
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY FORUM UNIT

Parma, 26 May 2008
EFSA/AF/M/2008/145/PUB/FIN

Minutes

**3RD MEETING OF THE STEERING GROUP ON COOPERATION
BERLIN (GERMANY), 26 NOVEMBER 2007**

Chair: *Hubert Deluyker*, Head of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance Department,
European Food Safety Authority.

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM

Austria	<i>Roland Grossgut</i>
Belgium	<i>Charles Crémer</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Stefka Petrova</i>
Cyprus	<i>Eleni Ioannou-Kakouri</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Vaclav Stejskal</i>
Denmark	<i>Arne Büchert</i>
France	<i>Lilian Puech</i>
Germany	<i>Gaby-Fleur Bôl</i>
Ireland	<i>Alan Reilly</i>
Netherlands	<i>Evert Schouten</i>
Portugal	<i>Manuel Barreto Dias</i>
Romania	<i>Alecsandra Dida Cozachievi</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>Zuzana Bírošová</i>
Spain	<i>Cristina Alonso Andicoberry</i>
European Commission	<i>Jeannie Vergnettes</i>

MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

SC Vice-Chair	<i>Ada Knaap</i>
SC Vice-Chair	<i>Pierre Le Neindre</i>

EFSA STAFF

<i>Bernhard Berger</i>
<i>Lucia Bilardi</i>
<i>Stefan Fabiansson</i>
<i>Djien Liem</i>
<i>Elena Marani</i>
<i>Torben Nilsson</i>

1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Hubert Deluyker, Head of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance Department, and Gaby-Fleur Bôl, BfR, welcomed the participants and opened the meeting.

Apologies were received from Herman Koëter, Director of Science, and Vittorio Silano, Chair of the Scientific Committee.

2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted without additional agenda items.

3 STATUS ON THE ACTION POINTS OF THE 2ND SGC MEETING

Djien Liem, Head of the Scientific Committee and Advisory Forum Unit, informed the SGC that most of the action points had been addressed already, while the remaining items would be discussed in relation with the specific ESCOs.

4 FEEDBACK FROM THE SC AND AF

Djien Liem provided a brief feedback from the Scientific Committee (SC) and the Advisory Forum (AF). Please refer to the already published minutes of these meetings for more details.

5 UPDATE ON THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON FOSTERING HARMONISED RISK ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

Roland Grossgut, Chair of the ESCO WG on fostering harmonised risk assessment approaches, presented this ESCO WG. He also made a proposal on the Extranet structure for the ESCO WG. The SGC endorsed this proposal and also agreed that 1) the ESCO WG should not address risk communication, since this is covered by the AFCWG, 2) the first step, involving a questionnaire to the Member States, should be completed with a report before the end of 2008, 3) the

ESCO WG would also look at quality management, and 4) no more participants are needed for the ESCO WG.

6 UPDATE ON THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF BOTANICALS AND BOTANICAL PREPARATIONS

Djien Liem informed the SGC that the draft guidance document on botanicals had been adopted for public consultation by the SC and that the ESCO WG on safety assessment of botanicals and botanical preparations would soon begin its work in two sub-working groups focusing on testing the safety assessment of botanicals and botanical preparation on selected cases and updating the compendia, respectively. The deadline for nomination of experts for this ESCO was the 30 November 2007.

7 UPDATE ON THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON RISKS AND BENEFITS OF FORTIFICATION OF FOODS WITH FOLIC ACID

Alan Reilly, Chair of the ESCO WG on risks and benefits of fortification of foods with folic acid, updated the SGC on this ESCO WG, including its mandate, participants and the outcome of an initial audio conference on 19 October 2007. A folic acid expert conference is foreseen in Sweden in 2008 and it was suggested to avoid the word cancer in the conference title, since this could be misleading. The SGC advised the ESCO WG to remain within the scope of its terms of reference, reflecting the remit of EFSA, or, alternatively, to submit a proposal for revision of its terms of reference to the SGC, in case the ESCO WG sees a need to expand its activities.

8 UPDATE ON THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON HORIZON SCANNING TO IDENTIFY EMERGING FOOD SAFETY RISKS

Djien Liem updated the SGC on the ESCO WG on emerging food safety risks, in particular on the outcomes of its first meeting on 19 September 2007 and the further work in sub-working groups. Key issues are the filtering of information to identify the important emerging risks and the use of networks for this purpose.

9 UPDATE ON THE ESCO NETWORK ON HARMONISATION OF CHEMICAL OCCURRENCE DATA COLLECTION IN FOOD AND FEED

Stefan Fabiansson, Head of the Data Collection and Exposure Unit, presented the ESCO network on harmonisation of chemical occurrence data collection in food and feed. The Member States who have not yet nominated anyone for this ESCO network are encouraged to do so and article 36 projects are foreseen in the field of data collection. The SGC advised that a close cooperation should be sought with other data bases, e.g. Eurostat, and Stefan Fabiansson confirmed that this was the aim despite some challenges regarding the specific data formats. Hubert Deluyker informed the SGC that EFSA was preparing a data bases strategy paper that would also address the issues discussed by the SGC.

10 UPDATE ON THE EXPERT GROUP ON FOOD CONSUMPTION DATA COLLECTION

Stefan Fabiansson presented the expert group on food consumption data collection. Challenges comprise the data ownership and sharing as well as the quality assurance and compatibility of data from various sources.

11 UPDATE ON THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON SETTING-UP A DATA BASE OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS IN EUROPE TO ASSIST EFSA

Bernhard Berger, Head of the Scientific Cooperation Unit, presented the ESCO WG on setting-up a data base of scientific experts in Europe to assist EFSA. The work in 2007 would focus on developing the general data base structure, defining eligibility criteria and preparing a strategy for populating the data base. The data base would be launched in 2008.

12 UPDATE ON NANOTECHNOLOGY

Djien Liem updated the SGC on nanotechnology and informed that the SC expected to adopt an opinion on nanotechnology by the mid-2008. Possible ESCO activities on nanotechnology could possibly be considered at a later stage.

13 NEW PROJECT IDEAS

The SGC decided to consider new project ideas at a later stage, since there were already many ongoing activities that would require substantial inputs from the Member States and EFSA.

14 NEXT STEPS

The SGC agreed to meet again around May 2008.

15 MEMBERSHIP OF THE SGC

Torben Nilsson, Team Leader of the Advisory Forum Secretariat, referred to the original intention in the terms of reference of the SGC that it would be composed by a limited number of selected members of the AF and the SC, representing these bodies in the SGC. While this approach is presently followed for the SC, all interested AF members are invited to attend the SGC meetings, leading to a high representation of AF in the SGC. Two different view points emerged from the discussion: 1) The SGC should have a broad participation by all interested AF members and serve also as a platform for information sharing or 2) The AF should be represented by a limited number of its members (to be nominated by the AF) in order for the SGC to act as a steering group, while the information sharing on the ESCO working groups and networks would be achieved through regular updates at the AF and SC meetings. Since there was approximately equal support to these two different view points, it was agreed that the issue should be referred to the AF for discussion at its next meeting.

16 NEXT MEETINGS

The SGC agreed that two annual SGC meetings would be a reasonable frequency to monitor the ESCO activities and that organising the future SGC meetings back-to-back with AF or SC meetings could be considered for practical reasons.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No issues were raised.

18 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Andreas Hensel, BfR, closed the meeting and invited the SGC to meet in Berlin again in 2008.