First report of *Acidovorax citrulli* causing a leaf spot disease on tomato plants in Greece

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Necrotic black spots, often with chlorotic haloes, were observed on leaves of tomato seedlings growing in two transplant houses in Greece, during June 2019 and April 2020. Approximately 20 to 30% of the seedling plants were diseased, causing serious economic losses to the houses. Isolations from the infected leaf tissues on King's B medium consistently yielded a slow-growing and non-fluorescent bacterium, forming cream-coloured colonies. Recently, these isolates were characterized as *Acidovorax citrulli* (Ac) with the following methodologies. They were found to be gram-negative, aerobic, oxidase-positive and negative for arginine, aesculin, gelatin and levan tests. They also induced hypersensitive response on tobacco and reacted with specific antiserum for Ac (Cat. No. 07354/02, Loewe®). Additionally, the isolates were identified by PCR amplification with specific primers SEQ ID no.3/ no.4 (Schaad et al. 2000). Blast analysis of 16S rDNA sequence of the specific isolate HMU50556 (424 bp, GenBank Accession No. MT906357) showed 99.53% similarity to Ac type strain ICMP7500 = ATCC29625 (NR_041758.1), strain T1 (WSBA01000009.1) and AAC00-1 (NZ_RCCQ01000001.1). Furthermore, the *gvrB* partial sequence (879 bp, MT912472) was 99.54% identical to Ac type strain ICMP7500 (GU385478.1) and 100% identical to strains T1 (NZ_WSBA01000009.1) and AAC00-1 (NC_008752.1). Pathogenicity tests were conducted on tomato and watermelon seedlings by spray-inoculation with suspension of the isolate HMU50556 (10^8 CFU mL⁻¹). Also,

mature watermelon fruits were inoculated using toothpick technique. Symptoms were developed within 7 days and resembled those of natural infections. The bacterium was then re-isolated from infested tissues of all seedlings and identified as Ac, fulfilling Koch's postulates. To our knowledge, this is the first report of Ac causing disease on tomato seedlings in Greece, Europe, confirming previous findings in Israel (Chalupowicz et al. 2020) that this species can infect other plants than cucurbits. Our observations indicate possible transmission and spread of Ac through tomato seeds.

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Data availability Data presented in this Note has been submitted in the NCBI GenBank.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Consent for publication All authors have approved the manuscript and agree with its submission to *Journal of Plant Pathology*.

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