



**EU stops some fruit and vegetable imports from India,
to protect EU crops from pests**

New Delhi, 01 May 2014: Emergency measures proposed by the Commission to ban the import of certain fruits and vegetables [Colocasia sp (taro, eddo) Mangifera sp, (mango) Momordica sp (bitter gourd), Solanum melongena (eggplant) and Trichosanthes sp (snake gourd)] from India, were endorsed by EU Member State experts meeting at the Standing Committee on Plant Health in March 2014 and published on the EU Official Journal on April 24th 2014.

The measures prohibit the import of some fruits and vegetables from India to tackle the significant shortcomings in the phytosanitary certification system of such products exported to the EU. This decision had to be taken due to a high number of such consignments being intercepted at arrival in the EU with quarantine pests, mainly insects, like non-European fruit flies. Though the prohibited commodities represent less than 5 % of the total fresh fruits and vegetables imported into the EU from India, the potential introduction of new pests could pose a threat to EU agriculture and production. Such pests were found in 207 consignments of fruits and vegetables from India imported into the EU in 2013. Audits carried out by the Commission in India, in particular in 2010 and 2013, revealed shortcomings in the phytosanitary export certification system. Despite assurances and action taken by India, the number of interceptions increased further in 2013. In the light of the outcome of those audits and the number of interceptions, it has been concluded that the current phytosanitary safeguards of India are insufficient to ensure that consignments are free from harmful organisms or to address the risk of introduction of harmful organisms into the Union through the import of the specified commodities. The measures will apply from May onwards. A revision will take place before 31 December 2015. For more information please visit the European Commission's webpage for EU rules on plant health and biosecurity:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosafety/index_en.htm

The adoption of this ban follows a long process started by the EU Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) with two audits conducted in India in 2010 and in April 2013. Already in July 2013, the EU authorities have officially informed the Indian authorities about the potential adoption of an export ban for mangoes and a limited number of vegetables. Between July 2013 and April 2014 several exchanges have taken place between the EU and India on this same subject both at political and technical level.

The lifting of the ban is possible and the following steps are envisaged:

- India will correct the deficiencies as regards their official controls to ensure that commodities exported to the EU fulfil the EU phytosanitary import requirements;
- India will send guarantees on the correct implementation of the Indian measures;
- The EU's Food and Veterinary Office will verify the good implementation of these guarantees on-the-spot at the end of 2014.

The decision on the lifting of the ban would depend on the outcome of an on-the-spot inspection by the EU's Food and Veterinary Office towards the end of 2014.

The EU has indeed very stringent rules when it comes to protecting its territory from pests which harm European fruits and vegetables.

For more information please visit –

<http://www.facebook.com/EUinIndia>

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/index_en.htm