



Brussels, 22 March 2015

Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis,
Health and Food Safety
Copy President Jean-Claude Juncker

Dear Commissioner,

Following my recent communications to your services, I have met last week with representatives of the Directorate General in charge of Health on the issue of *Xylella Fastidiosa* in the Apulia region (Italy).

We would hereby like, once more, to highlight the great mistake that the European Commission could commit in applying a protocol for the eradication of the *Xylella* pathogen, a measure that does not take into due consideration the evolution of the situation on the ground and that appears to be outdated by new findings, research and technical successful responses.

As pointed out to the DG, with the support of scientific and visual material, recent studies conducted by the University of Foggia confirm what is already stated in the European Commission Audit Report of 10-14 February 2014, i.e. that another type of pathogen, Fungi, that have been found in at least 6 different species (details are in the reports submitted), can alone cause the drying out of trees. Fungi have been found in all trees hit.

Consequently, the responsibility of the disease and the drying out of the trees is to be attributed to Fungi and needs to be cured as such.

More than 500 olive trees, treated for Fungi, have recovered and have been living in good health already since spring 2014. Pictures, videos and other support material, together with the studies of the University of Foggia, all point in the same direction.

The treatment successfully applied by Apulia farmers could be extended to all trees affected, to other regions, to other EU countries that are worried about the fast outbreak of the disease. It would be a unique chance for EU research and for EU olive oil production to have found the reason and the solution to this uncommon and inexplicable contagion.

Peacelink, speaking on behalf of local associations reunited around the Committee Spazi Popolari, believes that pursuing the decision of eradication is totally unnecessary and does not represent the solution to the problem.

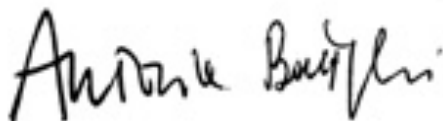
There are too many factors that have not been duly investigated and that point out to Xylella NOT being the real cause for olive oil drying out syndrome.

The European Commission risks condemning to death the whole Apulia ecosystem on the basis of results of tests that have not even ascertained the pathogenicity of Xylella in those trees. Tests realized by Italian authorities have been hasty, partial and inconclusive.

What would be the political consequences for the European Commission if it were demonstrated that the destruction of a million olive oil trees was not only unnecessary but also useless?

We call on you to ensure that before any decision is taken on the matter, all available scientific data and evidence is fully taken into account. You announced after the last Health Council that you are ready to visit the region and assess the situation. Please make sure you do so before it is too late to find out that you took the wrong decision. We stand ready to assist and are at your disposal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Antonia Battaglia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Antonia Battaglia
Peacelink
Apulia/Brussels