

## Final Minutes

### 29<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINT NETWORK UPPSALA (SWEDEN), 8<sup>TH</sup>-9<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2016

**Chair:** Jeff Moon

#### Members

Belgium	<i>Laurence Ballieux</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Donka Popova-Mincheva</i>
Croatia	<i>Vlatka Buzjak</i>
Cyprus	<i>Maro Christodoulidou</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Petr Beneš</i>
Denmark	<i>Birgitte Helwich</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>
Ireland	<i>Edel Smyth</i>
Italy	<i>Luca Busani</i>
Latvia	<i>Elina Ciekure</i>
Lithuania	<i>Rima Zivatkauskaitė</i>
Malta	<i>Ingrid Borg</i>
Luxembourg	<i>Elisa Barilozzi</i>
Netherlands	<i>Jacqueline Castenmiller</i>
Norway	<i>Gisle Solstad</i>
Poland	<i>Iwona Wisniewska</i>
Portugal	<i>Filipa Melo de Vasconcelos</i>
Romania	<i>Mihai Ponea</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>Milo Bystrický</i>
Slovenia	<i>Blaža Nahtigal</i>
Spain	<i>Ana Canals, Maria Angeles Capon (8/11, via tele-conference)</i>
Sweden	<i>Karin Nyberg</i>
Sweden	<i>Per Bergman</i>
Sweden	<i>Christina Greko</i>
Sweden	<i>Hanna Eneroth</i>
United Kingdom	<i>Alison Spalding</i>

#### Observers

FYR of Macedonia	<i>Dušica Santa</i>
Montenegro	<i>Drago Marojevic</i>
Turkey	<i>Muzaffer Nurseren Budak</i>

#### FP Secretariat

<i>Sérgio Potier Rodeia</i>	<i>Julia Finger</i>
-----------------------------	---------------------

#### EFSA Staff

<i>Stef Bronzwaer *</i>	<i>Elena Caprioli*</i>
<i>Jean-Lou Dorne *</i>	<i>Isabelle Hubert *</i>
<i>Nicoline Le Gourierec*</i>	<i>Sosanna Tasiou*</i>
<i>Jelena Vracar*</i>	

*\*videoconference*

**Apologies:** Austria, Estonia, Albania, Serbia, Switzerland

## 1. OPENING OF MEETING

Jeff Moon from EFSA's Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation Unit (AFSCO) and Chair of the meeting opened the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Focal Point (FP) network. Jeff welcomed Mihai Ponea, FP from Romania, attending a FP plenary meeting for the first time, Donka Popova, re-appointed FP member from Bulgaria and, connected by teleconference, the representation of Spain, Maria Angeles Capon and Ana Canals.

Jeff informed that the minutes of the 28<sup>th</sup> FP meeting were published on EFSA's website on 13 October 2016. The agenda for the current meeting was adopted by the plenary with no additional items raised. Finally Oral Declarations of Interest (ODOI) were asked at the beginning of the meeting and no additional interest was declared.

## 2. WELCOME BY THE SWEDISH REPRESENTATIVE IN THE ADVISORY FORUM

Jeff Moon welcomed Per Bergman, Advisory Forum (AF) member from Sweden, who welcomed FPs to Uppsala, home of the Swedish Food Safety Agency. Per gave an introduction to the city of Uppsala as well as to the history of the Swedish Food Safety Agency and emphasized the importance of FP activities, in particular with regards to the EU Risk Assessment Agenda (EU RAA), also topic on the meeting agenda. Jeff thanked Per Bergman for the good reference made to the work of FPs, underlining the importance to see not only individual tasks but as well the whole picture of scientific cooperation.

## 3. SWEDISH STRATEGIES AGAINST ANTIMICROBIOLOGICAL RESISTANCE

Jeff Moon invited Christina Greko from the National Veterinary Institute in Sweden to open the meeting with a presentation about Swedish strategies against antimicrobial resistance. The overall objective of the strategy, as Christina underlined, is to preserve the possibility of an effective treatment of bacterial infections in humans and animals. On her speech, she focussed on animal health aspects. Christina gave detailed overviews on antibiotic sales figures and the correlation of antibiotic sales and resistance. She also pointed out that the approach does not concentrate only on antibiotics but includes also a broader spectrum of topics, namely animal welfare, control of *Salmonella* and infectious diseases, and internal and external biosecurity. The composite strategy aims

at removing unnecessary use of antibiotics, avoiding the spread of infections, minimising the need of antibiotics through animal health and welfare and to optimise the use when needed, while constantly monitoring the antimicrobial use and resistance. Close collaboration of authorities, Academia, veterinarians and producers is important to implement good practices. On question from Jeff about the main obstacles when implementing the strategy, Christina mentioned that, 30 years ago, when the strategy was initiated, there were a few barriers. If this was initiated today, perhaps the availability of public financial support and open borders, together with increased risks of introduction of new diseases, would be a challenge. On related questions on strategies to convince farmers to lower the need to use of antimicrobials, Christina informed that public debates in Sweden since the 1960s are in favour of a ban on use of antimicrobials as growth promoters were part of a broader debate on environmental and animal welfare. This combination of concerns on public opinion led to the current strategies applied in Sweden, with risk perception of consumers being constantly monitored by stakeholders. Italy stressed the importance of not only to monitor the amount of antimicrobial use but also the type of antimicrobials, asking about the situation regarding the use of colistin. Christina confirmed that colistin is a high-ranked antimicrobial. Sales of antimicrobials are monitored by substance and reported by class. This means that sales of colistin (a polymyxin) are being monitored. Usage in Sweden is currently in the lower levels, as defined by the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial consumption (European Medicines Agency). On question from Italy regarding electronic systems for automatic collection of data on use of antimicrobials at farm level, Christina explained that the current IT system is old, but that work on its development is underway.

#### **4. CHEMICAL HAZARDS DATABASE**

Jeff Moon introduced Jean-Lou Dorne, who presented via videoconference the EFSA Chemical Hazards Database. Jean-Lou gave an overview on steps and data available in chemical risk assessment (RA). He then outlined the content of the new Chemical Hazards Database named "Openfoodtox". Jean-Lou explained modern methods in chemical RA and the aim to achieve a chain of knowledge from toxicokinetics (TK) to toxicodynamics, from external dose to toxic effect. The objective is to establish a range of open source TK and Dynamic Energy Budget (DEB) models. On question Jeff, Jean-Lou explained that the database should be available by the end of the year. Additional tools will be established progressively, probably by the end of 2017. Meanwhile, articles and other material will be published. Germany asked about the link between data in the Chemical Hazards Database and the EFSA Data Warehouse and Jean-Lou confirmed that Openfoodtox will be fully available within the Data Warehouse in the near future.

#### **5. UPDATE ON EFSA'S ED VISITS TO MS**

##### **5.1. ED visit to Slovak Republic**

Jeff Moon invited Milo *Bystrický*, FP from Slovakia (SK), to provide feedback on the ED visit to Slovakia. The visit took place on 27 September, on the occasion of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) and prior to the AF meeting on 28-29 September in Bratislava. The visit comprised a meeting with experts from Article 36 organisations and members in EFSA's Scientific Networks to discuss the strengthening of scientific cooperation, a session with the SK State Secretary and a dedicated press event. A joint project was agreed in the area of spread of harmful organisms in human and animal health. Milo explained that the choice for this project has its origins on general problems in the context of climate change, globalisation and related changes in nutrition habits of the SK citizens. The spread of vectors that have not been recognized in the territory before and the increased risk of tick-borne diseases for humans and animals requires additional research and RA, as transmission of parasite and vector-borne diseases via food has increased. The project aims to process the mapping of vectors and parasites, the monitoring of zoonotic agents and the carry out a RA for individual zoonotic agents in terms of parasite and vector dissemination. Milo underlined

that the project has been jointly agreed by the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic and Austria but is open to participation by other MS. Czech Republic underlined the importance of the project as the participating countries face similar problems and thanked EFSA for the support. Lithuania asked if Lyme disease and similar diseases have been included in the RA and Milo confirmed that also other tick-borne diseases will be assessed, however particular importance has been given to toxoplasmosis and *Trichinella spp.*

## **5.2. ED visit to Sweden and Finland**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Karin Nyberg, FP from Sweden, and to Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen, FP from Finland, to inform the plenary about the ED visit to Sweden and Finland, which took place on 10-11 (Finland) and 12-13 (Sweden) October 2016. The joint project that has been agreed concerns risk ranking of chemical and microbiological hazards. This joint Swedish-Finnish initiative aims at exploring and developing methods for ranking microbiological and chemical risks in food. The project is also linked to the Delphi priorities of the EU RAA and to EFSA's strategic topics. Karin and Kirsi-Maarit presented the detailed project plan, concluding that the project will contribute to the development of tools for improving the basis for decision-making and risk communication, increase harmonization between chemical and microbiological RA, stimulate the sharing of experience among EU MS and identify future research needs.

## **5.3. Overview on agreed joint activities**

Jeff Moon introduced Marina Koussathana, who presented via videoconference an overview on joint projects that have been agreed in the framework of ED visits to stimulate cooperation between EFSA and the MS. Joint projects, agreed on visits of the ED to the MS, are defined as activities on priority topics led by the MS, supported by EFSA, and often organised in cooperation with other MS. Marina provided an overview of countries visited in 2016 and an outlook on visits planned to be carried out in 2017.

*Action Point 1: EFSA to share the DMS link to the folder containing updated documentation on the progress of ED visits, including on the agreed joint activities with MS.*

# **6. ADVISORY FORUM**

## **6.1. Feedback from the last meeting**

Jeff Moon informed FPs about the 61<sup>st</sup> AF meeting that took place on 28-29 September in Bratislava, Slovakia. One important topic addressed was the shift of the AFCWG into a Network. The respective Terms of Reference (ToR) were tabled and agreed by the AF plenary and can be made available to FPs. From 2017 onwards, the group will continue to operate with the name "Communication Experts Network (CEN)" and under the governance umbrella of EFSA's Scientific Networks. Current membership will remain as is and nominations will continue to be done through the AF. Together with the yearly update of all Scientific Networks, confirmation of members and representatives will be asked to the Advisory Forum at the beginning of each year. On question from Italy, Jeff explained that, as for Scientific Networks, representation is on voluntary basis, thus each MS can decide to be represented or not. Another AF agenda item was the Independence Policy of EFSA, which foresees to exclude Panel members due to conflict of interest if working on the same topic at national level. This caused intense debates and will be taken up again on the upcoming meeting of the AF in December. Four MS will then share their national experiences on their national independence policies. A new initiative under the AF is the AF Discussion Group (AFDG) on International Capacity Building, which will be led by Germany. The standing item on AF meetings concerning RA activities evolved to a productive dialogue between EFSA and the MS. Sweden informed about discussions in the Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) network on preparing an Excel file regarding forthcoming RA in that area. Jeff informed that colleagues of the EFSA ALPHA Unit have been made aware of the shared file with the AF and will ensure that no duplication of activities takes place. Finally, the AF signed a Declaration of Commitment on the 10<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of the former Declaration of Intent to cooperate in the spirit of food safety and consumer protection across Europe.

*Action Point 2: EFSA to circulate ToR of the CEN Network to FPs.*

## **6.2. Follow up on the adopted revised operational procedures – actions for FPs**

Jeff Moon informed that the operational procedures of the AF, which were revised in line with the review of the AF, have entered into force after adoption by EFSA's Management Board (MB). FPs are now clearly mentioned in Article 5, which constitutes a first legal recognition of FP network in support to the AF. The revised operational procedures can be found on EFSA's website [here](#).

## **6.3. Upcoming AF meeting**

Jeff Moon gave an outlook on the upcoming AF meeting that will take place on 8-9 December in EFSA premises. The draft agenda is going to be circulated the week after the FP meeting. Reference was made to the breakout session that will be held to discuss issues in the area of Emerging Risks, as agreed during the AF meeting in Utrecht last May. On question by Germany, Jeff informed that the draft minutes of the last AF meeting have been circulated among members for their comments on 4 November.

## **7. UPDATE ON THE EU RISK ASSESSMENT AGENDA JOINT PROJECTS**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Julia Finger to give an update on the joint projects under the EU RAA. Julia revisited the background, starting with the Delphi study, the prioritization exercise finalized a year ago, which was followed by a dedicated session of the AF on the plenary meeting in December 2015, where members agreed on the key priority topics to address. As a next step, EFSA developed and circulated a template among MS for expressions of interest in leading one or more of the topics mentioned in the brainstorming session. The ideas are being collected in the EU RAA Joint Project Catalogue that so far contains 45 contributions from 12 countries. Additional project ideas can be sent until 25 November. The following round that will be initiated after this deadline will request for additional countries to express interest on project ideas included in the catalogue. The exercise of finding possible funding opportunities undertaken by FPs earlier in the year will help to identify various means to finance the projects. As a final step also third parties, like the European Commission (EC) and other EU Agencies and international partners can be involved.

On question from Slovenia, Julia confirmed that also projects that are already running at national level but intended to be opened to a broader spectrum with more partners can be included in the catalogue. The expressions of interest to join a project can be sent at any stage. However, it is advisable to wait until the deadline of 25 November. On question from Italy, Julia explained that an "expression of interest" means that a national institution is interested to join a project, which does not necessarily reflect an interest of the country as such. The expressions of interest can be sent both by the AF or FP member by national organisations. Stef Bronzwaer added via videoconference that additionally to the 28 priorities identified in the Delphi study, other project ideas can be suggested in a separate column of the Excel sheet. A PDF version of the EU RAA catalogue has been circulated and FPs are invited to share the document with Article 36 organisations and other national institutions. France asked if the country that has indicated to take the lead on a project has to organise the complete project. It was clarified that this will be up to organisations involved and that consortia are most welcome as entities to fully run projects. On question of Denmark it was clarified that projects that have already been inserted in the catalogue should not be duplicated unless they are significantly different. For similar projects, it is best that organisations express interest in becoming a partner. Observers from Pre-Accession countries cannot take the lead in a project but can join projects as partners.

*Action Point 3: EFSA to add concept paper on the EU RAA as a background document of the meeting.*

*Action Point 4: FPs to share concept paper on EU RAA with national organisations.*

## **8. NATIONAL NETWORKING**

### **8.1. Summary and follow up of breakout session of last FP meeting**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Sérgio Potier Rodeia to follow-up on the breakout session of the last FP meeting. FPs had discussed practices and problems regarding national networking. FPs gave positive feedback on the breakout session, declaring the exercise important and interesting. A summary of discussions of all five breakout groups has been attached to the minutes of the last meeting. Sérgio gave a detailed overview on key difficulties identified, improvements to the current interaction and possible increased outreach. The main findings were summarized in a report, with key issues identified being coupled with possible solutions to overcome them. This draft “matching” document was also shared ahead of the meeting as a background document. He invited FPs to comment on this document, which will then be used as a scoping paper for national networking in 2017 and revised on a regular basis.

Greece asked about foreseen tools for networking beyond the ones currently in use. Sérgio explained that the current document aims to stimulate an efficient use of already existing tools, prompt for new ones to appear, further increasing national networking to additional stakeholder groups not yet being addressed. The document has also allowed improving the current template for reporting annually on FP activities. Italy remarked that every institution has already established channels, which however are not always well-known within the institution, thus a mandate to use these channels would be welcomed by FPs. Sérgio replied that this mandate is framed within the current FP agreements; however the buy-in of national institutions may still vary. EFSA can support FPs on improving their national networking through individual requests, on a need basis. Norway underlined the importance of looking at national networking on a wider, European context. Thus, in addition to the usual national networking that FPs carry out, a European dimension should be considered.

*Action Point 5: FPs to comment on the draft “matching” paper on national networking by 16 December.*

### **8.2. Networking at national level – reflections in Belgium**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Laurence Ballieux, FP from Belgium, to give a presentation on reflections in Belgium about national networking. The project, aiming to improve the impact of the communication between the FP and national partners, was first introduced internally in March 2016. As next steps, communication channels have been analysed and meetings with other relevant departments took place. To identify the needs of national partners, a survey was launched in September. Reflections now concentrate on how to implement the results of the survey, which communications channels to use and how to progress with the development of these new tools of communication. Final decisions are expected in November. On question from France, Laurence explained that the partners contacted for the survey were Article 36 organisations and other scientific institutions on the mailing list of the Belgium FP.

### **8.3. FP survey on enhancing the dissemination of EFSA career opportunities**

Jeff Moon welcomed Isabelle Hubert and Elena Caprioli, presenting by videoconference feedback on the FP survey on enhancing the dissemination of EFSA career opportunities. The survey has been conducted among FPs between 17 and 26 October and contained two sections, one regarding the promotion of EFSA’s vacancies and another regarding recruitment campaigns. Isabelle gave an overview on the results and offered to share the detailed outcome with FPs after the meeting. Isabelle thanked FPs for the input regarding needs and support for disseminating career opportunities, which will be taken on board already for the launch of the call for Seconded National Experts (SNE) foreseen in the upcoming weeks. Due to alignment with EC rules, vacancies will now be published in all languages of the EU. Luxembourg noted that EU jobs cannot be posted on national



platforms, but can only be seen on the EURES platform. Elena expressed regret that national websites might not have the permission to publish calls, offering support on the provision of links to EU websites. She further explained that, in the case of EFSA, we are publishing vacancies on the EPSO platform with links available on EFSA's website. Sweden mentioned that dissemination via social media is often difficult, as not all FPs are allowed to publish on social media, thus if EFSA is conducting social media campaigns, key messages (easily re-tweeted and re-posted) would help FPs to liaise with the social media responsible persons in national organisations. Isabelle confirmed that EFSA is currently developing a twitter plan and further training could be taken into consideration. Germany questioned the reason of translating vacancies into all languages. Elena explained that this follows a requirement of the EC due to prior court cases for vacancies in EU bodies. Latvia confirmed having checked the translation, which will help to promote vacancies at national level. On an additional question from Germany, Elena confirmed that vacancies are also included in the EFSA newsletter.

*Action Point 6: EFSA to share with FPs the FP survey report on disseminating career opportunities.*

## **9. STATE-OF-PLAY ON USE OF MS OFFICE 365 and FEEDBACK TO AF ON RA ACTIVITIES**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Sérgio Potier Rodeia to inform FPs about the state-of-play of the pilot on MS Office 365 as a new platform for cooperation. Sérgio summarized that feedback from FPs was, overall, positive. Jeff added that the table on RA activities will continue to be updated via this tool and that any feedback from FPs on its use is most welcome. Jeff then gave an overview on how the information inserted by FPs in the table is been processed and used by EFSA and shared with the AF. Envisaged improvements include the extraction and sharing of one single extract of the table for the AF (currently there are two extracts, one on new RA activities and one on modified RA activities), thus it would be beneficial that prior discussions between AF and FP take place on this issue.

Per Bergman explained that, from the perspective of an AF member, a main difficulty concerns the handling of a very long list of RA activities one week before the meeting, suggesting a change in format, ideally a database that would allow insertion of input and proper preparation together with colleagues in the institutions, thus enabling a better preparation before each AF meeting. He agreed to merge information into one single list and proposed a change on the name of the table to "ongoing" instead of "forthcoming" RA activities. France agreed that the term "forthcoming" is not fitting well, as data is not being deleted from the table, and suggested a change on columns to be extracted. She added that information on the right side of the table e.g. concerning dates of start and conclusion of RAs and also the "Comments" column are more relevant for discussions than the dates of inclusion or modification of the data on the table. Denmark asked for the possible removal or shortening of the deadline typically set for inclusion of information on the table, so to allow more time for discussions at national level. Jeff explained that the deadline is inevitable as the extract of the table has to be created and shared ahead of the AF meeting, however a possible improvement would be keep the table always open for provision of input and reminders sent by EFSA well ahead of AF meetings. Norway expressed difficulties in handling the list in terms of whom to share it with and how to filter the information, and asked if the tool is expected to stay with the current format or if in a near future it may develop into a more interactive tool, so that information could be extracted more easily. Jeff replied that the creation of a database for managing this information is being considered in EFSA, although the new SCaIE platform will not be adequate as it is an open domain. Sérgio added that Office 365 has been considered a temporary solution to overcome problems with uploads on DMS, and that improvements can still be done on this platform. Germany suggested to combine the EU RAA catalogue with the table on RA activities, as projects in the catalogue will materialize in activities to be mentioned in the table, a suggestion that could be looked at in the future. Jeff concluded that additional discussions will take place with AF members so to decide on future improvements needed.

*Action Point 7: FPs to provide updates to the Excel table on RA activities through the Office 365 platform by Friday 25.11.2016.*

## **10. SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER**

Jeff Moon informed the plenary about a new initiative to create a newsletter on scientific cooperation, which should cover both activities of EFSA and the MS. Sweden welcomed the idea which will help FPs to aggregate a number of e-mails sent to stakeholders at national level. Norway suggested the inclusion of links to reports, meeting agendas and press releases in the newsletter. On question from Greece, Jeff explained that a frequency of 4-6 times per year is being considered. Denmark asked to whom the newsletter should be circulated at national level, which is yet to be defined from EFSA's side. On further question from Denmark, Jeff confirmed that information from MS on summer schools and conferences could be included in the newsletter.

## **11. CAPACITY BUILDING**

### **11.1. Update on the Fellowship Programme**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Nicoline Le Gourierec to provide FPs with an update on the Fellowship Programme. Nicoline presented the timeline for next steps, emphasizing that 2 grant calls for expressions of interest to become a fellow hosting site and for applying to a fellowship have been launched very recently. Following these calls, 30 fellows will be placed on a short list and 15 hosting sites will be selected until February 2017. Each hosting site can select two fellows. The start of the programme is foreseen for September 2017, with common induction training for fellows at EFSA premises, followed by three specific training modules in Vienna, Berlin and Athens until the finalisation of the programme in August 2018. Nicoline informed that a dedicated webpage for the fellowship programme will be launched soon and that information will be sent to all institutions on the Article 36 list so ensure that all potentially interested partners are made aware. On question from the Czech Republic, Nicoline confirmed that the infographic shared as a background document to the meeting can be published on national FP websites.

### **11.2. Guest Scientist Scheme: experiences from Italy**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Luca Busani, FP from Italy, to share with FPs his experience as a Guest Scientist in EFSA. Luca joined EFSA in October to work on a project related to the review of the Article 36 List, heading the Article 36 FP task force. Luca highlighted the positive experience to learn more about ongoing work at EFSA, both regarding scientific activities and cooperation, the opportunity to make direct contacts and sharing experiences on different ways of working. He thanked for the support and recommended FPs to make use of the guest scientist scheme if they have the possibility. Jeff added that interested FPs should express their interest together with a specific project they would like to work on.

### **11.3. Update on the FP task force on Article 36**

Luca Busani then presented more detailed information on the FP task force on Article 36, the project he was working on during his stay as a guest scientist in EFSA. Luca recalled the previously discussed overarching aim of developing a more efficient and effective approach to implement Article 36 cooperation. The newly initiated EFSA project aims to establish a more flexible list and enable to MS a better management of networking and collaboration with competent authorities. The task force is meant to support the new project by undertaking a proof of the concept, providing input and feedback, participating in a simulation exercise, contributing to guidelines and training, and assisting other FPs. The members of the task force have been elected by the plenary during the last FP meeting and consist of FPs from Denmark, Spain, Norway, Greece and Finland, with Italy taking the lead. The first activities of the task force comprised a SWOT analysis of the actual process and tool for the Article 36 management; a kick-off meeting followed by a teleconference; and a first activity report. Luca then gave an



overview of the findings and conclusions of the SWOT analysis. As next steps, information will be collected on national surveys concerning Article 36 organisations made by FPs by mid-November, for which FPs are to expect a separate e-mail request; and the drafting of procedures and questionnaire to elicit the AF members their opinion on the new concept at the beginning of December. The AF will be asked on their plenary meeting in March for input regarding the concept and the tool. Luca asked FPs to think of perspectives on how to shape the new tool and the management process. Future meetings of the task force will probably be combined with FP plenary meetings.

**Jeff Moon then closed the meeting for the first day.**

## **12. UPDATE ON THE FP REPORTING & RENEWAL OF FP AGREEMENTS FOR 2016**

Jeff Moon opened the meeting of the second day, giving the floor to Sérgio Potier Rodeia, who gave FPs an update on the FP reporting period during 2016 and on the renewal of FP agreements for 2017. The reporting season closed on 31.10.2016 with 27 final reports have been received. The possibility of sending draft reports for comments had positive reactions and led to improvements of reports, thus being recommended for future reporting. The renewal procedure kicked-off on 30.10.2016 by e-mail, and should be followed by a mutual exchange of letters after approval of annual reports. Payment of the first instalment of the grant is expected to occur no later than 30 days after EFSA confirms the renewal.

France mentioned that the inclusion of examples on the reporting template should help the filling in of the different sections and asked for the possibility to comment on FP tasks that will be revised for the 2017 template. Sérgio confirmed that changes regarding mandatory and non-mandatory tasks will be made and that the draft reporting template for 2017 can be shared with FPs for comments. Jeff added that next year a review of the reporting template could be done in a breakout session during the September meeting to allow for more time to consult with FPs. Italy suggested that activities included in approved reports could be used as examples for the reporting template of the following year. With regards to international cooperation activities, Italy asked if wider activities including other parties could be reported. Sérgio explained that it is clear that FPs are usually not the generators of international cooperation activities and thus can describe their role also when participating in activities of other organisations.

*Action Point 8: EFSA to share draft FP reporting template for 2017 with FPs for comments.*

*Action Point 9: FPs to comment on draft FP reporting template for 2017 until 23 November.*

*Action Point 10: FPs to submit the letters requesting the renewal of the 2015 FP Grant Agreement for 2017 by 23.11.2016.*

## **13. UPDATE ON PRE-ACCESSION ACTIVITIES**

Jeff Moon introduced Jelena Vracar, who gave an update via videoconference on the Pre-Accession (IPA) activities. The current IPA Programme is run with a grant from the EC as a multi-beneficiary programme to implement preparatory measures for the participation of IPA countries in the work of EU Agencies. Key areas of the EFSA IPA programme 2015-2017 include capacity building in RA and risk communication, the facilitation of data collection and reporting, joint activities between EFSA, EU MS and the beneficiaries, and the promotion of EFSA and of national networking. The beneficiaries are classified as candidate countries to the EU (Albania, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and

Turkey) and as potential candidate countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo). The beneficiaries (mainly candidate countries) are also observers in networks such as the AF, the FP network, the CEN and EFSA's Scientific Networks.

Jelena then gave more detailed information on a study visit to the Croatian Food Safety Agency that took place on 27-28 October, thanking the support provided by the colleagues from Croatia. Jelena also informed about outcomes of an IPA training course occurred in Podgorica in June 2016; an IPA training course on Zoonoses, AMR and FBO occurred in Parma last October; and about a workshop on Lumpy Skin Disease occurred in Brussels in May 2016 - in which IPA countries participated. Jelena added that the EFSA IPA programme is now having a long-term perspective as EC funds are stable and will enable to continue with the next programme immediately after finishing the current one. Closer links are drawn both to ECDC and TAIEX (the latter being a programme being used to complete EFSA's activities). The fyR of Macedonia added that the participation of IPA countries as observers in FP meetings is very helpful to strengthen cooperation with EU MS and, as a result, the fyR of Macedonia gave a presentation on a conference organised by the Bulgarian FP. The fyR of Macedonia explicitly thanked EFSA for the programme and invited FPs to consider a network meeting in their country.

## **14. ISSUES RAISED BY FOCAL POINTS**

### **14.1. Feedback on the workshop on "Risk Benefit Assessment in the Nordic countries"**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Hanna Eneroth from Sweden to give a presentation on a workshop on "Risk Assessment in the Nordic countries", held on 22-23 September in Sweden. The workshop aimed at increasing the cooperation among the participating countries - Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Finland and Denmark. Hanna explained that Risk Benefit Assessment (RBA) aims at weighing benefits against risks. One example is fish consumption, where intakes of vitamin D, iodine, selenium and long chain omega-3 fatty acids are likely benefits while exposure to dioxins, PCBs and methylmercury may pose a risk to certain consumers. The RBA procedure starts from a clearly formulated risk benefit question with at least two scenarios. Health impacts are described in common currency following a tiered approach in steps until it becomes clear whether risks or benefits weigh more. Projects in the Nordic countries regarding RBA in fish, nuts and breast milk have been completed. Common challenges have been identified and will be the basis for the group to continue its work. Norway added that they're looking forward to further cooperation in this area. A report will be issued at the beginning of 2017, in English, and can be shared with FPs and EFSA.

*Action Point 11: Sweden/Norway to share with FPs the report on RBA in Nordic countries.*

### **14.2. ANSES report from the Infant Total Diet Study**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Adrienne Pittman, FP from France, to explain details of a report published in October 2016 concerning the results of an ANSES study on dietary exposure of children less than 3 years of age to chemical substances. The study has been conducted during a 6 year period, between 2010 and 2016. The infant total diet study (TDS) has taken place in three phases, from sampling - reflecting food consumptions and practices - to analysis of the composite samples, prepared as consumed; and a final assessment of chronic exposure. A total of 670 substances have been analysed and 400 substances assessed, with the aim to characterise the chronic dietary exposure to substances of interest for children less than 3 years of age who were not breastfed. The results reveal an acceptable situation for 90% of the assessed substances, with a limited number of substances posing a risk that could not be ruled out. Efforts to reduce exposure to certain substances will continue and related recommendations are given in the respective report. Food diversification, in particular, only from the age of 6 months onwards is recommended, and never before 4 months of age. The full report can be found on the ANSES website and a link will be circulated to

FPs. Italy informed about a food consumption study on gluten, confirming difficulties in sampling and assessing the population. Also for an exposure assessment regarding breastfeeding for which the RBA has been applied, the assessment has been difficult due to low numbers in sampling. The Netherlands asked about recommendations regarding soy products, on which France will come back separately.

*Action Point 12: France to circulate to FPs the link to the report on infant TDS*

### **14.3. Feedback on BfR's 8th national EFSA Focal Point event**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Lea Herges, FP from Germany, to give feedback on the 8<sup>th</sup> national FP event held at the BfR on 7 October 2016. The agenda comprised items on cooperation between EFSA and the MS, presented by AF members from Spain and Portugal, and as well a workshop on intensifying relations of German institutions with EFSA. Jeff, having participated in the meeting, underlined both the good exchange of views with Spain and Portugal, and the positive impact of obtaining direct feedback from Article 36 organisations during the meeting.

Germany informed that a platform for exchange of presentations and meeting material has been created and asked FPs if they use similar tools. France informed that a platform for information exchange with Scientific Network Representatives has been installed this autumn, although some problems still occur with access rights. Belgium is also running a SharePoint site since 2014, with separate areas for scientific network representatives, experts in the communications network, and Article 36 contact points. Norway informed having a platform used by Panel members, and has as next step the idea to invite also Article 36 organisations' contact points and scientific network representatives. Italy shared that, due to access problems to their information platform, partners indicated that they prefer e-mail exchange as opposed to the platform. If Article 36 organisations are sharing information on the German platform, this could be useful for the FP task force. Germany agreed to share the information relevant for the FP task force on Article 36.

### **14.4. Zoonoses in Italy: viewpoint from two different data sources**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Luca Busani, FP from Italy, who gave a presentation on different views deriving from two different data sources for data collected on zoonoses. The human cases of zoonoses in Italy 2009-2013 notified to the national surveillance system might lead to different conclusions when compared with the number of hospitalisations collected in the hospital discharge records (SDO). A dedicated analysis has now spotted the overlaps, the differences and the reasons for differing numbers. The full report is available in Italian. The follow-up foresees revision and adjustment of data collection systems.

## **15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **15.1. Upcoming grants and procurement + update on pilot on data quality**

Jeff Moon welcomed Sosanna Tasiou, who joined the meeting via videoconference from EFSA, to answer questions regarding upcoming grants and procurements. A table with upcoming grants and procurements was shared with FPs as background document to the meeting. On question from Denmark, Sosanna confirmed the deadline of end January 2017 for both the open call for a framework contract in the area of data and the grant call for the selection of hosting sites for the fellowship programme. France raised the question concerning the conditions applying to the publication and use of results of studies following negotiated procedures. Sosanna clarified that the ownership of results in negotiated procedures is with EFSA; however the contractor can ask EFSA to use the results. For grants, the ownership remains with the beneficiary, but EFSA remains a partner and can always use the results. On request from FPs, Sosanna then gave an update on the Data Quality Project: a preparatory teleconference with the countries that volunteered to take part in the pilot has taken place and follow up meetings are planned. The draft technical specifications for these FPA have been prepared. Kick-off meetings

with each MS taking part in the pilot will occur once the grant agreement is signed early 2017.

### **15.2. Induction guidelines to new FP members**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Julia Finger to present to FPs a new initiative for welcoming new members. Similarly to guidelines that have been developed for network representatives, explaining their role as well as general and logistical procedures, a guideline for new members of the FP network is proposed to be developed. Therefore, a group of volunteers should be set up to write these guidelines. FPs welcomed the idea, with Norway, Italy, Denmark, Croatia, Greece, France and Sweden volunteering to join the discussion group. A second initiative aims at matching new members with an "induction buddy" in the network, to provide support with questions related to FP tasks. Members that are interested to become an "induction buddy" should express their interest to EFSA so that a list is set up.

*Action Points 13: FPs to express interest in becoming an "induction buddy" for new FP members.*

### **15.3. Information Exchange tools – IEP and new SCAIE platform**

Jeff Moon informed FPs that the Information Exchange Platform (IEP) has finally closed down in the last week of October. The pilot project, aiming to test the new Scientific Cooperation and Information Exchange (SCaIE) platform and presented to FPs on the last meeting, is about to start. The three FPs that have volunteered to participate will be contacted in the upcoming weeks.

### **15.4. FP feedback from last meeting**

Jeff Moon gave the floor to Sérgio Potier Rodeia who presented the feedback FPs gave on the 28<sup>th</sup> FP meeting that took place in Parma last September. Overall the feedback was positive, particularly regarding the usefulness of the breakout session. FPs are invited to bring up topics for more breakout sessions in future meetings. Denmark remarked that a 2-day-meeting could be of advantage compared to the current 1.5- day-meeting that is often too short to discuss all agenda items in detail. Jeff confirmed that, depending on the agenda, extra time for the meeting could be taken into consideration.

### **15.5. Upcoming FP meetings and other FP/National events & FP feedback from last FP meeting**

At the end of the meeting, Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave an outlook on upcoming FP and other national events taking place, and on the calendar for FP meetings in 2017: the 30<sup>th</sup> FP meeting will take place on the 8-9 February in EFSA premises, in Parma; the 31<sup>st</sup> FP meeting on 17-18 May in Helsinki, Finland; the 32<sup>nd</sup> FP meeting on 13-14 September in Prague, Czech Republic; and the 33<sup>rd</sup> FP meeting on 15-16 November in Parma.

### **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

Jeff Moon closed the meeting, thanking participants for their attendance and active contribution. He expressed special thanks to the hosting country, Sweden, for their efforts and hospitality and to EFSA staff participating in the meeting and supporting from the office in Parma. The next meeting will take place on 8-9 February 2017 in Parma.

## SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	EFSA	To share the DMS link to the folder containing updated documentation on the progress of ED visits
Action 2	EFSA	To circulate the ToR of the CEN Network to FPs
Action 3	EFSA	To add concept paper on EU RAA as background document of the meeting
Action 4	FPs	To share concept paper on the EU RAA with national organisations
Action 5	FPs	To comment on the draft "matching" paper on national networking by 16 December
Action 6	EFSA	To share with FPs the FP survey report on disseminating career opportunities
Action 7	FPs	To provide updates to the Excel table on RA activities through the Office 365 platform by Friday 25.11.2016
Action 8	EFSA	To share the draft FP reporting template for 2017 with FPs for comments
Action 9	FPs	To comment on the draft FP reporting template for 2017 until 23 November
Action 10	FPs	To submit the letters requesting the renewal of the 2015 FP Grant Agreement for 2017 by 23.11.2016
Action 11	SE/NO	To share with FPs the report on RBA in Nordic countries
Action 12	FR	To circulate to FPs the link to the report on infant TDS
Action 13	FPs	To express interest in becoming an "induction buddy" for new FP members

### Document history

Document reference	Version 1.2
Prepared by	Julia Finger
Reviewed by	Sérgio Potier Rodeia / Jeff Moon
Last date modified	16 <sup>th</sup> December 2016