



EFSA PROGRESS REPORT

Dear Members of the Board,

Please find attached the written progress report on matters of interest to the Board that have occurred since the last meeting and information concerning important future activities.

Geoffrey Podger
Executive Director

The inauguration of EFSA in Parma on 21 June

- 1) Since the last Management Board meeting, preparations for the inauguration of EFSA in Parma have been high on the agenda. The spring has been an extremely busy time as the preparations for the inauguration have had to run in parallel with daily business. EFSA is honoured that Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi will inaugurate the Authority at the Palazzo Ducale with the Chairman and its Board in the presence of the President of the European Commission; José Manuel Barroso, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection; Markos Kyprianou and other national, European and local dignitaries.
- 2) The period leading up to the inauguration has seen intensive team work across EFSA with the authorities of the Comune, the Provincia, Regione and with the Italian Authorities at the Palazzo Chigi.

International and Institutional Affairs

Advisory Forum - Two Advisory Forums have been held since the last Board meeting on the 7 April and 3 June respectively.

The Advisory Forum met on 7 April in Stockholm and discussed the following issues:

- 3) The elaboration of EFSA's Working Programme 2006
The Authority's draft work programme for 2006 was introduced with the intention to seek further input from the Advisory Forum on items which are not yet covered by the programme
- 4) The Forum discussed text from the Commission concerning the greater involvement of the Member States in the scientific process in order to avoid divergence of opinions on GMOs. It was concluded that although improvements are always possible the Forum was of a view that the networking put in place by EFSA was functioning efficiently although there could be further interaction, if needed in the future. EFSA would continue to ensure openness and transparency of its evaluation processes as far as legally possible.
- 5) The AF was also updated on the preliminary results of a project on quantitative microbiological risk assessment launched in December 2004 including a brief synopsis of the differences found between the member states and the scientists and the expected benefits of QMRA at European level. In addition the Forum was updated on the establishment of a scientific expert database, on progress on a Botanicals and Botanical preparations questionnaire and on the state of play concerning the discussion in the Scientific Committee on the Genotox and Carcinogenic proposal.

- 6) Following on from the discussion in April, the 2006 Work programme was discussed at the AF June meeting and members asked to contribute their ideas for work areas and priorities.
- 7) At the June meeting the Forum was informed about the first meeting of the ad hoc AF Working Group on the Input of National Authorities into the work of EFSA's scientific Committee, Panels and other Expert Groups which met on 27 May. The Forum also considered the up coming joint SANCO-EFSA crisis exercise, and the involvement of ESFA in the Romania and Bulgaria Phare programme.
- 8) The Advisory Forum WG on Communications has set up a Task Force on communication requirements in a crisis; a group that will investigate what type of documents will be useful to share between communications experts in times of emerging situations or even crisis, and the way in which these can be made available will be discussed.

PHARE Project involving Romania and Bulgaria in the work of EFSA

- 9) The Authority has started the implementation of a "PHARE multibeneficiary programme on the participation of Romania and Bulgaria in certain Community Agencies in 2005 and 2006". The Commission decision setting up the programme was adopted in 2004 and grants the Authority 500 000 € to ensure that Romania and Bulgaria have been fully involved as far as their status as acceding member states permits, before they join as full members of the EU in 2007. The programme runs over 18 months, until the end of year 2006. In April members of the EFSA Steering Committee for this project travelled to Romania and Bulgaria to discuss with the national authorities how to implement the project and a full programme of cooperation is in preparation.

Parliamentary issues

- 10) Geoffrey Podger addressed a hearing in the European Parliament on 13-14 June, with a hearing in the Environment and the Agricultural Committees respectively, and highlighted some of the tasks for this year and the tasks to be foreseen for 2006. After his address the Committees were given the floor to ask questions.
- 11) The Committee on Environment raised issues related to the EFSA budget and costs, the illegal dyes Sudan and Para Red and EFSA's role in the recent discussion, the link between risk assessment and risk management, GMOs and EFSA assessments in relation to Member States assessment and EFSA's independence. The Committee further asked questions about problems for EFSA in recruiting senior scientists and members were informed about the issue concerning the reduction of higher grades in the Establishment Plan and the concerns to which this gives rise. The Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Karl-Heinz Florenz, indicated that the Committee would do its best to help EFSA on budgetary issues if needed.

- 12) The Committee on Agriculture asked questions about the role of science in the political process, GMOs, the possibility of feeding other species than ruminants with meat and bone meal and fish meal, in particular EFSA's view on relaxing the current ban. The Committee was also interested in EFSA's general view on the vaccination of animals.

Science Department

The following provides an outline of EFSA scientific activities since the last Board meeting:

- 13) Since the Management Board met on 10 March, the AHAW Panel has received and started activities on three new mandates: brucellosis tests, the welfare of calves and captive birds.
- 14) In the PPR Panel, four "ecotoxicology" Working Groups and one "fate and behaviour in environment" WG meetings took place during this period.
- 15) The GMO Panel held 2 plenary meetings and 15 working group meetings. The EFSANet was launched with the Member States which enable close collaboration and exchanges of information between EFSA and the Members States. The panel adopted opinions on Bt11 maize, MON 863 x MON 810 maize and a Hungarian safeguard clause.
- 16) The CONTAM Panel held 1 plenary meeting and 10 working group meetings. The panel adopted a statement on acrylamide related to the JECFA report and 1 opinion on ergot as undesirable substance in animal feed.
- 17) The AFC Panel adopted opinions on two flavouring group evaluations, in all 28 substances. It will be published soon together with two opinions on 28 substances adopted at end of February. Opinions on two food contact substances were adopted. The Panel also adopted an opinion on semicarbazide in food as a follow up of its previous statements on semicarbazide in baby foods.
- 18) At its plenary meeting in April, the NDA Panel adopted 4 opinions. The NDA Panel also received a very resource intensive new mandate on the review of Population Reference Intakes (PRI), i.e. nutrient-base recommendations for the European population.
- 19) The FEEDAP Panel held 12 working group meetings mainly on assessments related to different products (coccidiostats, micro-organisms, enzymes, tannin extracts), general safety questions in animal nutrition (carotenoids), guideline work and self-tasks. Two plenary meetings took place and 5 opinions were adopted.

- 20) The BIOHAZ Panel held three plenary meetings and adopted eight opinions in total. Opinions in the field of BSE/TSE related to confirmation of the UK application on moderate BSE risk, the assessment of age limit for the removal of certain Specified Risk Material (SRM) in cattle and the Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA) for residual BSE risk in bovine derived products. It further adopted an additional four opinions in the field of Food Hygiene-Food Microbiology.
- 21) The BSE/TSE Risk Assessment Unit adopted and published 6 Scientific Reports on Geographical BSE Risk assessment (GBR) and one scientific report on the evaluation of tests for TSE detection in small ruminants. The Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection met once. The new web-based reporting system was launched in the end of April, and since then the Member States have been actively reporting the data from 2004 through the system.
- 22) The Pesticides Risk Assessment Peer Review Expert Group (PRAPeR) finalised the conclusions for the existing active substances glufosinate, tolylfluanid and trifluralin as well as for the first new active substance (1-methylcyclopropene). In the working group meeting on 18-20 May, the conclusions for 3 additional substances were discussed and PRAPeR is currently preparing the dispatch to the Commission.
- 23) Since the last MB meeting in March, the Scientific Committee (SC) met once in plenary and had 5 working group meetings (on transparency, exposure assessment, and emerging risks).

Human Resources

Staffing levels

- 24) Total staffing levels as of 31/5: 62 A posts, 19 B posts and 38 C posts which equals 119 Temporary agents (more precisely 118 TA and 1 FT).

Breakdown:

Auxiliary Agents (AX)	25	14,89%
Seconded National Experts (END)	9	4,26%
"Fonctionnaires" (FT)	1	0,71%
Temporary Agents (AT)	118	80,14%
Sum:	153	

School

- 25) The Scuola per l'Europa in Parma has been given the green light from the European Schools Board of Governors to become an official Associated School. The modalities for running Associated Schools will be defined during the coming year. The Scuola per l'Europa should be able to offer the full tuition up to the EU Baccalaureat from the academic year 2006/2007.
- 26) For the academic year 2005/2006 the school will open on 6 September in the renovated building located in Via Saffi. It will gather over 200 students from first nursery to 3rd secondary years. Language sections are IT/EN/FR as it was in the 2004-2005 academic year.

Communications

- 27) The Annual Report and Summary, developed according to the recommendations of the Management Board were published and distributed from the end of May. Approximately 700 copies have been distributed.
- 28) Eurobarometer project: The final questionnaire agreed by EFSA and DG SANCO relating to risk perception is now finalised and will be fielded in September by Gallup as part of the Eurobarometer wave scheduled at that time.

IT

Update on videoconference project

- 29) EFSA's videoconference project to connect all national food authorities to EFSA and to each other is progressing well. All Member States, plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, the European Commission and the EFSA all have access to modern videoconference equipment. All sites are connected with sufficient bandwidth and 26 sites out of 30 have been certified by EFSA's contractor BT.