa* has not been detected in Serbia yet. Serbia is considered a *Xylella*-free country and the status has been checked periodically by surveying and sampling of potential host plants mainly of the external origin. Since the establishment of *X. fastidiosa* in Italy and later in France, a number of plant species inspected and sampled for the analysis at the border crossings have increased rapidly. No pathogen was detected in 173 samples in 2016 and 126 samples in 2017. This scientific conference was a good opportunity for us to communicate with our colleagues and exchange experiences in testing large number of samples. Phytobacteriology laboratory at Faculty of agriculture, University of Belgrade took part in External Quality Assessment studies for laboratory performance EU-XF-PT-2017-02: Proficiency testing for the evaluation of molecular and serological diagnosis of *Xylella fastidiosa*. Since Serbia is a *Xylella*-free country any laboratory experiments with living cells is prohibited. Therefore, future collaboration can include a cell inactivated DNA for a new round of proficiency testing in detection of *X. fastidiosa* in plant material. Also, future cooperation will focus on development of protocols for diagnosis of *X. fastidiosa*, including improved methods for sampling, for isolation of *X. fastidiosa* from plant material and for (molecular) analysis of strains.

Participation at this conference was a unique opportunity to present a poster on “Preventing *Xylella fastidiosa* introduction in Serbia – Challenges in pathogen detection” and to discuss my findings with colleagues from all-over the world. This feedback will help us implementing efficient measures to prevent introduction and spreading of *X. fastidiosa* in Serbia. Moreover, meeting renowned colleagues will certainly help in my career advancement.