

Geographical balanced membership of the Scientific Committee and Scientific expert panels



European Food Safety Authority

GEOGRAPHICAL BALANCED MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND SCIENTIFIC EXPERT PANELS

1. In January 2005 the Management Board discussed document MB 18.01.2005-7 and reconsidered the procedure for the selection of candidates for membership of the Scientific Committee and the 8 Scientific Expert Panels, as adopted at their 7th Meeting in March 2003 (MB.19/20.03.2003). They also addressed the adopted procedure for replacing resigning members of the Scientific Committee and Panels. The Management Board endorsed again the procedures as described in these documents.

2. The Management Board however also requested the EFSA Secretariat to propose procedures for adoption that would increase the chance of a balanced representation in the Scientific Committee and Panels of experts from the 10 new Member States when in 2006 the Scientific Committee and Scientific Expert Panels are all up for re-election. Furthermore, the Management Board expressed its intention to have a discussion on the matter of geographically balanced representation of national experts during its meeting in June. This document is intended to share at an early stage the outcome of the Advisory Forum discussion of the same issue, to allow for a preliminary discussion and seek additional input from the Management Board.

3. Currently not all Panels are filled up to the maximum of 21 members. The reason for this is two-fold. On the one hand at the time of establishment of the Panels in 2003 it was not fully clear what tasks could be expected for a number of Panels. Thus, some posts were intentionally kept vacant to accommodate future needs. On the other hand both the first and second call for experts (in January 2003 and January 2004, respectively) did not yield sufficient candidates optimally fitting the required expertise an experience profiles required for some of the Panels.

4. The current composition of the Panels and Scientific Committee is as follows:

Country	AFC	AHAW	BIOHAZ	CONTAM	FEEDAP	GMO	NDA	PPR	SC
Austria			1		1	1			
Belgium	1		2	1	1	1	1	2	
Germany	3	2	2	1	3	3	1	3	
Denmark	1	1	1	2		2		1	
Spain	1	2	1		3	1	1	1	1
Finland	1		1		1	1	1	1	
France	2	2	3	3	3	1	1		2
UK	3	5	3	2	2	4	3	5	3
Greece	1	1	1			1	1	3	
Ireland	1	1	1			1	1		2
Italy	2	3	1	4	2	1	2	2	1
Luxemburg									

Netherlands	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	2
Portugal					1				1
Sweden	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Argentina		1							
Czech Rep.				1					
Norway			1	1	1		1		
Poland									
Serb / N. Zealand			1						
Switzerland				1					1
TOTAL	19	21	21	20	21	21	16	21	14

5. From the two calls for experts it appeared that the numbers of experts applying for membership of a Panel or Scientific Committee were not always proportionate to the size of the country in terms of its population and from a few Member States eligible applications were as low as less than 5 experts. It also appeared that a substantial number of applicants from various Member States did not comply with the basic criteria for membership, most notably with the required expertise and experience.

6. Following the Management Board meeting of 18 January 2005 and based on a short paper from the Executive Director (AF 03/04.02.2004-7), the balanced representation of experts from all Member States was discussed by the Advisory Forum when meeting on 3 and 4 February in Lisbon, Portugal. From this paper and the discussions of the Advisory Forum it was clear that:

- the main objective remains to have the best available experts on the Panels and the Scientific Committee;
- Calls for experts launched by EFSA are open to all experts who wish to apply for membership of a Panel or the Scientific Committee and there should be no other selection process than the EFSA process adopted by the Management Board;
- All efforts should be made to achieve geographical balanced membership from all Member States, proportionate to the countries' size in terms of population; and
- the aim is to fill each Panel up to the maximum of 21 experts, provided that their collective scientific profile fits the needs of the Panel and that a reasonable geographical balance is achieved.

7. In addition, the Advisory Forum discussed : (i) the process to ensure that a call for experts to apply for membership to the Scientific Committee or any of the Panels be transmitted as broadly as possible throughout the scientific communities of all Member States and (ii) how scientist in the new Member States could be encouraged to submit their candidature. Following the discussion the Advisory Forum agreed that:

- announcements of calls for experts should continue to be advertised in the European Journal, in the most appropriate professional journals and other publications frequently consulted by scientific experts.
- In addition, the Advisory Forum requested that the EFSA Secretariat would formally inform national food safety agencies of such calls through the

Advisory Forum together with the request to circulate these to national experts in their data bases, relevant Ministries (in particular those dealing with agriculture/fisheries, health and environment) and national Institutions selected in accordance with Article 36 of EFSA's founding Regulation 178/2002.

- The Advisory Forum further agreed that through direct contacts between national food safety agencies and national experts as well as through direct contact between EFSA staff (in particular those who are citizens of the new Member States) and national experts these experts should be encouraged to put forward their nomination.
- Well before the deadline for applications, the EFSA Secretariat could inform the Advisory Forum of the numbers of nominations (no disclosure of any names at this point of time) received from all Member States with the aim to allow for additional national last minute initiatives which may result in additional nominations before closure of the call.
- The EFSA has again offered to share with the Advisory Forum for their advice details of the candidates on the shortlist for consideration by the Management Board following the approved selection procedure.

8. The tenure of the Scientific Committee and the 8 Panels is three years and therefore in 2006 EFSA will launch the third call for experts and start the selection process to re-populate the Scientific Committee and Panels. Meanwhile, in case of early resignation of experts as occurred earlier in the CONTAM and GMO Panels, EFSA will apply the procedure for replacement of experts as described in document MB.18.01.2005-7.

9. The Management Board is invited to note the further steps set out in this document.