

## Final Minutes

### 25<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINT NETWORK PARMA (Grand Hotel de la Ville); 18<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2015

**Chair:** Stef Bronzwaer / Jeff Moon

Members	
Austria	<i>Melanie Kuffner</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Snejana Todorova</i>
Croatia	<i>Sanja Milos</i>
Cyprus	<i>Maro Christodoulidou</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Petr Beneš</i>
Estonia	<i>Piret Priisalu</i>
Finland	<i>Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen</i>
France	<i>Adrienne Pittman</i>
Germany	<i>Lea Herges</i>
Greece	<i>Gorgias Garofalakis</i>
Hungary	<i>Renata Prisztoka</i>
Iceland	<i>Àstfríður Sigurðardóttir</i>
Ireland	<i>Grainne Redmond</i>
Italy	<i>Luca Busani</i>
Latvia	<i>Elina Ciekure</i>
Lithuania	<i>Rima Zivatkauskaitė</i>
Malta	<i>Ingrid Busuttil</i>
Netherlands	<i>Jacqueline Castenmiller</i>
Norway	<i>Gisle Solstad</i>
Poland	<i>Iwona Wisniewska</i>
Portugal	<i>Filipa Vasconcelos</i>
Romania	<i>Dida Cozachievici</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>Zuzana Birosova</i>
Slovenia	<i>Blaža Nahtigal</i>
Spain	<i>Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry</i>
Sweden	<i>Irene Mattison</i>
United Kingdom	<i>Alisdair Wotherspoon</i>
United Kingdom	<i>Tom Hollands</i>

**Observers**

Switzerland

*Barbara Engeli*

**EFSA Staff**

*Alberto Spagnolli*

*Stylianos Koulouris*

*Stef Bronzwaer*

*Marina Koussathana*

*Jeff Moon*

*Ilias Papatryfon*

*Sérgio Potier Rodeia*

*Kerstin Gross- Helmert*

*Julia Finger*

*Sosanna Tasiou*

*Shira Tabachnikoff*

*Donna Lucas*

**Apologies:**

Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg and Observers from Candidate Countries

**1. OPENING OF MEETING**

Stef Bronzwaer, Head of Unit (HoU) of EFSA's Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation Unit (AFSCO) and Chair of the meeting welcomed Alberto Spagnolli, Head of Department (HoD) of the Communications and External Relations Department (COMMS), who opened the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Focal Point network.

Alberto introduced new opportunities arising from the integration of the AFSCO Unit into the COMMS Department, allowing for closer ties between the Advisory Forum (AF), Focal Points (FPs) and the Advisory Forum Communications Working Group (AFCWG), bringing EFSA's external relations together under one umbrella and ensuring that communications would be part of the FPs portfolio in the future.

He thanked FPs for their work as EFSA's connection to the Member States and their importance in raising the visibility of EFSA's scientific work and impact in Europe as key actors in the context of national networking.

The Chair then welcomed new FP representatives to the meeting, namely Jacqueline Castenmiller (FP from The Netherlands), Snejana Todorova (FP from Bulgaria), Elina Ciekure (FP alternate from Latvia), Grainne Redmond (FP alternate from Ireland) and Tom Hollands (FP alternate from the United Kingdom).

The Chair informed that the minutes of the 24<sup>th</sup> FP meeting, which was held as a joint meeting with the AF on 14-16 October in Milan are under consultation for comments from AF and FPs.

The agenda for the current meeting was adopted by the participants without further issues being raised.

Finally ODoIs were asked at the beginning of the meeting and no additional interest was declared.

**2. FEEDBACK FROM EFSA'S SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE**

The Chair gave the floor to Alberto Spagnolli who gave feedback on EFSA's second Scientific Conference that took place in Milan 14-16 October. More than 900 participants from 63 countries participated and particular interest was given to the 250 posters exhibited by young researchers. Alberto invited FPs to take part on the online survey

which will help EFSA to identify key achievements and lessons learned. FPs asked when presentations and additional material of the conference will be made available, and the Chair confirmed to circulate them as soon as possible.

*Action Point 1: EFSA to circulate link to presentations and additional material of Scientific Conference as soon as available.*

### **3. UPDATE ON STRATEGIC ISSUES:**

#### **3.1 Expertise for the future**

The Chair gave the floor to Stylianos Koulouris to present the key findings of the session from the EFSA Scientific Conference on "Expertise for the future". The session pointed at the importance of training and new forms of training for capacity building in risk assessment (RA). Stylianos invited MS to inform the secretariat of further training initiatives available at MS and international level. The Chair pointed out that some EFSA RA courses have been opened for the participation of experts from MS, in particular to Scientific Network representatives. He added that a descriptive analysis of the FP reports, which will be presented at the next FP meeting, will provide an overview of training initiatives in the MS and thus help to better plan resources and avoid duplication.

#### **3.2 Risk Assessment Agenda**

The Chair gave the floor to Jeff Moon, who introduced the EU Risk Assessment Agenda; the process for its development, the current status and the planned implementation.

Regarding the process for its development, the Delphi-like process launched early in 2015 and its results due to be presented at the AF meeting in December, was briefly presented and induced a number of questions from the FPs. The final list of prioritised domains will be presented at the AF meeting in December.

Means to initiate innovative projects, as thematic grants or joint MS projects are a core part of this agenda. EFSA is also investigating external funding resources among international and European partners, as well in MS. For a similar purpose, DG Research and Innovation has established its own "Focal Points" in each country. The AF will further analyse the shape of thematic grants and funding schemes and set a list of priorities in its meeting on 8-9 December. There is also the intention to give the lead of joint projects to MS in the near future. Alberto Spagnolli underlined that the EU Risk Assessment Agenda is the flagship project on EFSA's future cooperation with MS, which will allow evolving from cooperation into partnership. To this end, FPs will play a major role in coordinating input coming from national level and contribute to ensure a coordinated approach at European level.

*Action Point 2a: EFSA to circulate the Delphi report to FPs.*

*Action Point 2b: FPs to liaise with the national "Focal Points" of DG RESEARCH to find information on funding schemes in his/her country.*

### **4. SCIENTIFIC NETWORKS**

#### **4.1 Draft guideline for new Scientific Network Representatives**

The Chair gave the floor to Julia Finger, to present the new Guidelines for Network Representatives. The development of such guidelines had been identified by FPs at earlier meetings as a helpful means to improve national networking. A Discussion Group made up of FPs and EFSA staff from different scientific Units and functions drafted a document, which had been circulated to FPs for comments until 30 November. FPs discussed the draft document and made additional suggestions for improvement. Special importance was given to the aspect of confidentiality, leading to the agreement that the

sharing of information between Network Representatives, FPs and AF is not hindered by confidentiality rules unless a document is marked as "confidential". On the question made by the Italian FP, several FPs confirmed having standard procedures applying to the identification and selection of experts for the Scientific Networks, with one, the Slovak Republic, having it laid down in writing.

*Action Point 3: EFSA to update the draft Guideline for Network Representatives with additional comments made by FPs.*

*Action Point 4: Slovak Republic FP to circulate their procedure for nominations of Network Representatives.*

*Action Point 5: EFSA to make the DMS link to the Guide accessible to all Network Representatives.*

*Action Point 6: FPs to comment on the draft Guideline for Network Representatives until 30.11.2015.*

#### **4.2 Training possibilities for EFSA Network Representatives in 2016**

The Chair gave the floor to Sérgio Potier Rodeia, who gave a summary on the EFSA training courses in risk assessment that have been opened for the participation of Scientific Network Representatives. The successful pilot run on the second half of 2015 will continue in 2016 with a new set of courses being open to Network Representatives. An eventual further opening of these courses to experts from Scientific Network organisations and Article 36 organisations is currently under discussion. FPs asked for EFSA to investigate the possible sharing of training material and the take up by MS experts enrolling on the courses as a result of the pilot.

*Action Point 7: EFSA to inform FPs if national Network Representatives applied for the EFSA training courses in risk assessment and if they have been selected.*

*Action Point 8: EFSA to check if training material from the training courses in risk assessment can be shared.*

#### **4.3 Management of Scientific Networks**

The Chair gave the floor to Julia Finger to explain new developments in the management of EFSA's Scientific Networks.

A new Scientific Network on Residues of Veterinary Medical Products Data Collection has been established. It is managed by EFSA's DATA Unit and will have its first meeting on 23-24 February 2016. The Advisory Forum has been asked to nominate a national Network Member and a Representative to the Network. The list of nominations is now accessible to FPs.

Due to a technical problem with the DMS the general list of network members is facing data errors. A new list will be created in the course of the yearly update on Network Member nominations. The Advisory Forum will be asked on its December meeting to conduct the annual review of their national nominations until the end of January 2016 and FPs are asked to support them on this activity. At the same time, the calendar of Network meetings for 2016 will be updated and shared with FPs.

Nominations for the two Networks in the area of Pesticides are going to be kept outside the regular nomination process of the Advisory Forum due to particular sector legislation.

*Action Point 9: EFSA to update the Network meeting calendar for 2016 and circulate link to FPs.*

### **5. ARTICLE 36 LIST**

The Chair gave the floor to Kerstin Gross-Helmert who gave an overview on the status of the Article 36 List and the introduced changes to lean the administrative process. Kerstin

gave a demonstration of the database and its features from the FPs perspective. The original documents have to be kept for 5 years for auditing purposes either in the national Permanent Representation or the Focal Point.

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After the lunch break Jeff Moon took over as Chair of the meeting

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## **6. FOCAL POINT AGREEMENTS AND REPORTING**

### **6.1. State-of-play of the 2015 Focal Point reporting & renewal of Focal Point Agreements for 2016**

The Chair gave the floor to Sérgio Potier Rodeia to inform FPs on the state-of-play of the 2015 FP reporting process and on the renewal of FP agreements for 2016. As the 2015 reporting period was opened earlier, when compared to previous years, all reports were approved and the balance paid by 06.11.2015. Letters requesting the renewal of the FP Agreements should be sent after EFSA communicates the approval of the FP Technical Reports. The first part of the grant is likely to be paid end of 2015 / early 2016. For the reporting period in 2016 revised templates will be made available.

FPs expressed lack of clarity on reporting international cooperation activities and as well with regards to the promotion/management of national databases of experts. Sérgio explained that the aim is to share within the FP network relevant information on international cooperation activities that countries are involved on, or that are of their knowledge. On a first instance, such activities may concern the FP organisation themselves; however activities involving other national organisations are also welcome. Regarding the promotion/management of national databases of experts, any overview on expert target audiences used at national level to cascade information to should be reported.

### **6.2. National evaluation of the work of the EFSA FP**

The Chair gave the floor to Lea Herges, FP from Germany, who presented their national evaluation of the work of the German EFSA FP. The evaluation comprised the feedback of 19 institutions with a response rate of 80%. The questionnaire and the final report will be shared with EFSA and the FP Network.

*Action Point 10: German FP to share questionnaire and report on the evaluation of the work of the EFSA FP.*

## **7. UPDATE ON COMMUNICATION ISSUES**

The Chair gave the floor to Shira Tabachnikoff, giving an overview on the activities of the AFCWG during 2015 and an outlook on the activities foreseen for 2016. The four key objectives for the future of the AFCWG are to: 1) further align with the AF to better serve their needs; 2) identify and collaborate on key EU food safety priorities; 3) improve preparedness and approach to diverging opinions; 4) build on project approach to best leverage expertise and resources. The Norwegian FP informed on the successful staff exchange taken place between a Colleague from their institution and an EFSA staff member between both Communication Departments.

The next meeting of the AFCWG will take place on 1-2 March 2016.

## **8. ISSUES RAISED BY EFSA & FOCAL POINTS**

### **8.1. Update on ED visits**

The Chair gave the floor to Marina Koussathana, who informed FPs on the visits of EFSA's Executive Director (ED) to the Member States. The ED visits have become

important opportunities to stimulate cooperation and joint projects. Eleven visits have been done so far. Marina provided an overview on the various joint projects agreed upon as concrete outputs of the visits, on which Member States are taking the lead. On the question raised by the FP from Iceland, Marina confirmed that the ED visits comprise Iceland and Norway.

In this context, the German FP gave an update on the *FoodChainLab* workshop held with 22 participants from 16 countries. The link to the training material and presentations will be circulated.

The FP from Cyprus reminded FPs to express interest in the workshop on IMPRORISK.

*Action Point 11: German FP to disseminate feedback on FoodChainLab with presentations and training material.*

*Action Point 12: FPs interested on the IMPRORISK workshop to inform Cyprus.*

## **8.2. Issues related to regulated product consideration**

The Chair gave the floor to Alisdair Wotherspoon, FP from the UK, who raised issues related to regulated product considerations as currently on-going in the UK. The topic will be on the agenda of the AF meeting in December and FPs are asked to support their AF member for the discussion so to assess if there are similar concerns in the different countries. A better understanding on the current developments regarding regulated products in general would be helpful to handle a particular concern that occurred in the UK. Jeff Moon added that EFSA recently responded to a letter from industry concerning the same issue.

*Action Point 13: EFSA to circulate industry letter and EFSA reply ahead of AF meeting.*

## **8.3. ANSES opinion on co-exposure of bees to stress factors**

The Chair gave the floor to Adrienne Pittman, FP from France, who informed FPs on an ANSES opinion on co-exposure of bees to stress factors. The report is currently available in French and will be made available also in English soon. The link to the report will be shared with FPs.

*Action Point 14: French FP to circulate link to report on co-exposure of bees to stress factors.*

## **8.4. Leaflet/brochure on the role of the EFSA FP**

The Chair gave the floor to Lea Herges, FP from Germany, who raised questions related to the publication of EFSA FP brochures or leaflets. Many FPs have created own documents, generating a discussion on the possible use of a uniform template for such brochures and of a uniform EFSA FP logo. Discussions concluded that a uniform template created by EFSA is not necessary, but that FPs could share ideas, documents and logos they have created on a dedicated workspace on DMS. Stef Bronzwaer also informed FPs on the newly created "MS Corner" on the ground floor of EFSA premises. The Chair invited FPs to send printed material on cooperation activities with EFSA in addition to those already shared. As of April 2016, a screen will be added to this MS Corner so to display national multimedia material.

*Action Point 15: EFSA to create a DMS workspace for sharing brochures and leaflets.*

*Action Point 16: FPs to send printed material for the MS Corner (on request).*

# **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

## **9.1. Update on upcoming Grants & Procurement**

The Chair gave the floor to Ilias Papatryfon to give a brief overview on upcoming Grants and Procurement calls. The French FP remarked that a provisional table of calls that are

going to be launched, including some explanatory lines, would be helpful, including those with re-opening competition, in the framework grants.

*Action Point 17: EFSA to consider the sharing - on a quarterly basis - of a table with upcoming grant calls (at FP meetings).*

*Action Point 18: EFSA to check if calls with re-opening competition (in the framework grants) can be included in list of open calls.*

## **9.2. Table on forthcoming RA activities**

The Chair gave the floor to Sérgio Potier Rodeia, who informed FPs on issues and possible ways to overcome them concerning the table on forthcoming RA activities. FPs were asked to share ideas and comments on how to best handle this table.

*Action Point 19: FPs to comment on how to best handle the table on forthcoming RA activities in the future.*

## **9.3. EU Food Safety Almanac**

The Chair gave the floor to Lea Herges, FP from Germany, who informed about a survey among AF, AFCWG and FPs to evaluate the EU Food Safety Almanac. Lea also gave an outlook on the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Food Safety Almanac for which a request for update will be sent in the upcoming days; as well on the on-going project regarding the Food Safety Almanac for the European Neighbouring Countries.

## **9.4. EFSA weekly media monitoring**

The Chair informed about the EFSA weekly media monitoring that had exemplary been shared with the FPs, asking them if they consider the information useful and wish to receive it on a regular basis.

*Action Point 20: FPs to comment on EFSA weekly media monitoring and if they want to receive it regularly.*

## **9.5. Upcoming FP meetings in 2016**

Sérgio Potier Rodeia presented an overview of upcoming FP meetings in 2016: the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting will take place on 10-11 February in Parma; the 27<sup>th</sup> on 11-12 May (TBC); the 28<sup>th</sup> on 14-15 September in Croatia (TBC); and the 29<sup>th</sup> on 8-9 November in Parma.

# **10. TRAINING ON ARTICLE 36 PROCEDURES**

The Chair introduced a voluntary training session on Art.36 procedures held by Kerstin Gross-Helmert.

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The Chair closed the meeting of the first day

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# **11. TRAINING ON GRANTS & PROCUREMENT**

The Chair opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the meeting, introducing Sosanna Tasiou and Donna Lucas, from EFSA's Finances Unit, who delivered a training session on Grants and Procurement. The first part of the morning session was dedicated to the Procurement process, while the second part to the Grant process, followed by a general question & answer session.

*Action Point 21: EFSA to share the audit report on Grants and Procurement.*

# **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

The Chair closed the meeting, thanking participants for their attendance and active contribution, and expressed special thanks to the EFSA colleagues that were giving the training sessions.

## SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	EFSA	<i>To circulate link to presentations on Scientific Conference as soon as available.</i>
Action 2a	EFSA	<i>To circulate the Delphi report to FPs.</i>
Action 2b	FPs	<i>To liaise with the "Focal Points" of DG RESEARCH to find information on funding schemes in his/her country.</i>
Action 3	EFSA	<i>To update the draft Guideline for Network Representatives with additional comments made by FPs.</i>
Action 4	SK FP	<i>To circulate their procedure for nomination of Network Representatives.</i>
Action 5	EFSA	<i>To make the DMS link to the Guide accessible to all Network Representatives.</i>
Action 6	FPs	<i>To comment on the draft Guideline for Network Representatives until 30.11.2015.</i>
Action 7	EFSA	<i>To inform FPs if national Network Representatives applied for the EFSA training courses in risk assessment and if they have been selected.</i>
Action 8	EFSA	<i>To check if training material from material from advanced training courses in risk assessment could be shared</i>
Action 9	EFSA	<i>To update the Network meeting calendar for 2016 and circulate link to FPs.</i>
Action 10	DE FP	<i>To share questionnaire and report on the evaluation of the work of the EFSA FP.</i>
Action 11	DE FP	<i>To disseminate feedback on FoodChainLab with presentations and training material.</i>
Action 12	FPs	<i>Interested on the IMPRORISK workshop to inform Cyprus.</i>
Action 13	EFSA	<i>To circulate industry letter and EFSA reply ahead of AF meeting.</i>
Action 14	FR FP	<i>To circulate link to report on co-exposure of bees to stress factors.</i>
Action 15	EFSA	<i>To create a DMS workspace for sharing brochures and leaflets.</i>
Action 16	FPs	<i>FPs to send printed material for the MS Corner (on request).</i>
Action 17	EFSA	<i>To consider the sharing - on a quarterly basis - of a table with upcoming grant calls (i.e. at FP meetings)</i>
Action 18	EFSA	<i>To check if re-opening of competition (in framework grants) can be included in list of open calls.</i>

Action 19	FPs	<i>To comment on how to best handle the table on forthcoming RA activities in the future</i>
Action 20	FPs	<i>To comment on EFSA weekly media monitoring and if they want to receive it regularly.</i>
Action 21	EFSA	<i>To share the audit report on Grants and Procurement.</i>

#### **Document history**

Document reference FP151118-m	Version 1.3
Prepared by	Julia Finger
Reviewed by	Sérgio Potier Rodeia / Jeff Moon
Last date modified	11 January 2016