

Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards

Minutes of the 124th Plenary meeting

Held on 5-6 December 2018, Parma (Italy)

(Agreed on 20 December 2018)

Participants

■ Panel Members:

Ana Allende, Avelino Alvarez-Ordóñez, Declan Bolton, Sara Bover-Cid, Marianne Chemaly, Robert Davies, Alessandra De Cesare, Lieve Herman, Friederike Hilbert, Konstantinos Koutsoumanis, Roland Lindqvist, Maarten Nauta, Luisa Peixe, Giuseppe Ru (only 6 December by web-conference), Marion Simmons, Panagiotis Skandamis, Elisabetta Suffredini.

■ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Petros Angelopoulos, Kris De Smet (for item 9.1 by web-conference)

■ EFSA:

BIOCONTAM Unit: Giusi Amore, Sandra Correia, Maria Teresa da Silva Felício, Michaela Hempen, Maria Francesca Iulietto, Ernesto Liebana, Winy Messens, Angel Ortiz Pelaez, Eleonora Sarno, Pietro Stella, Yves Van der Stede

AHAW Unit: Nikolaus Kriz, Frank Verdonck (for item 10.2.4)

ED office: Eleni Boulomyti (for item 13)

■ Observers: (In application of the guidelines for Observers¹)

Anoar Jamai Masroue (physical observer, only 5 December); Ifigeneia Makariti, Nada Alasiri, Laura Monclus, Camila Menegon Teixeira Detanico, Stefanie Geiser, Ifigeneia Avdikou, Nikos Grivokostopoulos, Leticia Ungaretti Haberbeck, Süeda Öztürk, Ardian Hoxha (online observers through web-streaming for part of the meeting)

■ Others:

Zoltan Kunsagi (European Medicines Agency, for item 11.4)

¹<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/stakeholders/observers.html>

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Giuseppe Ru for 5 December.

2. Brief introduction of Panel members and Observers

The BIOHAZ Panel members, EFSA staff and the physical observer briefly introduced themselves.

3. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without further changes.

4. Declarations of Interest of Scientific Committee/Scientific Panel/ Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence² and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management³, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Panel members invited to the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the members at the beginning of this meeting.

5. Presentation of Guidelines for observers

EFSA Secretariat introduced the EFSA Guidelines for observers, including the rules for attending the meeting both physically and through web-streaming, and explained when in the agenda specific slots for answering questions from the observers have been placed.

6. Agreement of the minutes of the 123rd Plenary meeting held on 24 and 25 October 2018, Parma (Italy)

The minutes of the 123rd Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 8 November 2018.⁴

² http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

³ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf

⁴ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/181024>

7. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption or endorsement

7.1. Statement on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feed as notified to EFSA. 9: Suitability of taxonomic units notified to EFSA until September 2018⁵

Last meeting was held on 23 October in Parma. Between April and September 2018, the QPS notification list was updated with 46 microorganisms from applications for market authorisation. From these, 30 biological agents already had QPS status, 13 were excluded of the QPS exercise from the previous QPS mandate (4 filamentous fungi) or from further evaluations within the current mandate (two notifications of *Enterococcus faecium* and seven of *Escherichia coli*). One taxonomic unit was (re)evaluated: *Pseudomonas fluorescens* had been previously evaluated in 2016, and was now re-evaluated within this mandate, and *Mycobacterium setense* and *Komagataeibacter sucrofermentans* were evaluated for the first time. The Panel agreed on the final conclusions and recommendations. The summary of the data extracted on possible safety concerns through an extensive literature search (ELS), for references retrieved between January and June 2018, was incorporated in the document, thoroughly discussed and agreed. The opinion was adopted by the BIOHAZ Panel.

8. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

8.1. Scientific opinion on *Salmonella* control in poultry flocks and its public health impact⁶

The last WG meetings were held on 5 and 6 October 2018 by web-conference and 21 October 2018 in Parma. The WG chair informed that the chapters of the draft opinion related to welfare aspects were reviewed by the AHAW Panel members during the 114th AHAW Plenary meeting and specific comments were discussed in detail. For instance, some text was included to describe the limitations of the data provided by the identified studies and approximate uncertainty probability terms were introduced into the conclusions. The WG Chair then presented the entire draft opinion to the BIOHAZ panel and a discussion took place. The Panel requested to further reduce text, to keep only clear and short answers to the ToR and to remove the uncertainty in final conclusions for harmonization reasons. The next meeting of the WG will take place on 12 December 2018 by

⁵ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00830>

⁶ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00692>

web-conference. The deadline for adoption of this scientific opinion is 31 January 2019.

8.2. Scientific opinion on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feed as notified to EFSA⁷

The last WG meeting was held on 23 October in Parma. The summary of the data extracted on possible safety concerns through an extensive literature search (ELS), for references retrieved between January and June 2018, was incorporated in the Panel Statement part 9. Next meeting will take place by web-conference on 21 January 2019. Background of QPS approach to be further improved. The deadline for adoption of this scientific opinion is December 2019.

8.3. Scientific opinion on the pathogenicity assessment of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) and the public health risk posed by contamination of food with STEC⁸

The WG Chair updated the Panel on the progress of work made during the WG web meeting on 20 November. The approaches proposed by the WG to answer the ToRs were presented to the Panel and limitations of the available data which will be used for that have been highlighted. The Panel agreed with performing the ranking exercise by comparing food commodities in the EU and ranking these based on estimated source attribution fractions. Questionnaires produced by the WG on STEC monitoring in humans and STEC monitoring in food/feed/animals will be distributed to ECDC's FWD network and EFSA's Zoonoses network as well as VTEC EURL network respectively. EFSA sent an official data request to ECDC and the data is expected to be delivered to EFSA before the end of 2018. The next WG meeting will take place on 1 February 2019, as a web-conference. The deadline for the adoption of this scientific opinion is at the plenary meeting on 11-12 December 2019.

8.4. Scientific opinion on the application and use of next generation sequencing (including whole genome sequencing) for risk assessment for foodborne microorganisms⁹

The WG Chair updated the Panel on the progress of work made during the web meeting on 28 November 2018. The approaches proposed by the WG to answer the ToRs were presented to the Panel and the Panel agreed with these. ToR1 will be answered based on a non-systematic review of recent relevant literature as well as on the outcome of relevant research projects and ToR2 performing a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of NGS-based alternative methods.

⁷<http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00684>

⁸<http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00293>

⁹<http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00397>

The next WG meeting will take place on 29-30 January 2019 in Parma. The deadline for adoption of this opinion is the October 2019 plenary meeting.

8.5. Scientific opinion providing an update and review of control options for *Campylobacter* in broilers at primary production¹⁰

The first WG meeting was held on 4th December 2018 in Parma. The WG chair updated the panel on the WG composition and discussions during the first meeting. The approach to answering the terms of reference was presented. A literature search will be carried out focussing on publications after 2010 and a mathematical model will be used to assess the effect of on-farm interventions. The panel agreed with the suggested approach. The draft opinion will be kept as concise as possible focussing on updates since the publication of the BIOHAZ panel opinion 2011.¹¹ This opinion will implement the EFSA uncertainty guidance¹² and the approach for its implementation was also agreed on during the plenary. The uncertainty analysis for the whole process will be qualitative but there will be a, possibly quantitative, description of model uncertainty included. For the implementation of the uncertainty guidance, the WG is supported by the SCER Unit and cross-cutting WG on Uncertainty. The deadline for adoption is January 2020.

8.6. Scientific opinion on an update of the scientific opinion on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in cervids¹³

The Chair of the working group (WG) reminded the Panel the terms of reference of this mandate, received on 24 September 2018 and presented the summary of the first meeting that took place on 4 December as a physical meeting in Parma, linked to the plenary. The terms of reference were discussed and it was agreed to seek clarification to the EC on two specific terms of ToR1. Overall approaches and data sources were agreed realising that much of the new data in this field is incomplete and largely in the pre-publication stage hence the extra weight given in the WG selection criteria towards researchers who are actively investigating different aspects of the European cases, and could share this preliminary data. The WG members are willing to share preliminary data and a number of research groups working with isolates of European and North American CWD cases were identified and specific data requests to them will be issued. The second meeting will take place on 24-25 January 2019 as a 1.5 day physical meeting in Parma.

¹⁰ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00676>

¹¹ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2105>

¹² <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/5123>

¹³ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00763>

9. New Mandates

9.1. Request for a scientific opinion on the public health risk posed by *Listeria monocytogenes* in frozen fruit and vegetables including herbs, blanched during processing

EFSA Secretariat presented to the Panel the background and terms of reference of this mandate, received on 4 December 2018. The Panel chair nominated Ana Allende as Chair of the ad hoc WG which will be established for this mandate (conditional to screening and approval of her declaration of interests).

10. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/Scientific Panels, EFSA, the European Commission

10.1. Scientific Committee and other Scientific Panels

10.1.1. Scientific Committee

The 91st Plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC) took place on 21 November 2018. The BIOHAZ Panel chair briefly reported the topics discussed at the SC meeting. The next SC meeting will take place on 19 February 2019.

10.1.2. Scientific opinion on the evaluation of the safety and efficacy of lactic acid to reduce microbiological surface contamination on carcasses from wild game and small stock¹⁴

No update.

10.2. EFSA including its Working Groups and Networks

10.2.1. Scientific Networks on BSE-TSE and MRA

The next MRA network meeting will be on 21-22 May 2019. The next BSE-TSE Network meeting will be in October 2019 (date to be defined).

10.2.2. Update on Rapid Outbreak Assessments and related activities

EFSA Secretariat addressed the Panel with a presentation on recent ECDC-EFSA Rapid Outbreak Assessments (ROAs). The most recent one, published on 25 October 2018, relates to a multi-country *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak linked to salmon products.¹⁵

¹⁴ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00667>

¹⁵ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/en-1496>

10.2.3. Scientific and technical assistance on harmonized monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria transmitted through food¹⁶

Discussion on this item was postponed to the next Plenary meeting.

10.2.4. Update on activities of the AHAW Panel

EFSA Secretariat (AHAW Unit) addressed the Panel with a presentation on the activities of the AHAW Panel, in particular in relation to animal welfare (rabbit production, slaughter and killing of animals), animal health (African swine fever, avian influenza, *Echinococcus multilocularis* and lumpy skin disease) and on the EFSA SIGMA project. The BIOHAZ Panel expressed interest in future collaboration with the AHAW Panel on topics of overlapping remit of the two Panels.

10.3. European Commission

No update.

11. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

11.1. Topics of scientific concern in the area of biological hazards and possible priorities for BIOHAZ self-tasking work in the future

EFSA Secretariat presented an updated draft proposal for a self-task activity on the role played by of environment in the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance through the food chain. The draft presented at the previous plenary was updated according to comments received from the BIOHAZ Panel members and EFSA BIOCONTAM and was shared with the European Commission and EU agencies ECDC, EEA and EMA for comments. The Panel agreed in proceeding with the EFSA procedure for approval of the self-task mandate.

11.2. Update on the training on the implementation of the guidance on uncertainty analysis in scientific assessments

EFSA Secretariat updated the Panel on the organisation of the training to be delivered to the Panel on the implementation of the EFSA Guidelines on Uncertainty analysis in scientific assessments. The training is expected to take place in March 2019. The Panel Chair and the Secretariat are discussing with the trainer on how to shape the training around the needs of the BIOHAZ Panel. Some preparatory meetings with selected Panel members will take place in January and February 2019, details will be shared with Panel members as soon as possible.

¹⁶ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00051>

11.3. EU Summary Report on surveillance for the presence of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) in 2017

EFSA Secretariat addressed the Panel with a presentation on findings reported in the EU Summary Report on surveillance for the presence of TSE in 2017. The report was published on 29 November 2018.¹⁷

11.4. EC request to EMA for an update of the advice on the impact on public health and animal health of the use of antibiotics in animals (categorization of antimicrobials and early hazard characterization)

Zoltan Kunsagi (EMA) addressed the Panel with a presentation on the new scientific advice from the EMA Antimicrobial Advice Ad Hoc Expert Group (AMEG), which is currently being finalised by EMA. The advice concerns an update of the AMEG characterisation of antimicrobials and a methodology for early hazards characterisation of antimicrobials.

12. Answers to questions from Observers

Before the plenary meeting, observer Anoar Jamaï Masroure provided the Panel with one question in relation to ways to improve the risks from *Campylobacter*, especially in developing countries and especially in young people. During the meeting, panel members answered the question, giving an overview on *Campylobacter* control methods in both high- and low-income countries, based on previous EFSA opinions and on their scientific knowledge and expertise.

13. Any other business

No other businesses were discussed.

¹⁷ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/5492>