



EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE

EFSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PROGRESS REPORT

Executive Summary

The present report refers to the period from 1st October to 30th November, 2011.

Science Strategy and Coordination (SCISTRAT): The Guidance document on repeated-dose 90-day oral toxicity study on food/feed in rodents and the draft overview on the assessment procedures of dietary exposure to chemicals were adopted. Work on Risk Assessment Terminology and on Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TCC) is ongoing.

The Emerging Risk report on Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) outbreaks in Europe was published and the renewal of the mandate for the Stakeholders Consultative Group on Emerging Risks is being launched.

The Advisory Forum was updated on the Emerging Risk Exchange Network and from the German Statistical Office. Almost 3,000 experts are included in the EFSA Expert Database and the third quarterly report was finalised. The summary report of the EFSA Scientific Colloquium on Emerging Risks in Plant Health has been published on EFSA’s website.

Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance (RASA):

EFSA has adopted eight Scientific Opinions, on food hygiene and animal by-products, on alkaloids and alternaria toxins in food and feed, and on the risk to the EU of citrus originating in Florida, and one Guidance document on plant health environmental risk assessment. EFSA endorsed for public consultation the draft Guidance document on evaluation of risk reduction options, and the draft Guidance document on animal health and welfare aspects of GM-animals.

A Technical Report on EFSA’s approaches to risk assessment in the area of antimicrobial resistance, and an Event Report on a technical hearing with Freshfel Europe as a supporting document to the Opinion on STEC in sprouts were published.

The EFSA Guidance and accompanying Technical Report covering the Total Diet Studies approach have been approved. Seven Internal Reports were completed by EFSA in support of the Scientific Committee and Scientific Panels.

The 2nd meeting of the EFSA Scientific Network on Plant Health took place in October, and the 3rd meeting of the AHAW Scientific Network was organised in November. The Scientific Network on Food consumption data also met in November, discussing progress with the EU Menu project and the Comprehensive European Food Consumption Database. The October meeting of EFSA’s Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection was held jointly with ECDC’s Food- and Waterborne Disease Network for the first time.

Scientific Evaluation of Regulated Products (REPRO): EFSA has adopted 41 Scientific Opinions, two Scientific Statements, two Guidance Documents on the scientific requirements for health claims related to antioxidant, oxidative damage and cardiovascular health, as well as on the Toxigenic potential of *Bacillus* used in animal nutrition. In addition, four conclusions were adopted following the pesticide peer review of four active substances. EFSA also endorsed a draft Guidance Document for public consultation on the requirements for health claims related to physical performance. The statement on bisphenol A (BPA) was adopted following a request from the European Commission regarding the recently published reports from the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES). The Art.13 botanical claims (1,548 claims) are still on hold.

The peer review programmes will continue for the 57 pending new active substances, and the remaining 51 active substances of stage four of the review programme. EFSA expects to receive a number of Art.13 claims (up to 100) for reassessment (probiotics for which EFSA concluded that they are not sufficiently characterised, and claims for which EFSA concluded that there is insufficient evidence).

The APDESK Unit has been operational since 1st October, acting as a “front office” and “support desk” and providing information and support for applicants, Member States and other stakeholders.

Communications (COMMS): EFSA has communicated widely on the launch of the EFSA’s new Application Desk and in the areas of Independence, Chemicals in food, Zoonoses and GMOs. EFSA dealt with 97 media queries and organised 10 interviews with the Executive Director and scientific staff and experts with media from across Europe. EFSA published three press releases, nine web-stories, and three event stories. In October the Advisory Forum Communications Working Group held its 32nd meeting. In November EFSA participated in the fifth European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology.

Budget and human resources: EUR 64.78 million or 83.79% of the EUR 77.31 million budget was committed. EUR 51.63 million or 68.39% of the EUR 75.50 payment appropriations were paid. All activities except activity 3 (Scientific cooperation, data collection and networking) reached a level of commitment at end November in line with the targets set. Activity 3 stands below the initial target and reached a 73% commitment rate. Activity 1, with 92% committed is ahead of schedule, in particular in the field of scientific meetings. On 30 November 2011, 436 posts were occupied and 2 job offers have been sent to the selected candidates bringing the total to 438 posts filled-in out of the planned 494 posts.

Corporate: The Executive Director had her annual hearing before the ENVI Committee in the European Parliament, and EFSA received the visit of Julie Girling, ENVI Committee member. EFSA participated in a joint EFSA, ECDC and DG SANCO seminar, hosted by European Parliament Vice-President Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, on joint EU actions to combat food-borne zoonotic diseases. EFSA received the visit of the Swedish National Food Agency to discuss further strengthening of scientific cooperation between EFSA and Sweden, and welcomed delegations of the World Dairy Leaders who met in Parma on the occasion of the 2011 World Dairy Summit. The Executive Director visited the Netherlands to further strengthen cooperation and networking with the Dutch national food safety agency and research institutes.

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SCIENCE STRATEGY AND COORDINATION

Scientific Committee (SC)

The Scientific Committee adopted the draft EFSA Guidance document on repeated-dose 90-day oral toxicity study on food/feed in rodents. Publication is expected by December. An Overview of the procedures currently used at EFSA for the assessment of dietary exposure to the different chemical substances was endorsed.

The draft Guidance on guidance on Default Values will be tabled at the December Scientific Committee plenary for possible adoption. The draft Opinion on Risk Assessment Terminology was tabled for a first discussion at the beginning of December.

The adoption of the draft Opinion on the Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC) has been postponed to early 2012. Work is in preparation to draft a mandate to seek the Scientific Committee views on Risk Assessment of regulated compounds with allergenic properties.

Emerging Risks Unit (EMRISK)

One Scientific report was published, on Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) outbreaks in Europe.

Two calls for procurement were awarded, one on a review of possible applications of “omics” technologies in Risk Assessment, and a second on collecting consumption data for energy drinks. A third call, on providing training support for crisis responses, has been launched. The report on the outsourced project on the effect of climate change on mycotoxin production in cereal crops will be published shortly.

A renewal of the mandate for the Stakeholders Consultative Group on Emerging Risks is under consideration. An internal mandate on the practicalities and potential usefulness of collection and analysis of pricing data with a view to emerging risk identification is under preparation.

Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation (AFSCO)

At the 42nd Advisory Forum meeting held on 30 November-1 December discussions took place on follow up on the topic of data collection, the development of a hazard database addressing chemical hazards, updates from EFSA's emerging risk exchange network and presentations from the German Statistical Office.

Detailed information was provided on cooperation with the Member States in the BIOHAZ area with the chair of the BIOHAZ Panel attending. At the last Focal Point (FP) meeting (19-20 October) presentations and discussions included the preparation of Article 36 Guidelines and promotion activities for the Information Exchange Platform. FPs also shared experiences, particularly on how they retrieve and disseminate information/ data at national level.

By November 2011, almost 3,000 experts were included in the EFSA Expert Database. The newly designated Expert Database Supervisory Committee met twice in this period and finalised Expert Database Quarterly Reports of Activities of the first three quarters of 2011. The summary report of the EFSA's Scientific Colloquium XVI on Emerging Risks in Plant Health has been published on EFSA's website.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE

Panel on animal health and welfare (AHAW)

The Guidance document on the animal health and welfare aspects of GM-animals was endorsed, while its adoption is foreseen in December by the GMO Panel.

The 3rd meeting of the AHAW Scientific Network was organised on 14-15 November. Ongoing activities and future work-plans were presented and discussed. The meeting also included a workshop on data collection and data needs for risk assessments in animal health and welfare. A workshop was also organised by EFSA for the AHAW Panel members together with EFSA scientific staff on the methodology of systematic reviews and its application during development of Scientific Opinions.

The AHAW Panel has been requested to review the EU Summary Report on zoonoses; the review should address non-food-borne zoonoses (e.g. brucellosis, echinococcosis, rabies, tuberculosis). AHAW expects new opinions on Tuberculosis, Fish Transport and Casings by end 2011. For the upcoming Opinion on Laying Hens, AHAW is currently launching a procurement to provide preparatory work.

Panel on biological hazards (BIOHAZ)

The BIOHAZ Panel adopted four opinions: one on food hygiene, (Risk posed by Shiga-Toxin producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) and other pathogenic bacteria that may contaminate seeds and sprouted seeds) and three on animal by-products (Evaluation of On-site treatment of pig carcasses; Evaluation of Isolation in proofed pit on farm of dead poultry and Evaluation of Composting on farm of dead poultry).

In addition, the BIOHAZ Unit published: a scientific report of EFSA in collaboration with the FEED, GMO, BIOMO and PRAS Units on EFSA’s approaches to risk assessment in the area of antimicrobial resistance, with an emphasis on commensal microorganisms, and an Event Report on a technical hearing with Freshfel Europe as a supporting document to the Opinion on STEC in sprouts.

In the coming months and in addition to the already ongoing mandates, the Panel will focus on several mandates recently received, particularly on the Review on the European Union Summary Report on zoonoses and food borne outbreaks in 2009 – for *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, VTEC (verotoxin-producing *E. coli*), *Listeria monocytogenes* and food-borne outbreaks and on two self-task mandates: “Experiences learned from modelling on biological hazards”, and “Development of risk ranking tools”.

Panel on contaminants in the food chain (CONTAM)

The CONTAM Panel has adopted three opinions related to (1) Opium alkaloids in poppy seeds, (2) Pyrrolizidine alkaloids in food and feed, and (3) *Alternaria* toxins in feed and food. In the coming months the CONTAM Panel will focus on the recently received mandate on dioxin and dioxin-like PCBs in food for infants and children.

Panel on plant health (PLH)

The PLH Panel adopted the scientific opinion on the risk of citrus originating in Florida to the EU and the Guidance document on environmental risk assessment. The PLH Panel has also endorsed for public consultation the draft Guidance document on evaluation of risk reduction options.

The 2nd meeting of the EFSA Scientific Network for Risk Assessment in Plant Health took place in Warsaw on 20-21 October. The technical report from the network will be prepared by December 2011.

In the coming months, the PLH Panel will focus on the following mandates: (1) the pest risk analysis on *Pomacea insularum*, the island apple snail (short deadline to assist EC in taking measures); (2) the risk to plant health of the *Tospoviruses*; (3) the risk to plant health of *Bemisia tabaci* and (4) the risk to plant health for the EU territory of *Liriomyza trifolii*, *Liriomyza huidobrensis*, *Erwinia chrysanthemi* pv. *dianthicola*, *Pseudomonas caryophylli*, *Phialophora cinerescens*, *Puccinia horiana*, *Scirrhia pini* and *Chrysanthemum stunt viroid*. In addition the PLH Panel will continue to address the request concerning risks to plant health posed by European versus non-European populations of the potato cyst nematodes *Globodera pallida* and *Globodera rostochiensis*.

Scientific assessment support Unit (SAS)

Seven internal reports were completed in the reporting period, in support of: AHAW: (1) electrical requirements for water bath stunning equipment for poultry and (2) Guidance on Risk Assessment Guidelines for Animal Welfare; SCOM: (3) Guidance on the Development of a protocol for 90-day feeding trials with whole food/feed; FEED: (4) Astaxanthin // Astaxanthin (CAROPHYLL® Pink 10% CWS) for salmonids and ornamental fish; NUTRI: (5) DAG oil - helps in the

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management of body weight through weight loss and (6) Bimuno® GOS - may reduce intestinal discomfort; PLH: (7) phytosanitary risk of certain plant species and genera as regards pine wood nematode.

12 panel experts and 27 staff members were trained on systematic literature review.

In the coming months, the Unit will focus on the recently accepted internal mandate on a procurement on “Inventory of sources of scientific evidence relevant to EFSA’s risk assessments and information sessions on literature searching techniques”. The Unit plans to launch two specific calls under the new statistical framework contract and is preparing an internal mandate on a guidance document for statistical reporting in dossiers submitted to EFSA.

Dietary and chemical monitoring Unit (DCM)

The guidance and accompanying technical document covering the Total Diet Studies approach have been finalised and approved. The scientific review of exposure assessment methodologies used by EFSA Panels was endorsed by the Scientific Committee at its November meeting and will be published before the end of the year. A number of contracts have been signed during the period to expand the coverage of the Comprehensive Database to more countries and age groups. The Comprehensive Database has proven to be an excellent information source in the re-evaluation of cadmium exposure in support of European Commission risk management activities.

A network meeting was held in November with the food consumption data experts in the Member States discussing progress with the EU Menu project and extensions to the current EFSA Comprehensive European Food Consumption Database.

Biological monitoring Unit (BIOMO)

The Unit contributed to the BIOHAZ technical report on antimicrobial resistance in commensal microorganisms, and organised the first specific Task Force (network) meeting on antimicrobial resistance in October. At that meeting the most appropriate ways of analysing the antimicrobial resistance data at EU level were addressed and the Member States were encouraged to report isolate-based data since it facilitates better analyses and interpretation of the data.

A joined network meeting with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) took place in Rome in October. In that occasion EFSA’s Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection and ECDC’s Food- and Waterborne Disease Network met for the first time. The programme of the shared day was focused on the Escherichia coli outbreak in Europe and investigations of food-borne outbreaks in general. The Task Force continued with a separate meeting and discussed the main findings in the 2010 zoonoses data and the reporting of 2011 data. In addition the need to revise the reporting specifications for E. coli in animals and food was recognised to enable submission of comparable data on all human pathogenic serotypes.

The Unit is preparing the EU Summary reports on zoonoses, food-borne outbreaks and antimicrobial resistance data for the year 2010. Also the work on epidemiological indicators for meat inspection of poultry continues and new working groups for indicators in meat inspection of bovine animals, small ruminants, farmed game and solipeds will be established in the near future.

SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION OF REGULATED PRODUCTS

Panel on food additives and nutrient sources added to food (ANS)

The ANS Panel has endorsed the draft Guidance on submission for food additives evaluations, which is currently under public consultation.

A technical meeting with stakeholders on exposure assessment of food additives has been organised in November 2011 to exchange views and to discuss the current and future exposure assessment methodologies used by the ANS Panel as well as the submission process.

In the coming months, the Panel will mainly focus on the re-evaluation of food additives in line with Regulation (EU) No 257/2010 setting up a programme for the re-evaluation of approved food additives in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008. In addition, it will continue the safety assessment of new food additive applications, safety assessment of nutrient sources, including nutritional substances for use in fortified food that are subject to national derogations according to Regulation (EC) No 1925/2006. The final Guidance document is foreseen to be adopted by July 2012.

Panel on food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings and processing aids (CEF)

The CEF Panel adopted eight Scientific Opinions on applications on flavourings (5) and on food contact materials (3). In addition, a statement on bisphenol A (BPA) was adopted following a request from the European Commission regarding the recently published reports from the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES).

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In preparation of this statement EFSA organised a videoconference on 7 November with ANSES, the CEF Panel chair and the chairs of the previous EFSA Working Group on BPA in order to identify possible discrepancies between the 2010 EFSA opinion on BPA and the recent reports of ANSES. Following an internal mandate, an explanatory Note for Guidance on Flavourings will be published.

In 2012, the Panel will focus on the evaluation of plastic recycling processes and of active and intelligent packaging materials, and on the re-evaluation of hundreds of flavouring substances for which the outcome of the evaluation was that additional data were needed. Applications for the microbial decontamination of carcasses are also expected and the Working Group will prepare an Environmental Risk Assessment. The Panel will also work on the principles of evaluation of food contact materials in order to update the guidance document in line with the Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC) approach and with the flavouring evaluation principles.

Panel on additives and products or substances used in animal feed (FEEDAP)

The FEEDAP Panel adopted 20 scientific opinions on the authorisation of feed additives, belonging to the following categories: technological (6), sensory (5), nutritional (5), zootechnical (3) and coccidiostats (1). The majority of the additives evaluated were applications for re-evaluation of feed additives (14 opinions), in some cases in combination with a request for a new use of the additive, mainly use in water (the submission of applications for inclusion of an additive in the diet via drinking water is foreseen in Regulation (EC) No. 1831/2003, as this is a novel use compared with the former authorisation procedure).

Additionally the Panel adopted one Guidance document on Toxicogenic potential of *Bacillus* used in animal nutrition. The first question under Regulation (EC) No. 767/2009 (Art. 10) was received on the “Evaluation of the safety of leaves of *Solanum glaucophyllum*”.

The re-evaluation of feed additives remains one of the main working areas of the Panel.

Panel on genetically modified organisms (GMO)

The GMO Panel adopted four opinions on: Biogalactosidase from GMM; GM Maize MON 88017; the update of the Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) of GM maize 1507; and the safety of pollen of maize MON810. The GMO Unit published three overall opinions on applications, one internal technical report on Antimicrobial Resistance in commensal microorganisms and finished one scientific advice regarding TestBiotech criticisms on a GM Maize (smart stax).

The GMO Unit held a meeting with Applicants on 11 October and the fifth meeting with NGOs on 29 November to exchange views and to discuss PMEM and smart stax.

Three new applications on GM plants and four on feed additives from GMM were received, while two applications on GMM biomass were withdrawn.

Panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies (NDA)

The NDA panel adopted nine opinions related to health claim applications, one draft guidance on the scientific requirements for health claims related to antioxidant, oxidative damage and cardiovascular health, taking into account the comments received during the public consultation, and one statement on the safety of glucosamine for patients receiving coumarin. The Panel also endorsed for public consultation a draft guidance document on the requirements for health claims related to physical performance, as well as a technical report on the outcome of a public consultation on the draft guidance on the scientific requirements for health claims related to antioxidants, oxidative damage and cardiovascular health to be published together with the guidance document.

A negotiated procedure was launched on the “Preparatory work in relation to the characterisation of certain micro-organisms in the context of EFSA’s scientific evaluation of health claims”. The final deliverable is a report for internal use in the framework of the reassessment of certain Art.13 health claims.

For health claim the Panel has received to date 335 applications of which 125 opinions have been adopted covering 132 applications; 141 applications have been withdrawn; 16 applications are in progress. EFSA expects to receive a number of Article 13 claims (up to 100 claims) for reassessment (probiotics for which EFSA concluded that they are not sufficiently characterised, and claims for which EFSA concluded that there is insufficient evidence). The Article 13 botanical claims (1,548) are still on hold. The Panel received four new Novel Food applications. The work on dietary reference values for nutrients is ongoing and has moved on to address the first micronutrients.

Panel on plant protection products and their residues (PPR) and Pesticide Unit (PRAS)

An EFSA Scientific Report on Tier-1 and Tier-2 scenario parameterisation and example calculations, in support of revision of the Guidance Document on persistence in soil was completed.

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Four conclusions were adopted following the pesticide peer review of four active substances.

A new Working Group on non-target terrestrial plants was formed, in support of the revision of the Guidance Document on terrestrial ecotoxicology (SANCO/10329/2002).

The peer review programmes will continue for the 57 pending new active substances, and the remaining 51 active substances of stage 4 of the review programme, for which EFSA should deliver its view by 31/12/2012. In addition, at the request of the European Commission, a conclusion on the risk assessment for honeybees for thiamethoxam is scheduled to be delivered by 29/02/2012. The draft Assessment Reports for a further 14 new active substances are expected to be received in the first half of 2012.

Application Desk (APDESK)

The APDESK Unit is operational since 1st October, acting as a “front office” and “support desk” and providing information and support for applicants, Member States and other stakeholders. The launch of the Application Desk function on EFSA website was performed on 1st November and provides the following services: i) a web-form to ask questions to EFSA regarding applications, ii) a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for each regulated products area. With this new service on EFSA’s website, the users can access information about applications and submit specific questions related to the legal and technical requirements for evaluations. All questions are registered and answered individually within an estimated time frame of 15 working days.

The APDESK Unit was presented at the EFSA technical meeting with applicants on GMOs (11 October), as well as at the EFSA Stakeholders Platform meeting (17 and 18 November).

In the future, the Unit will also be responsible within EFSA for centralising and processing the initial administrative steps of all applications (including reception, registration and verifying the administrative completeness of the information in the submitted application). Other tasks include the harmonization of templates; development of IT tools to improve the efficiency of evaluation workflows; coordinating public consultations; registration and initial administrative compliance check the application dossiers; development of efficient and high quality working practices together with other Units in the REPRO Directorate.

COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES / MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

THEMATIC:

Innovation – The launch of EFSA's new Applications Helpdesk was supported with the creation of a new section of the EFSA website dedicated to answering queries about applications in the area of regulated products. The section provides information to applicants and other interested parties through FAQs, technical and administrative guidance and useful links, and includes a dedicated web form for submitting questions to the Helpdesk. The launch was accompanied by a related web news story. Improvements and additional communications are expected in 2012 as the new Unit gradually takes up more of its new responsibilities.

Chemicals in food – Discussions to develop the thematic approach to chemicals in food have been progressing with scientific staff Units from across EFSA (ANS, CEF, CONTAM, EMRISK, etc.). A task force will be set up in early 2012 and some communications initiatives are already planned: four 'Understanding science' videos; news stories on food enzymes, PET recycling processes; new key topics on food enzymes, alkaloids, fusarin toxins; and major upgrades of key topics on food additives, food contact materials.

Zoonoses – Important strides were made during the period with regards to the thematic approach on zoonoses. EFSA published a comprehensive package of information regarding zoonotic diseases and Authority’s work in the area on its website. Thematic communication was further supported by printed fact sheets on Food-borne zoonotic diseases, Salmonella, Campylobacter, antimicrobial resistance and the STEC outbreak in 2011. To raise awareness of zoonoses at the European Parliament, EFSA, the European Commission and ECDC organised a joint event to brief MEPs on joint EU actions to combat food-borne zoonotic diseases.

GMO – An important communication was issued to announce EFSA’s opinion on the safety of pollen produced by GM maize MON810. Scientific advice was requested by the EC following a recent ruling by the European Court of Justice that stated that GM pollen produced by MON810 maize and present in honey falls under the scope of Regulation 1829/2003 on GM food and feed and is therefore subject to authorisation prior to placement on the market. A web story was also issued to accompany a Panel opinion on the post-market environmental monitoring (PMEM) report for maize MON810, the first such EFSA opinion related to PMEM of a GM plant authorised for cultivation in the EU. In line with the aims of the thematic

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approach on GMOs to increase stakeholder engagement, EFSA will hold a meeting on 29 November with environmental and consumer NGOs in the area of GMOs.

Independence – EFSA held a consultative workshop in Brussels on 12 October to hear the views and opinions of its stakeholders (150 delegates) on its draft policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes. The event further advanced EFSA’s thematic communications on independence by improving outreach and fostering engagement with stakeholders. The event was webcast live reaching an audience of 1,600 live and over 2,400 on-demand viewers in the first month after the event. News stories were issued both in advance of and after the meeting.

COOPERATION AND OUTREACH:

MEMBER STATES

AFCWG – 13-14 October, Bucharest – 32nd Meeting of the Advisory Forum Communications Working Group (AFCWG). Key agenda issues of this meeting included: finalising of the Risk Communications guidelines; update on EFSA’S Independence policy (including feedback from EFSA’s consultative workshop on Independence); lessons learnt from E.coli outbreaks; EFSA’s thematic approach update as well as joint AFCWG/Focal Points meeting in 2012; and EFSA’s 10-year anniversary. Members also discussed Norway’s social media strategy; France’s Anses report on Bisphenol A; and UK’s case study on BSE and relaxation of measures on processed animal protein in feed and a case study on the impact of social sciences on the UK’s FSA work.

MEDIA RELATIONS

Media activities - In the two months October –November 2011, the Media Relations team dealt with 97 media queries and organised 10 interviews with the Executive Director, EFSA experts and EFSA staff with European media such as German national daily Die Welt, ARD TV (German national TV), WDR radio (German national radio), specialised French weekly Agra Alimentation, the International Dairy Federation and the Revue Laitière Française.

Media lunch – 15 November, The Hague – media lunch with Dutch journalists. Media Relations invited a small number of Dutch journalists from key dailies to discuss topical food safety issues and EFSA’s work with EFSA’s Executive Director during a visit to the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (VWA), the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) and the RIKILT Institute of Food Safety.

Media visit from ten Member States – 30 November, Parma – Ten journalists covering food safety-related issues from the major national dailies of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom were invited to EFSA’s headquarters in Parma for a day of presentations and Q&A sessions on zoonoses, pesticides, GMOs and risk communications. This was the third media visit at EFSA organised during 2011 with the aim of establishing contacts with key journalists and raising EFSA’s profile.

SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES

ESCAIDE 2011 - 6-8 November, Stockholm: EFSA had an information stand at the fifth European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology and contributed with two oral presentations and one poster. The conference was attended by over 800 worldwide epidemiologists, microbiologists, clinicians and public, veterinary and environmental health experts with a professional and scientific interest in applied infectious disease epidemiology.

ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

Preparatory work for the next phase of EFSA’s reorganisation has been carried out, preparing the website for the merger of the ANS and CEF units and ensuring this doesn’t impact the user experience.

A website speed monitoring system has been set up with the aim of quantifying perceived webpage loading issues and ultimately ensuring that the right measures can be taken to improve the website responsiveness.

COMMUNICATIONS OUTPUTS:

Press Releases (3):

- Residues compliance continues to rise, pesticide report shows (8 November)
- EFSA engages with its stakeholders in defining its new policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes (11 October)

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- EFSA completes first Opinion in meat inspection work (3 October)

Web News Stories (9):

- EFSA assesses public health risks of opium alkaloids in poppy seeds (8 November)
- EFSA assesses health impacts of pyrrolizidine alkaloids in food and feed (8 November)
- EFSA launches draft Science Strategy 2012-2016 for public consultation (4 November)
- EFSA new Applications Helpdesk: enhanced service and increased transparency (3 November)
- EFSA assesses 2009 Post-Market Environmental Monitoring report for maize MON810 (25 October)
- Hubert Deluyker appointed Director of Science Strategy and Coordination (25 October)
- EFSA supports European Commission with scientific advice on safety of maize MON810 pollen (24 October)
- EFSA to analyse new Bisphenol A reports (19 October)
- EFSA updates consumer advice on sprout consumption following the 2011 E. coli outbreak in Germany & France (3 October)

Event stories (3):

- 50th Management Board meeting: EFSA’s Management Board endorses draft Science Strategy for public consultation (20 October)
- EFSA closes public consultation of its independence policy with constructive stakeholder debate (12 October)
- EFSA, ECDC and the European Commission brief MEPs on joint EU actions to combat food-borne zoonotic diseases (10 October)

Other publications:

- Launch of EFSA factsheet series with 5 factsheets on zoonoses (food-borne zoonoses; antimicrobial resistance; campylobacter; salmonella; zoonotic E. coli).
- Newsletters: EFSAnews 25; Moving Together 8; and InFocus 10 (Food, Animals, Plants).
- Scientific conference posters.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Decentralised intranet content publishing was further improved through the update of guidelines and documentation for content providers. A process of monitoring intranet usage has been initiated in order to facilitate access to most used content.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Institutional relations

- 4-5 October, Parma: a delegation from the Swedish National Food Agency visited EFSA. The aim of the visit was to present the new structure within the Swedish administration and discuss further strengthening of scientific cooperation between EFSA and Sweden. Discussions focused on risk assessment priorities, challenges and opportunities ahead.
- 10 October, Brussels: a joint EFSA, ECDC and DG SANCO seminar was organized in the European Parliament. It was hosted by EP Vice-President Dagmar Roth-Behrendt and offered the opportunity to brief MEPs on joint EU actions to combat food-borne zoonotic diseases. The seminar allowed to take stock, identify challenges and propose ways forward in dialogue with MEPs, outlining the role and work of the key EU actors involved in fighting these diseases.
- 7 November, Brussels: annual hearing of EFSA’s Executive Director before the ENVI Committee in the European Parliament.
- 23-24 November, Parma: MEP Julie Girling, member of the ENVI Committee, visited EFSA. The aim the visit was to further strengthen knowledge about EFSA, its modus operandi, priorities and challenges. Equally, discussions focused on few dossiers that are at the moment on the agenda of MEPs, such as nutrition, new technologies, contaminants, and emerging risks.

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International relations

- 15-16 November, Amsterdam: an EFSA delegation led by the Executive Director visited the Netherlands. The aim of the visit was to further strengthen cooperation and networking with Dutch national food safety agency and research institutes. A Focal Point meeting with experts in EFSA Panels, Working Groups and networks as well as Article 36 competent organisations was organized. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on science strategy and scientific cooperation but also on particular areas of research such as data collection, allergenicity, zoonoses, to name but a few.
- 15-18 October, Parma: EFSA welcomed delegations of World Dairy Leaders who were meeting at the occasion of the 2011 World Dairy Summit. The presentations and exchanges of views focused mainly on topics such as biological hazards, nutrition and health claims and animal health matters as those areas are of great interest for the dairy industry. Equally, EFSA was represented at the Conference.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Stakeholder relations

17-18 November, Brussels: EFSA organized the 17th plenary meeting of the EFSA Stakeholder Consultative Platform, where discussions focused on *inter alia* the progress report of the EFSA Executive Director, the draft Scientific Strategy 2012-2016, the draft opinion on “Exploring options for providing preliminary advice about possible human health risks based on the concept of Threshold of Toxicological Concern, the achievements made so far in the EFSA Comprehensive European Food Consumption Database, the processing of applications in EFSA with the creation of the Applications Desk Unit and the action plan stemming from the *Reflection Paper on the engagement of Stakeholders in EFSA’s activities*.

Data protection (DP)

Follow-up on the European Data Protection Supervisor’s (EDPS) opinion on selection and appointment of members of the EFSA Scientific Committee and Scientific Panels was provided to the EDPS. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) provided advice and support to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Regulation with respect to various policies and activities such as an in-house database on scientific expertise, EFSA promotion and reclassification policy, the organisation of a staff survey, EFSA Dol policy, online pesticide workspace, anti-harassment policy, EFSA welcome pack, and mission management.

Court cases

On 3 November, EFSA received a reply from PAN Europe and ClientEarth in Case T-214/11 concerning access to documents and environmental information, following EFSA Defence lodged on 2 August. EFSA has to lodge the rejoinder by 15 December and is expecting to receive the interventions of the European Commission and the Kingdom of Denmark by 7 December.

On 8 November, EFSA submitted an intervention in the Appeal proceedings of Cases T-107/11 and T-108/11, concerning the Staff Regulations, in support of the European Training Foundation (EFT) which brought the case before the General Court.

IT and Operations

The Application Desk tool has been activated online on the EFSA website on October 31st: it is a unique solution to handle requests and questions via the EFSA Application Desk online form in a systematic, timely and professional way. The solution enables EFSA to store and filter the various requests, answer them and dispatch incoming requests to the appropriate EFSA Units.

New functionalities have been added to the Dol tool, in order to improve the visualization of Dols on the EFSA website and to improve transparency in the processing of Dols.

The premises of the EFSA new seat have been connected to the Internet. Two data connections have been activated between the new EFSA seat and the current EFSA premises, that will be used to establish the functionalities of Disaster Recovery.

EFSA new seat

Monitoring of building operations: required works to make the building fully compliant to EFSA needs will finish on 1st December. This deadline is compatible with the timing required for the subsequent internal refurbishing and the target date of the move scheduled on 22 December.

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Purchase of the building: EFSA together with Parma Authorities is preparing the conditions which will lead to the signature of the Purchase Agreement on 19 December. The modality of payment of the purchase price will be carried out according to regular instalments over 25 years to the STU, the amount of which would reflect the interest payable by STU to the bank (Cariparma) they selected through an open call in 2008 to finance the building. The sale will be finalised taking into account the provision of the ‘property reserve or title retention’.

Status of ongoing procurement procedures of goods and services to equip the building:

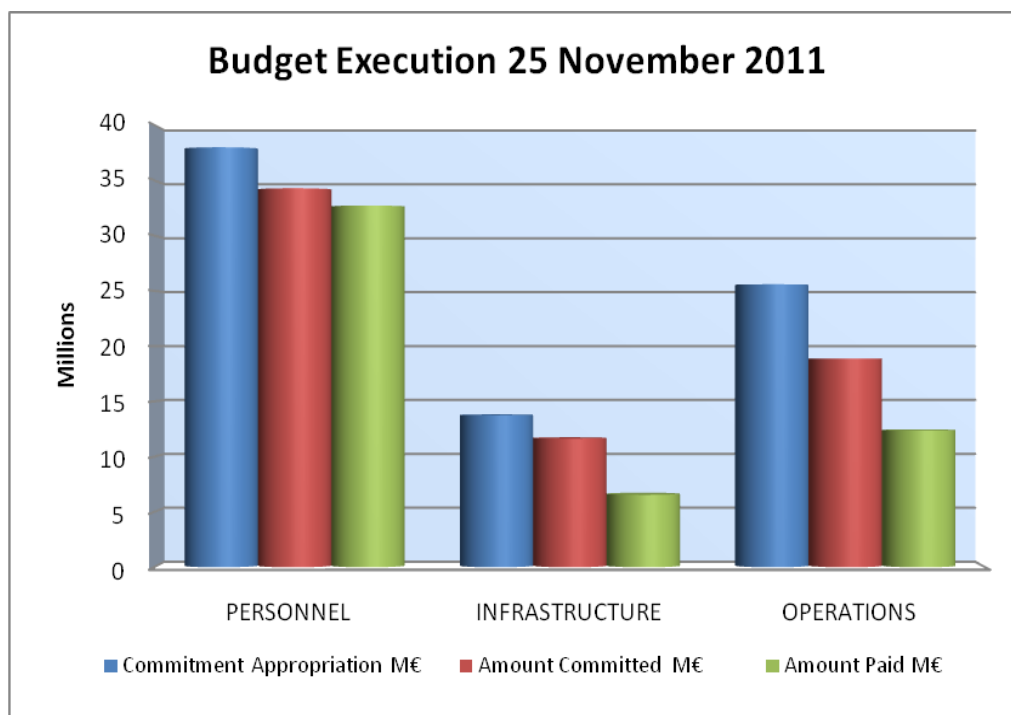
- Canteen and bar services (to be awarded in December).

Financial management

As of 25 November 2011,

- EUR 64.78 million or **83.79%** of the EUR 77.31 million budget was committed. This commitment level stands EUR 5.06 million below the target set for November (EUR 69.84 million). Under Title I, the budget is at 90% committed, in line with the personnel costs. Under Title II Infrastructure, the budget is at 85% committed, in line with the objective. Under Title III Operations, the execution rate reached 74% with, in particular, the EUR 3.25 million commitment level reached under the scientific cooperation program being EUR 3.53 million below the initial objective (EUR 6.78 million). The commitments related to scientific fora reached 94% of available appropriations.
- EUR 51.63 million or **68.39%** of the EUR 75.50 payment appropriations were paid. This payment level stands EUR 5.89 million below the target (EUR 57.52 million) mainly for reason pertaining to the delays in awarding the Scientific Cooperation programme.

Title	Commitment Appropriation	Amount Committed	% Committed	Payment Appropriation	Amount Paid	% Paid
PERSONNEL	37,980,400	34,273,225	90.24%	37,980,400	32,714,205	86.13%
INFRASTRUCTURE	13,741,000	11,638,387	84.70%	13,741,000	6,552,390	47.68%
OPERATIONS	25,588,400	18,869,906	73.74%	23,776,900	12,364,009	52.00%
Total:	77,309,800	64,781,517	83.79%	75,498,300	51,630,604	68.39%

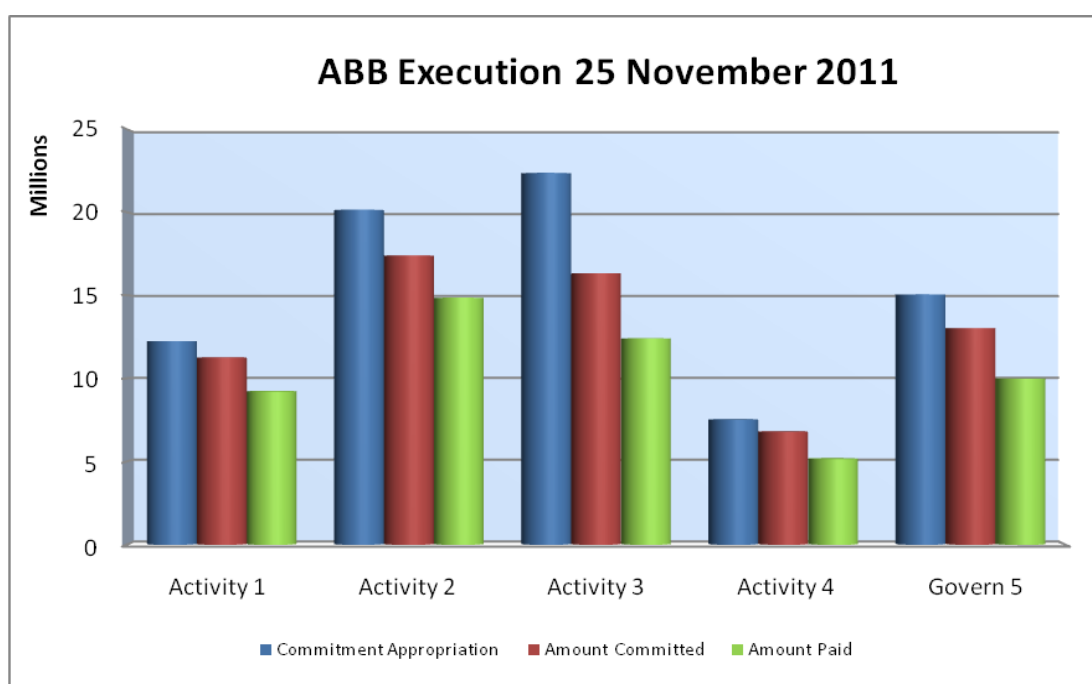


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The following table and chart report the budget appropriations and executions along with the four operational activities and governance & administration functions (Activity Based Budgeting).

- Activity 1. Provision of scientific opinions and advice and risk assessment approaches
- Activity 2. Evaluation of products, substances and claims subject to authorisation
- Activity 3. Data collection, scientific cooperation and networking
- Activity 4. Communication and dialogue
- Govern 5. Governance and administration functions

In EUR	Commitment Appropriation	%	Amount Committed	%	Payment Appropriation	Amount Paid	%
Activity 1	12,240,857	15.83%	11,257,921	91.97%	12,304,779	9,222,308	74.95%
Activity 2	20,143,342	26.06%	17,397,261	86.37%	19,233,337	14,856,330	77.24%
Activity 3	22,357,367	28.92%	16,323,677	73.01%	21,309,698	12,413,529	58.25%
Activity 4	7,513,600	9.72%	6,782,746	90.27%	7,595,813	5,154,217	67.86%
Govern 5	15,054,634	19.47%	13,019,911	86.48%	15,054,673	9,984,220	66.32%
Total	77,309,800	100.00%	64,781,517	83.79%	75,498,300	51,630,604	68.39%



All activities except activity 3 reached a level of commitment at end November in line with the targets set. Activity 3 – SC cooperation, data collection and networking – stands below the initial target and reached a 73% commitment rate, mainly represented by the staff and infrastructure expenditure sustained. Commitments directly relating to the Scientific Cooperation programme amount to EUR 3.25 million at 25 November or 52% below the initial target. Activity 1, with 92% committed is ahead of schedule, in particular in the field of scientific meetings. These commitment levels include all expenditure components of the activities i.e., the operational, staff and infrastructure components.

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Year on Year

Year on year, the commitments increased by EUR 4.65 million over the same period, which represents a 7.73% increase. The payments were EUR 0.26 million below last year payments which represents a 0.50% decrease mainly explained by the delays in awarding the contracts and grants under the scientific cooperation programme.

Title	Commitments 25 Nov 2011	Commitments 25 Nov 2010	Increase	Payments 25 Nov 2011	Payments 25 Nov 2010	Increase
PERSONNEL	34,273,225	33,520,860	2.24%	32,714,205	32,320,787	1.22%
INFRASTRUCTURE	11,638,387	8,459,358	37.58%	6,552,390	6,009,357	9.04%
OPERATIONS	18,869,906	18,154,470	3.94%	12,364,009	13,557,753	-8.80%
Total:	64,781,517	60,134,687	7.73%	51,630,604	51,887,897	-0.50%

Accounting

EFSA has migrated fully to the new financial system – ABAC (Accrual Based Accounting) and during the reporting period more than 3.000 payments have been executed.

In November, the Court of Auditors has performed their first audit mission in order to audit EFSA annual accounts concerning the financial year 2011.

Human Resources

Staff Categories	Target 2011	Total Contracted and Offered
Temporary Agents and Officials		
Executives, Managers & Officers (AD)	219	201
Assistants functions (AST)	136	133
Total	355	334
Contract Agents		
Officers functions (CA FG IV)	60	40
Assistants functions (CA FG I, II, III)	50	50
Total	110	90
Seconded National Experts	29	14
Total all staff categories	494	438

On 30 November 2011, 436 posts were occupied and 2 job offers have been sent to the selected candidates bringing the total to 438 posts filled-in out of the planned 494 posts. The Recruitment execution rate for the Establishment Plan 2011 (Temporary Agents and Officials) is at 94%.

On 1st November 2011, a total of **157** training instances were organised since year start with an average of **10** training days per staff member which translates into **125%** against progressive execution of yearly target (8 training days per staff member).

Glossary

AF – EFSA’s Advisory Forum

AFCWG – Advisory Forum Communications Working Group

ANSES – French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety

BPA – Bisphenol A

BSE-TSE - Bovine and Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies

DG COMM – Directorate General Communication

DG SANCO – Directorate General for Health and Consumers

DOI – Declaration of Interest

DPO – Data Protection Officer

EC – European Commission

ECDC – European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

ED – EFSA Executive Director

EDB – EFSA Expert Database

EDPS – European Data Protection Supervisor

ENVI Committee – Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee at the European Parliament

EP – European Parliament

ERA – Environmental Risk Assessment

ESCO – EFSA Scientific Cooperation projects

FP – Focal Point

GMO – Genetically modified organism

IEP – Information exchange platform

MEP – Member of the European Parliament

MRL – Maximum residue levels

MS – EU Member States

PMEM – Post Market Environmental Monitoring

SC – Scientific Committee

SP – Scientific Panel

STEC – Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli

TTC – Threshold of toxicological concern

UK FSA – UK Food Safety Agency

VTEC – Verotoxin-producing E. coli

WG – Working Group