

Communication and External Relations Department

Stakeholder Engagement

1st Meeting of the EFSA Stakeholder Bureau

Brussels, 19 September 2017

1. Background

Stakeholders have been contributing to the work of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) since it was established in 2002. In recent years, EFSA has recognised changes in societal expectations and a demand, from a number of interested parties for more transparency and closer involvement in the scientific process. As part of its five-year strategy¹, EFSA is committed to prioritising public and stakeholder involvement in the process of risk assessment.

On 15 June 2016, EFSA's Management Board adopted a Decision on the criteria for establishing of a list of registered stakeholders and the establishment of the Stakeholder Forum and Stakeholder Bureau². This Decision underpins EFSA's new Stakeholder Engagement Approach³ (SEA) and is linked to a multi-annual, wide-ranging EFSA project: Transparency and Engagement in Risk Assessment (TERA).

The overall purpose of the SEA is to provide stakeholders with a better understanding of EFSA's scientific decision-making processes and to improve the quality of EFSA's scientific outputs to better meet stakeholders' needs.

The Stakeholder Bureau has been set up as a permanent mechanism that advises EFSA on stakeholder engagement and dialogue on civil society's concerns regarding health, the environment, food production and other issues in the Authority's remit. It is made up of one representative of each of the seven stakeholder groups, proposed by the stakeholders themselves to act in the interests of the stakeholder category they represent. An additional task of the Bureau is to contribute to the general understanding among stakeholders of EFSA's scientific risk assessment process, thereby improving trust in and creating a sense of ownership over decisions taken. Members of the Bureau act in the interests of the whole stakeholder category that they represent.

As envisaged by Article 6 of the Management Board Decision establishing the Stakeholder Forum and the Bureau, the registered stakeholders from each category were required to propose a nominee to represent their category in the Bureau. The categories of NGO and Academia could not reach a consensus on one single nomination. In order to facilitate the process, EFSA launched an on-line voting tool. The names of Bureau members were announced at the first Stakeholder Forum meeting in Parma in May 2017 (see Annex 1).

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate/pub/strategy2020>

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Document18992.pdf>

³ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EFSA%20Stakeholder%20engagement%20approach_FINAL.pdf

2. 1st Meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau

The first meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau took place in Brussels on 19 September 2017. The selection of the members of the Bureau was carried out according to Article 6 of the Decision of the Management Board and The Terms of Reference for the annual meeting of Bureau are set out in a Framework for Interaction for the Stakeholder Bureau that was developed jointly with registered stakeholders and endorsed by the Stakeholder Forum at its meeting in May 2017.

The first meeting of the Bureau was chaired by EFSA's Executive Director with the participation of the vice-chair of EFSA's Management Board. Representatives of the European Commission (DG SANTE) attended in an observer capacity.

The agenda of the meeting was co-drafted with participants and designed with a view to allow space for interaction and questions during the meeting.

The first meeting of EFSA Stakeholder Bureau was an opportunity to agree on several operational issues such as the framework for interaction between EFSA and the Bureau, to follow up on the recommendations arising from the Stakeholder Forum, and to exchange views on the implementation of activities carried out to date under the SEA framework.

3. Discussion Points

The Bureau took note of recommendations arising from the meeting of the Stakeholder Forum⁴ and discussed how best to implement them.

There was an extensive discussion on transparency that focussed on the need to engage in a meaningful way with stakeholders to build trust in science. Regarding the issue of open data, the Bureau proposed to investigate options for hosting an information event with risk managers (e.g. European Parliament), EFSA and stakeholder representatives to promote EFSA's initiatives and raise awareness.

In the area of risk communication, the Bureau noted the importance of risk communications and the promotion of science. There was a good debate on how the Bureau can act as an advocate for science and for EFSA and how to ensure a balanced representation of interests on the Bureau.

Bureau members came with a number of practical solutions on how to advance with the implementation of the SEA. It was agreed that the definition and scope of specific targeted mechanisms should be improved to allow better understanding of how stakeholders can engage. All agreed that the composition of existing discussion groups should be renewed to allow participation of newly registered stakeholder organisations including those under Practitioner and

[4 Report of the First Meeting of EFSA Stakeholder Forum](#)

Academia categories. The Bureau proposed a review of the feasibility of setting up additional Stakeholders Roundtables for categories other than Industry and NGOs, starting with Practitioners and Academia.

There was an exchange of views on the setting up of a stakeholder discussion group for the framing of questions. The objective of the group is to improve the way in which EFSA captures societal needs and expectations and to involve stakeholders at an early stage of the development of self-mandates or Guidance documents, particularly those that are sensitive or technically complex. The Discussion Group responds to an initiative that stems EFSA's broader Transparency and Engagement project (TERA). It was agreed that the concept of "societal concerns" should be revised to better address the risk management aspect.

4. General Remarks and Next Steps

The Bureau recommended that EFSA continue to invest in communicating to stakeholders about the engagement opportunities available to them under the new approach. The Bureau recommended launching a call for expression of interest among registered stakeholders to take part in the Discussion Group on Framing of Questions, which is planned for Q1 2018.

It was agreed that the Bureau shall provide input on topics for possible new discussion groups to be established. The Bureau shall have an important role in framing of the Stakeholder Forum 2018 meeting and help to identify specific scientific topics of interest to stakeholders.

The Bureau agreed that its meetings shall be organised on a six-monthly basis, in Brussels whenever possible. The Bureau will meet again in six months' time (April 2018).

Annex 1. Members of the Stakeholder Bureau

1	Consumers - BEUC	Ilaria Passarani Head of the Food and Health Department
2	NGOs and Advocacy Groups - Pesticide Action Network Europe	Martin Dermine Pollinators Project Coordinator
3	Farmers and Primary Producers - COPA-COGECA	Pekka Pesonen Secretary General of Copa and Cogeca
4	Business and Food Industry - European Crop Protection Association–ECPA	Euros Jones Director of Regulatory Affairs (Member resigned on 21 November 2017)
5	Distributors and HORECA - Euro Commerce	Els Bedert Adviser, Product Safety (Food & Non-Food).
6	Practitioners - European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians–EFAD	Ayla Gulden Pekcan Professor at Faculty of Health Sciences, Hasan Kalyoncu University, Gaziantep, Turkey
7	Academia - Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry Europe–SETAC	José Julio Ortega Calvo Immediate Past-President of SETAC, Researcher at the Spanish National Research Council, Department of Agro-chemistry and Soil Conservation