

**ADVISORY FORUM AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION UNIT**

Parma, 22 November 2011  
EFSA/FP/M/2011/086/PUB

**Minutes**

**TWELFTH MEETING BETWEEN FOCAL POINTS AND EFSA  
GDANSK (POLAND), 19-20 OCTOBER 2011**

**Participants**

Chair: Bernhard Berger

|                |                                 |                |                                     |
|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Austria        | <i>Johann Steinwider</i>        | Latvia         | <i>Dace Vilcāne</i>                 |
| Belgium        | <i>Laurence Ballieux</i>        | Lithuania      | <i>Sniegulė Ščepoņavičienė</i>      |
| Bulgaria       | <i>Bistra Benkova</i>           | Luxembourg     | <i>Nathalie Welschbillig</i>        |
| Cyprus         | <i>Popi Ziegler</i>             | Malta          | <i>Ingrid Busuttil</i>              |
| Czech Republic | <i>Klara Bauerova</i>           | Netherlands    | <i>Hub Noteborn</i>                 |
| Denmark        | <i>Arne Büchert</i>             | Norway         | <i>Marie Louise Wiborg</i>          |
| Estonia        | <i>Piret Priisalu</i>           | Poland         | <i>Barbara Jaworska-Luczak</i>      |
| Finland        | <i>Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen</i>   | Portugal       | <i>Jorge Proença Reis</i>           |
| Germany        | <i>Brigitte Graf</i>            | Romania        | <i>Alecsandra Dida Cozachievici</i> |
| Greece         | <i>Stamatina Louka</i>          | Slovenia       | <i>Blaža Nahtigal</i>               |
| Hungary        | <i>Judit Sali</i>               | Spain          | <i>Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry</i>  |
| Iceland        | <i>Ástfríður Sigurðardóttir</i> | Sweden         | <i>Irene Mattisson</i>              |
| Ireland        | <i>Anne-Marie Boland</i>        | United Kingdom | <i>Alisdair Wotherspoon</i>         |

**Observers and Invitees**

|        |                         |             |                    |
|--------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Poland | <i>Iwona Wiśniewska</i> | Switzerland | <i>Judith Beck</i> |
| Poland | <i>Piotr Holownia</i>   |             |                    |

## Speakers from Member State

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Jan Orgelbrand</i> <sup>1</sup> |  |
|------------------------------------|--|

## Staff of the European Food Safety Authority

|                              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Bernhard Berger</i>       | <i>Saadia Noorani</i>    |
| <i>Kerstin Gross-Helmert</i> | <i>Carola Sondermann</i> |
| <i>Torben Nilsson</i>        | <i>Andras Szoradi</i>    |

## 1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Bernhard Berger from EFSA's Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation (AFSCO) Unit and Chair of the meeting opened the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting between Focal Points (FPs) and EFSA. He introduced Jan Orgelbrand, Vice-Chief Sanitary Inspector of the Polish Chief Sanitary Inspectorate.

Jan Orgelbrand welcomed the participants. He pointed out the crucial work of the Polish Ministry of Health and EFSA to ensure food safety in Poland. Finally he wished the participants a fruitful meeting.

The Chair thanked Jan Orgelbrand for hosting the meeting and Iwona Wiśniewska, Barbara Jaworska and Piotr Holownia, of the Polish FP, for the support in organising this event. The Chair welcomed the representatives from 26 countries, in particular Bistra Benkova from Bulgaria, who attended the FP Meeting for the first time. Apologies were received from France, Italy and the Slovak Republic.

## 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

After distribution of the draft agenda to the FPs before the meeting, one more items was raised by EFSA, namely EFSA's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and four additional items were raised by FPs (Sweden, UK, Iceland and Spain). Participants agreed to the proposed changes and the agenda was adopted after inclusion of further four items under "Any Other Business" (AOB), namely: i) Focal Point Reporting; ii) Survey of the Expert Database; iii) Results of EFSA's expert survey; and iv) Future FP meetings.

The draft minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting were sent to FPs for comments on 22 June 2011. The minutes were approved without comments from participants and have been placed on EFSA's website.

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI) filled in by the participants invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the beginning of this meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Attended part of the meeting

### **3 PRESENTATION OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTORATE**

Jan Orgelbrand presented the structure of the Polish system for ensuring food and feed safety and the role and tasks of the Polish Chief Sanitary Inspectorate to ensure food and feed safety within the country. He further described the cooperation of the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate with other food control bodies and laboratories within Poland and with EFSA.

The Chair thanked Jan Orgelbrand for his presentation and pointed out the importance of the close cooperation between the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate and EFSA.

### **4 ENSURING TRANSPARENCY AND VISIBILITY OF AUTHORITIES' OUTPUTS**

#### **5.1 EFSA JOURNAL**

Carola Sondermann, from EFSA's AFSCO Unit, presented the types of EFSA scientific outputs and showed where different items are published on EFSA's website. She further demonstrated the EFSA Journal in more detail, including the structure of the landing page, the issues of the Journal, the search possibilities, and the subscription process.

It was clarified that subscribing to the EFSA Journal is free of charge. The EFSA Journal was established to allow the published scientific work of EFSA to be indexed in scientific bibliographic databases. This increases the visibility of EFSA's work in the scientific community, helps readers to access scientific information, and supports scientists working with EFSA to get their work published in an indexed journal. While there is no traditional peer-review of the articles in the EFSA Journal (as EFSA needs to stay in line with legislation and once a Panel adopts an opinion, it cannot be changed), the procedure itself, of writing an opinion, includes several review steps, often even a public consultation for key opinions. The EFSA Journal is currently indexed in several bibliographic databases, including CAB Abstracts, FSTA, SciFinder, DTU Libraries and ISI Web of Knowledge. It is planned to approach further databases, such as Medline, at a later stage. FPs were interested in receiving a list of scientific bibliographic databases. AFSCO will share a list of databases with FPs.

#### **5.2 MAKING SCIENTIFIC OUTPUTS OF MEMBER STATES ACCESSIBLE**

Two Member States (MS) showed how their institutions make their scientific outputs accessible:

- Brigitte Graf, from the German FP, illustrated the availability of BfR scientific outputs on the BfR website. Risk assessments / BfR opinions, several scientific brochures, as well as BfR press releases, which also contain scientific information, are all listed under the "publications" tab. Most BfR scientific outputs are available in German and English. All risk assessments that have been translated into English are also uploaded to the IEP.
- Marie Louise Wiborg, from the Norwegian FP, showed the publication of scientific outputs of the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety (VKM), describing the use of VKM's website and social media, and the development of a communication

plan for all risk assessments. The VKM restricts its active use of social media to twitter and blogs, while encouraging facebook friends to share information on VKM's outputs. Several MS and EFSA are considering how best to use social media. Experiences have been shared in the Advisory Forum Communication Working Group and should be discussed there further.

In the following discussion, a number of MS also indicated that, in connection to publishing their outputs, they also (plan to) indicate possibilities of how risks may be reduced. Conversely, some MS pointed out that they cannot publish all of their outputs. Often, these also cannot be uploaded onto the IEP. It was specified that it needs to be clear that items may be shared, before uploading them onto the IEP.

FPs were encouraged to look at each other's websites to see what scientific information is published. Links to the websites are given on the IEP, in the EU Food Safety Almanac and on EFSA's FP webpage.

*Action 1: AFSCO to share a list of scientific bibliographic databases with FPs.*

## 5 ARTICLE 36 GUIDELINES

Kerstin Gross-Helmert, from EFSA's AFSCO Unit, presented reflections on the draft Article 36 guidelines, including the designation process, the assessment of organisations against formal criteria stipulated in Commission Regulation (EC) No 2230/2004, the process of updating organisations' profiles and the presentation of organisations on the Article 36 List.

New designations can be done by Permanent Representations/Missions at any point in time. EFSA's Management Board then decides on inclusion/non-inclusion of the organisation on the List. The designated entity can either be an entire organisation or part of a bigger organisation. The most adequate size of the entity is determined by the respective MS on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that the needed tasks can be performed by the designated entity and that the necessary information flow within the entity is ensured. It was stressed that each designated entity (entire organisation or part of a bigger organisation) needs to have a separate questionnaire filled-in in the online Article 36 Database, which also needs to be submitted as hard copy to EFSA at designation through the respective Permanent Representation/Mission of the country.

Besides designating organisations, the Permanent Representation/Mission also has the responsibility to withdraw designations, if necessary.

The Regulation does not specify how the designation/withdrawal process should be carried out within a Member State and who should do the assessment (i.e. whether it is the Permanent Representation/Mission to assess an organisation directly or to delegate this to another organisation/person in the Member State, e.g. the Advisory Forum (AF) Member). The potential issue of possible conflicts of interest would need to be considered at national level.

The contact person of an organisation has a crucial role. Thus, it is important that organisations nominate the correct person. AFSCO will make a list of tasks of the contact person available to FPs. FPs should encourage organisations in their country to

adequately nominate the contact person(s). To facilitate information flow at organisation-level, it is proposed that the contact person uses a corporate e-mail address.

The guidelines will be a ‘living document’ and it is envisaged to include tips, e.g. stemming from FP experiences.

*Action 2: AFSCO to make available a list of tasks of the contact person(s) of Article 36 organisations to FPs.*

*Action 3: FPs to encourage Article 36 organisations to nominate an adequate contact person.*

## 6 RELEVANT ISSUES FROM THE AF AND AFCWG MEETING

Torben Nilsson, from EFSA’s AFSCO Unit, informed participants about relevant issues from the AF Meeting held in Krakow on 28-29 September 2011. The minutes of the meeting in Krakow will be available on EFSA’s website. He also briefed FPs about the AFCWG Meeting in Bucharest on 13-14 October 2011, including the risk communication guidelines, EFSA’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the thematic approach to EFSA’s communications.

## 7 EFSA’S 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Torben Nilsson informed participants that the year 2012 will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the General Food Law (Commission Regulation (EC) 178/2002) and EFSA’s establishment. Different areas within EFSA will be involved in raising awareness in MS of this anniversary. Torben Nilsson presented first ideas of activities, including organisation of events and communication activities. FPs were asked to consider linking national FP events in 2012 to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. FPs should discuss any ideas on raising awareness of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with their AF member and organise any communication-related activities in liaison with the AFCWG member, if applicable. The AFSCO Unit would welcome to be kept informed on any such activities to ensure that EFSA remains informed and can coordinate as necessary and appropriate.

Carola Sondermann further presented the idea to publish a special issue on scientific cooperation projects in the EFSA Journal. Articles, authored by national scientists and/or EFSA staff, could e.g. cover emerging issues as well as successful projects in which one or more Member States and EFSA were involved. The FPs were asked to reflect on the idea of a special issue and send any potential suggestions to AFSCO. It was suggested that a special issue should cover as much of EFSA’s remit as possible and the widest possible timeframe.

*Action 4: FPs to inform AFSCO on (1) any activities they may plan in 2012 that could be linked to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EFSA and the European Food Law and (2) any potential title/subject of a contribution for a special issue of the EFSA Journal to Scientific.Cooperation mailbox ([Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu)).*

## 8 INFORMATION EXCHANGE PLATFORM

Saadia Noorani, from EFSA's AFSCO Unit, informed participants about the implementation of recommendations from the Information Exchange Platform (IEP) evaluation report, ongoing and planned promotion activities on the IEP, and technical improvements. She also gave feedback from the IEP Working Group (WG) meeting which took place on 12 October 2011.

FPs were asked to actively promote the IEP amongst risk assessment bodies in their country. Suggestions from the IEP WG meeting included sending out targeted e-mail messages to their networks, as well as producing posters or featured articles in newsletters. FPs were also encouraged to widely distribute the monthly IEP reports to risk assessment bodies. Although the IEP is password restricted, access may be granted to interested individuals. AF Members can request read-only access for individuals by sending an e-mail message to the IEP mailbox ([IEP@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:IEP@efsa.europa.eu)).

In addition to uploading documents from their own institutions, FPs were also encouraged to collate and upload documents from other official risk assessment bodies. The decision on which documents to upload should be taken by AF Members/FPs based on the IEP guidelines. EFSA will ensure that the IEP guidelines cover documents from official risk assessment bodies.

AFSCO may offer a training session on the IEP at the next FP Meeting in February 2012. FPs will be asked to indicate their interest in participating in such a training session.

*Action 5: FPs to promote the IEP at national level.*

*Action 6: FPs to collate and upload risk assessment documents, from their own institutions and from other official risk assessment bodies in their country.*

*Action 7: AFSCO to ensure that the IEP guidelines cover documents from official risk assessment bodies.*

*Action 8: AFSCO to send message to FPs asking whether they are interested in participating in an IEP training session.*

## 9 TRAINING ON FOOD SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

### 9.1 TRAINING OF PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF FOOD SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Andras Szoradi, from EFSA's AFSCO Unit, described the planned training courses on principles and methods of food safety risk assessment, including the overall layout and structure of the different courses, the target audience, and the implementation of the courses through the European Commission's "Better Training for Safer Food" (BTSF) Programme. FPs were asked to contact their respective BTSF contact point at an early stage to get further information on the programme, such as the maximum number of participants for each country, and to initiate collaborating on items such as publicising the courses at MS-level, and identifying and screening suitable candidates.

*Action 9: FPs to start collaborating with the BTSF contact person in their country to receive further information on the programme and to identify possible participants for risk assessment training courses under the BTSF training.*

## 9.2 EVIRA'S RISK ASSESSMENT 10TH ANNIVERSARY SEMINAR AND OTHER TRAINING EVENTS

Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen, from the Finnish FP, informed FPs about EVIRA's risk assessment seminar<sup>2</sup> on 26-28 October 2011 in Helsinki and introduced the topics of the event. Places were still available and FPs could contact the Finnish FP if they wished to participate. Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen also gave an overview of past risk assessment training events organised by EVIRA.

*Action 10: FPs to contact the Finnish FP if wanting to participate in EVIRA's seminar on 26-28 October 2011.*

## 10 RETRIEVING AND DISSEMINATING INFORMATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Carola Sondermann introduced the break-out session, where FPs shared their practices and experiences of retrieving and disseminating data and information at national level. The main points of the discussion will be summarised by AFSCO and circulated to FPs. Generally, it was pointed out that FPs should make clear where data and information comes from when sending it to EFSA, particularly if it comes from non-governmental/non-public sources.

*Action 11: AFSCO to summarise the main points of discussions at the break-out groups and circulate it to FPs.*

*Action 12: FP to clearly specify the sources of information/data (particularly if it comes from non-governmental/non-public sources), when sending information/data to EFSA.*

## 11 SUBJECT(S) RAISED BY FOCAL POINTS

### AESAN's II Workshop of Scientific Cooperation with EFSA

Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry, from the Spanish FP, gave feedback on AESAN's II Workshop of Scientific Cooperation with EFSA, which they organised for Article 36 organisations, amongst others. At the meeting, Spanish experiences in procurement were exchanged and the French FP presented the experiences at ANSES.

Increasingly more countries are organising national FP meetings with Article 36 organisations, which welcome the sharing of experiences at national or even international level.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.evira.fi/portal/fi/evira/tapahtumat/tapahtumien\\_materiaalit/riskinarvioinnin\\_seminaarit/26.-28.10.2011\\_riskinarvioinnin\\_10\\_v.\\_juhlaseminaari/](http://www.evira.fi/portal/fi/evira/tapahtumat/tapahtumien_materiaalit/riskinarvioinnin_seminaarit/26.-28.10.2011_riskinarvioinnin_10_v._juhlaseminaari/)

## Metals in baby foods

Irene Mattisson, from the Swedish FP, informed FPs about the ongoing Swedish assessment of risks and benefits of metals (contaminants and fortified substances) in baby foods.

## 12 AOB

### Focal Point Reporting 2011

Andras Szoradi presented the changes that have been made to the reporting template used last year. He reminded FPs of the deadline for the submission of the national FP reports, as well as the reporting periods and timelines of the entire exercise. The reporting template for 2011 and the guidelines for statement of financial resources have been uploaded in the reporting folder on Extranet. A Word version of the report and a pdf version of the supporting documents should be sent to the *Scientific.Cooperation* mailbox, while the original, signed document needs to be sent to AFSCO by courier.

*Action 13: FPs to send their FP Report 2011 and all financial supporting documents to the *Scientific.Cooperation* mailbox ([Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu)) by 15 November 2011 at the latest and the signed originals by courier.*

### Survey on the Expert Database (EDB)

Bernhard Berger informed FPs of the upcoming EDB survey to all external experts included in the EDB. He asked FPs for their support in replying to the survey and, if applicable, to stimulate their AF members to also reply.

### Results of EFSA's Expert Survey

Andras Szoradi gave an overview of the 2011 EFSA Scientific Expert Satisfaction Survey, including its objectives and results.

### Publication of Reports of UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA)

Alisdair Wotherspoon, from the UK FP, informed participants of the publication of the following FSA reports:

- Chief Scientist's Annual report  
( <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/researchpolicy/chiefsci/csreps/> )
- Social science research committee annual report  
( <http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2011/aug/ssrcannualreport> )
- Major infectious intestinal diseases  
( <http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2011/sep/iid2> )

## Request for information on caffeine

Astfridur Sigurdardóttir, from the Icelandic FP, reminded the other FPs to send information regarding caffeine in foods. The request was circulated to FPs on 12 October 2011.

*Action 14: FPs to send information on caffeine request to the Icelandic FP*

## Survey on External Scientific Committees

Cristina Alonso Andicoberry informed participants that they are preparing a survey to organisations working with external Scientific Committees. An e-mail message will be sent to FPs, requesting information.

## Future FP Meetings

For 2012, the preliminary dates are as follows:

- 13<sup>th</sup> FP meeting: 15-16 February 2012, Austria;
- 14<sup>th</sup> FP meeting: 5-6 June 2012, Switzerland;
- 15<sup>th</sup> FP meeting: 10-11 October 2012, Parma, Italy;

FPs were reminded not to make any travel arrangements until receiving the formal invitation from EFSA. FPs were also reminded that they need an approved ADoI before registering for a meeting.

## 13 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting. He thanked the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate for their hospitality in hosting the meeting and Iwona Wiśniewska, Barbara Jaworska and Piotr Holownia for their excellent support. He also thanked the participants for their attendance and their active contributions in the various discussions. Finally he stressed AFSCO's continued commitment in supporting the work of FPs.

## SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

| Reference | Who   | What  |
|-----------|-------|---|
| Action 1  | AFSCO | To share a list of scientific bibliographic databases with FPs  |
| Action 2  | AFSCO | To make available a list of tasks of the contact person(s) of Article 36 organisations to FPs   |
| Action 3  | FPs   | To encourage Article 36 organisations to nominate an adequate contact person  |
| Action 4  | FPs   | To inform AFSCO on (1) any activities they may plan in 2012 that could be linked to the 10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of EFSA and the European Food Law and (2) any potential title/subject of a contribution for a special issue of the EFSA Journal to Scientific.Cooperation mailbox ( <a href="mailto:Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu">Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu</a> ) |

| <b>Reference</b> | <b>Who</b> | <b>What</b>  |
|------------------|------------|--|
| Action 5         | FPs        | To promote the IEP at national level   |
| Action 6         | FPs        | To collate and upload risk assessment documents, from their own institutions and from other official risk assessment bodies in their country   |
| Action 7         | AFSCO      | To ensure that the IEP guidelines cover documents from official risk assessment bodies   |
| Action 8         | AFSCO      | To send message to FPs asking whether they are interested in participating in an IEP training session  |
| Action 9         | FPs        | To start collaborating with the BTSF contact person in their country to receive further information on the programme and to identify possible participants for risk assessment training courses under the BTSF training  |
| Action 10        | FPs        | To contact the Finnish FP if wanting to participate in EVIRA's seminar on 26-28 October 2011   |
| Action 11        | AFSCO      | To summarise the main points of discussions at the break-out groups and circulate it to FPs  |
| Action 12        | FP         | To clearly specify the sources of information/data (particularly if it comes from non-governmental/non-public sources), when sending information/data to EFSA  |
| Action 13        | FPs        | To send their FP Report 2011 and all financial supporting documents to the Scientific.Cooperation mailbox ( <a href="mailto:Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu">Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu</a> ) by 15 November 2011 at the latest and the signed originals by courier |
| Action 14        | FPs        | To send information on caffeine request to the Icelandic FP  |