

Office of the Executive Director and the Management Board

**Minutes of the
Management Board Meeting
Public Session, 2 October, 2008
Paris**

Members of the Management Board present

Diána Bánáti (Chair)	Sinikka Turunen
Bart Sangster (Vice-Chair)	Sue Davies
Peter Gaemelke	Roland Vaxelaire
Bernhard Url	Jiri Ruprich
Piergiuseppe Facelli	Konstantinos Yazitzoglou
Milan Pogačnik	Matthias Horst
Marion Guillou	Robert Madelin

Observers and Invitees of the Executive Director

Professor Vittorio Silano	
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Staff of the European Food Safety Authority present

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle	Christine Majewski
Alexandrine Maviel-Sonet	David Caira
Anne-Laure Gassin	Gisèle Gizzi
Riitta Majjala	
Hubert Deluyker	

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SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

The Management Board:

- Noted the election of new Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Board
- Noted the thanks to the French Authorities for hosting the Management Board meeting
- Adopted the agenda
- Adopted the minutes from the Management Board Meeting on 25th June in Ljubljana
- Noted that the Board would adopt the new financial regulation if the European Commission had no comments
- Noted that the Audit Committee informed the Board about the preparation of an audit programme for 2009. The European Court of Auditors have reported EFSA's accounts for 2007 as reliable and regular
- Took note that the transfers in the EFSA budget represented less than 5% of EFSA's budget

Opening and welcome by the Chair and introduction of new Board members

1. The Chair opened the meeting by announcing her election as new Chair of the Board and introducing the two new Vice-Chairs. She welcomed the board members, executive director, directors of EFSA and EFSA staff present as well as Professor Vittorio Silano the chair of the Scientific Committee. The Chair acknowledged the apologies of M. Elvander.
2. The Chair thanked the French authorities for their hospitality in hosting the meeting.
3. The Chair asked the new Board members to introduce themselves.
4. The Chair announced that the new Board members had already filled in their declarations of interest and asked if members wished to make any new declarations of interest. None were declared.

Adoption of Agenda (Document MB 2.10.08 item 3 doc 1 draft agenda)

5. The Chair asked the Members if they had any addition to the agenda and proposed to switch agenda items 6 and 7.
6. The agenda was adopted.

Adoption of draft minutes of the MB meeting public session (Document MB 2.10.08 item 4 doc 2 draft minutes)

7. The Chair asked for comments on the draft minutes from the Board meeting from 25th June in Ljubljana.
8. A Member inquired about the paper announced for the October Board meeting, concerning new emerging technologies and their relevance for risk assessment.
9. EFSA's executive director announced follow up for late 2008/early 2009. She highlighted that this was an ongoing project.
10. The draft minutes were adopted.

Visit of Commissioner Vassiliou to EFSA

11. The Chair invited the Executive Director to update the Board on the visit of Commissioner Vassiliou to EFSA on July 27th and 18th and the discussions held during this visit. This visit saw the participation of some members of the Management Board and on the agenda were meetings with the Scientific Committee, EFSA directors and EFSA staff.
12. EFSA's Executive Director explained that during the visit of the Commissioner EFSA work was presented and the main challenges that EFSA is facing today explained. She described the meetings as very constructive. The beginning of the meeting saw the presence of Italian's Undersecretary of Health Francesca Martini which was a very useful opportunity for the Commissioner to discuss the cooperation between EFSA and the Italian authorities, in particular in relation with the school and the airport.
13. EFSA's Executive director further highlighted that the Commissioner during her speech to all staff expressed her confidence and trust and promised support to EFSA and to its scientific experts. Furthermore, the Commissioner expressed confidence in the scientific opinions that EFSA delivers.

14. The Commissioner addressed important key messages in particular the importance of the interface and dialogue with the European Commission but also cooperation with Member States. In particular she highlighted the importance of creating a sense of ownership in Member States for EFSA's scientific output, of strengthening the strategy for cooperation and networking with Member States and the initiatives undertaken recently with the creation of focal points in all 27 Member States. The Commissioner considered that EFSA's activities with the European Parliament were relevant.
15. A further important statement made by the Commissioner was that EFSA's opinions should be clear and understandable. EFSA should make sure that its opinions are understandable and readable not only by scientific experts but also by those who are using these scientific opinions for example risk managers. In this context EFSA's Executive Director mentioned the initiative already taken on the implementation of a self-review and an internal review of the quality of scientific output based on advice from the Scientific Committee.
16. The last point made by the Commissioner in this context concerned the monitoring and the definition of priorities by indicating that the general governance is crucial in particular in relation to the appropriate allocation of resources and its optimal use in the different areas.
17. Concluding, EFSA's Executive Director pointed out that it is EFSA's intention to follow up on this very fruitful exchange and that EFSA was very pleased by the Commissioner's expression of confidence in EFSA's work. She declared that EFSA will continue strengthening the interface and dialogue without compromising its scientific independence.
18. The Chair thanked EFSA's Executive Director and emphasized the importance of issues EFSA is already working on namely the quality and timely delivery of opinions and the communication of EFSA's scientific work, she then asked the other Members of the Board for comments.
19. The Members of the Board thanked EFSA's Executive Director and described the visit as extraordinarily useful and stressed the importance of communicating to the scientists working in EFSA's panels and in the Scientific Committee the expression of value addressed by the Commissioner. The Commissioner's visit is to be interpreted as a sign of encouragement towards the staff and the scientists working for EFSA. Some Members asked to have a regular update on the developments regarding the points raised by the Commissioner.

Progress Report (Document MB 2.10.08 item 7 doc 3 progress report)

20. The Chair of the Management Board complimented the Executive Director and EFSA staff on the work and the progress achieved.
21. A Member of the Management Board congratulated the Executive Director on the progress made and enquired about the procedure concerning changes in the risk assessment methodology particularly referring to the GMO area.
22. Another Member of the Board highlighted the good work done by EFSA and referred to the fact that EFSA manages with its progress indicators timeliness and cost effectiveness of its opinions but pointed out that also the quality should be measured.
23. A Member of the Management Board enquired how the NDA panel was expected to cope with the large amount of claims it had received.
24. Another Member of the Management Board commented that the progress report showed that a lot was going on and that the EFSA as an organisation was changing fast. He also pointed out that EFSA has managed to gain the trust of risk managers in Europe and beyond. He went on to stress the fact of including risk assessment experts from new Member States in EFSA and pointed to the necessity of strong and proactive communication effort to ensure this.

25. A Member of the Management Board insisted that the infrastructure problems that EFSA faces have to be solved. In addition to this another Member pointed out that the Management Board was becoming impatient for the fact that the problems with the School for Europe, the airport and the final seat of EFSA had still not been solved and encouraged the Italian Authorities to help. EFSA can only be efficient if the working conditions are of standard.
26. EFSA's Executive Director said that initiatives are being undertaken in this regard, in particular two workshops are organised in Budapest and Warsaw to attract experts from the new Member States.
27. Concerning the problems that still need to be solved as far as the Parma airport, the School for Europe and the EFSA final seat were concerned the EFSA Executive Director pointed to a high level meeting held in Rome with Undersecretary of State Gianni Letta which should help with concrete actions. The Executive Director will continue to keep the Management Board informed of the ongoing issues and also report back to the European Parliament.

Staff in Parma

28. The Chair introduced this next point in the agenda. EFSA's Executive Director welcomed the opportunity to share with the Board information about staff in Parma in a period where concerns were raised in the Parliament about the attractiveness of EFSA for staff and experts as well as difficulties related to Parma as a location.
29. She highlighted that it has been three years since EFSA and 150 staff relocated from Brussels to Parma and that since then staff significantly increased (more than doubled) to 374 covering 25 nationalities which is an indication of EFSA's attractiveness.
30. EFSA is aware of the fact that it is important to recruit and to maintain good staff and for this reason has put in place a number of important human resources procedures and strengthened internal communication.
31. EFSA's Executive Director highlighted that based on an important tool put in place in 2007, objectives for staff were set that help monitor performance. This helped to allocate promotion for the first time in 2008 which allowed for 17 staff members to be promoted.
32. Concerning the issue of renewal or non renewal of contracts, the criteria is outlined in the staff policy plan which is based on performance of the person and the needs of the organisation. This, according to the Executive Director, is the usual policy in European agencies.
33. The School for Europe in Parma was set up in 2004 and is composed of a Kindergarden, Primary and Secondary School. There are three language sections (Italian, English and French) and almost 500 children are inscribed out of which 120 are staff member's children. The school is funded 100% by the Italian government.
34. The School for Europe is now accredited until 5th grade and it is expected to receive accreditation for the baccalaureat shortly. At the moment the school is on provisional premises but there is a project to build a final building. So far there has been difficulty with the recruitment of mother tongue teachers. The possibility for EFSA to partly finance the School for Europe was discussed with the Commission as well as with the European Parliament.
35. As far as the EFSA final seat is concerned the Executive Director informed the Board of the fact that a call was launched by the Commune for the financing of the new building, but there are concerns with the financial rate and maybe this will need to be further discussed with the Board.
36. Concerning the transport situation the Executive Director informed the Board that flights existing now are to Rome, Palermo, London, Tirrana and Olbia. These means that a shuttle service is being run by EFSA. The

issue is being discussed with the Italian authorities, EFSA's priorities being an improvement of the connection to Rome or Malpensa as hubs and possibly additional European capitals.

37. Dr. Letta, Sottosegretario alla presidenza del consiglio of the Italian government, took the initiative to set up a high level meeting in Rome with heads of cabinets of the different ministries which will help EFSA obtaining support.
38. Following this overview of the situation by EFSA's Executive Director the Board Members commented that the conditions of EFSA staff and experts are crucial and that proper working conditions must be ensured in order to guaranty the attractiveness of EFSA as an organization and of its scientific excellence. It was noted that improvements were made such as for example the accreditation of the School for Europe but that the Board is eager to see promises made fulfilled especially as far as the final EFSA seat and the flight connections are concerned.

Strategic plan 2009 – 2013 (Document MB 2.10.08 item 8 doc 4 strategic plan)

39. The EFSA's Strategic Plan 2009-2013 was introduced by the Chair who asked the Executive Director to explain developments regarding this document. EFSA's Executive Director informed the Board that on the basis of the Board's recommendation in June 2006 and the fact that EFSA is now fully established and producing scientific output almost every two working days EFSA wanted to have a mid term vision of the organization.
40. EFSA's Executive Director highlighted the six strategic objectives that EFSA prepared in view of the organization in the next five years.
41. The Chair welcomed the paper because of the strategy and vision which are important for a growing organization. She mentioned in this context also the important issue of coherence in risk communication.
42. The Members of the Board stressed that the document was an excellent one and of strategic importance for EFSA's future. In their comments the Members highlighted that a European system of risk assessment must be developed and risk assessment methodologies should be harmonized. Furthermore, it was discussed how far EFSA should cover the nutrition area.
43. The Board also said that in some areas of the document, progress and impact indicators could be introduced to make strategic goals that need to be assessed, measurable
44. One Board Member expressed his concerns on the issue of expected workload against available resources in view of possible legislative developments. In such case the demand is going to be higher than the resources.

New financial regulation (MB 2.10.08 item 9 doc 5 new financial regulation)

45. The Chair of the Management Board introduced the point on the New Financial Regulation. EFSA's Director of Administration informed the Board that the according to the Founding Regulation the Management Board can only adopt the financial regulation of EFSA if the European Commission clears the document first. This clearance had been expected for the previous month but not arrived yet. The Director of Administration further explained that the document aims at clarifying points and rules that EFSA is already applying.
46. The Chair asked the European Commission's Board Member to comment. The Board Member firstly apologized in the name of DG Budget for not having given their approval yet, he personally had no comments on the document itself.
47. The Board decided that it can adopt the document subject to the endorsement by the European Commission; otherwise they would come back and discuss these.

Update from the Audit Committee

48. The Chair asked a Member of the Audit Committee for an introduction of the topic. The Member of the Audit Committee informed the Board that a short-term internal audit plan together with EFSA's new internal auditor had been prepared and an audit programme for 2009 had been prepared. The Board was informed that the final report from the European Court of Auditors for the year 2007 had been received. The outcome of this report is that EFSA's accounts for the financial year ending on 31.12.2007 are reliable and all transactions underlying the accounts are legal and regular.
49. The Member of the Audit Committee further informed the Board that the results of the internal audit service mission on external communications had been discussed and the internal audit for annual declaration of interest and inventory of fixed assets had been discussed and closed.

Budget execution and year end forecast (Document MB 2.10.08 item 12 doc 6 budget execution and forecast)

50. On request of the Chair EFSA's Director of Administration laid out the situation concerning the budget execution up to September 15th explaining that 43 million have been committed, an amount similar to what EFSA spent in 2007 for the whole year representing 65% of EFSA's 2008 budget.
51. The Director of Administration further explained that the budget was being spent on all activities in the same proportion. In activity one and two, the scientific activities, execution is high, representing an 80% of the EFSA budget with more than 20 million on those operations. In the area of Scientific Cooperation & Assistance the increase was a significant 65%.
52. On request of a Member of the Board the Director of Administration elaborated that based on estimations it is probable that EFSA can make the 94% execution by the end of the year, by pessimistic assumptions this could be between 90 and 93%.

Transfers in the EFSA budget (Document MB 2.10.08 item 13 doc7 transfers and EFSA budget)

53. The Director of Administration explained that in order to recover some delay in the recruitment some money was transferred from item 1 to item 2, item 2 being infrastructure and IT equipment. This allowed for a better organization of the budget as at the same time one IT project that had been planned for 2009 was anticipated to this ongoing year. The amount transferred represents less than 5% of the EFSA budget which is below the 10% ceiling in the financial regulation.

Any other business

54. On request of the Chair, EFSA's Executive Director updated the board on an exchange of view that has taken place during the Slovenian Presidency based on a document presented by the French delegation on Risk Analysis at European level
55. On suggestion of a Board Member who brought to the Board's attention the fact that on "googling" EFSA all kinds of non related associations came up EFSA's Executive Director will investigate on this issue and inform the Board of the outcome. The Board was nonetheless informed that EFSA acronym is registered.