

**ADVISORY FORUM AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION UNIT**

Parma, 13 September 2011  
EFSA/AF/M/2011/393/PUB/FIN

**Minutes**

**FORTIETH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM**

**BUDAPEST (HUNGARY), 25-26 MAY 2011**

**MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM**

**Chair:** *Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle*, Executive Director, EFSA

Austria	<i>Roland Grossgut</i>	Latvia	<i>Gatis Ozoliņš</i>
Belgium	<i>Benoît Horion</i>	Lithuania	<i>Zenonas Stanevicius</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Boiko Likov</i>	Luxembourg	<i>Patrick Hau</i>
Cyprus	<i>Popi Kanari</i>	Malta	<i>Ingrid Busuttil</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Jitka Götzová</i>	Netherlands	<i>Evert Schouten</i>
Denmark	<i>Jørgen Schlundt</i>	Norway	<i>Kirstin Færden</i>
Estonia	<i>Hendrik Kuusk</i>	Poland	<i>Jan Krzysztof Ludwicki</i>
Finland	<i>Jaana Husu-Kallio</i>	Portugal	<i>Maria João Seabra</i>
France	<i>Valérie Baduel</i>	Slovakia	<i>Ján Štulc</i>
Germany	<i>Andreas Hensel</i>	Slovenia	<i>Ada Hočvar</i>
Greece	<i>Eirini Tsigarida</i>	Spain	<i>Ana Troncoso</i>
Hungary	<i>Maria Szeitzné Szabó</i>	Sweden	<i>Leif Busk</i>
Ireland	<i>Raymond Ellard</i>	United Kingdom	<i>Alisdair Wotherspoon</i>
Italy	<i>Giancarlo Belluzzi</i>		

**OBSERVERS**

Croatia	<i>Zorica Jurković</i>	Switzerland	<i>Michael Beer</i>
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	<i>Svetlana Tomeska Mickova</i>	Turkey	<i>Nergiz Özbağ</i>
Montenegro	<i>Nedeljko Latinović</i>	European Commission	<i>Jeannie Vergnettes</i>

## REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

**Advisory Forum secretariat:** *Saba Giovannacci, Elena Marani, Jeffrey Moon, and Torben Nilsson.*

<i>Bernhard Berger</i>	<i>Alexandre Feigenbaum<sup>3</sup></i>
<i>Franck Berthe<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Anne-Laure Gassin</i>
<i>Hubert Deluyker</i>	<i>Djien Liem</i>
<i>Dirk Detken<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Tobin Robinson</i>
<i>Karl-Heinz Engel</i> (Vice-Chair of EFSA's CEF Panel) <sup>3</sup>	<i>Philippe Vannier</i> (Chair of EFSA's AHAW Panel) <sup>1</sup>

### 1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle opened the meeting and passed the floor to Endre Kardeván, State Secretary responsible for Food Chain Safety, who welcomed the AF members, outlined the institutional arrangements regarding food safety in Hungary, including the role of the Hungarian Food Safety Office, and stressed the importance of international liaison on food safety matters. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked Hungary for its hospitality and active contributions to EFSA's work. She then welcomed the AF members, in particular the new AF alternate from Greece and the new observers from Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as the Chair of EFSA's Animal Health and Animal Welfare (AHAW) Panel and the Vice-Chair of EFSA's Food Contact Materials, Enzymes, Flavourings and Processing Aids (CEF) Panel. She also mentioned that apologies were received from Iceland and Romania.

### 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

France, Sweden, Slovakia, and EFSA raised issues for agenda item 4.7. Belgium requested an update on the EU menu project and the Netherlands asked for information from Germany on the ongoing outbreak of diarrhoeal illness caused by Shiga toxin producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC). The agenda was adopted.

### 3 STRATEGIC DISCUSSION ON EFSA'S WORK WITH THE MEMBER STATES

#### 3.1 EFSA's draft Science Strategy

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle introduced the discussion on EFSA's draft Science Strategy by saying that the advice from the AF would guide the further work on defining the strategy before its adoption by the Management Board in the autumn

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<sup>1</sup> Attended agenda item 3.2.

<sup>2</sup> Attended agenda items 4.1 and 4.2.

<sup>3</sup> Attended agenda item 3.3.

2011. Djien Liem then presented the key objectives and core elements of EFSA's draft Science Strategy and informed that it would be discussed again at the next AF meeting in September 2011. The focus of the draft Science Strategy was on extending and improving the evidence base for risk assessment and risk monitoring, ensuring adequate risk assessment capacity in the EU, taking the lead in the development and harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies and approaches, and strengthening the relevance and support of EFSA's scientific outputs for EU decision makers and stakeholders.

Austria found that further scientific development was needed to ensure sufficient risk assessment capacity in the EU.

France supported the vision, but advised that the title of the document should be reconsidered, since the contents of the strategy appeared to become wider than a science strategy, *e.g.* addressing also resources and knowledge management. France highlighted the need for scientific networking and suggested working further on the scientific part of the strategy and the identification of challenges as a basis for defining future staff profiles. Finally, France supported the emphasis on transparency of the risk assessment processes, *e.g.* the choice of method.

Denmark asked for a clarification of EFSA's role in using science produced by research institutions to answer questions at EU level and proposed illustrating the positive impact of EFSA's work.

Sweden agreed with Denmark that EFSA's role in science should be clarified and found that EFSA's Science Strategy would be helpful for the Member States when developing national scientific strategies. Sweden suggested emphasising EFSA's role in non-regulated areas more and missed an EFSA involvement in science policy work. Sweden proposed describing the scientific processes leading to scientific quality. Finally, Sweden argued that risk management decisions are based on other legitimate factors too, *e.g.* ethics and economics. If these were assessed in a similarly scientific way, it would lead to increased transparency in risk management. This should be reflected in EFSA's Science Strategy, even if the assessment of such other factors would not necessarily be done by EFSA.

Belgium suggested that the discussions on data collection, research priorities and regulatory mapping at the joint meeting between EFSA's MB and AF in March 2011 could feed into EFSA's Science Strategy. Belgium also mentioned that EFSA's capacity to provide rapid advice should be addressed and considered it important to use a holistic approach in the framing of the scientific questions to be addressed, *e.g.* taking into account ethical, environmental and social factors.

The Netherlands suggested that EFSA could safeguard its independence by increasing its use of self-tasking beyond the current 10 %.

The United Kingdom referred to the important link between EFSA's Strategic Plan and Science Strategy and suggested synchronising these two documents. The United Kingdom considered the openness and transparency of risk assessments and the phrasing of uncertainties in EFSA's opinions very important for ensuring trust in EFSA's work, especially when risk management is not squared with science. Finally, the United Kingdom said that the evidence is wider than natural sciences, so also social sciences and economics would need to be considered to determine the real burdens on public health.

Germany referred to previous discussions on EFSA's scientific role and reiterated the need for quality data and experts to ensure the quality of EFSA's scientific outputs. This would require good links to national research institutions and closer cooperation with the European Committee for Standardisation, Eurostat, and DG Research and Innovation. Germany further suggested that EFSA would have an international role in risk assessment training.

Norway expressed an interest in the discussion on a holistic approach, while questioning whether it would be desirable to extent EFSA's remit or whether the other factors should be assessed by the European Commission based on other inputs. Norway considered it important to involve the AF in the implementation of the Science Strategy.

Hungary highlighted the need to enhance EFSA's internal scientific capacity and argued that EFSA should be able to initiate research studies and provide training.

Spain suggested explaining better how EFSA distinguishes between leadership and influence and what EFSA expects from the scientific community.

Djen Liem acknowledged the very useful comments, which would be considered when further developing the document.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle summarised the key points that would require further clarification in the Science Strategy as follows:

- EFSA's role and how science is used;
- The major health challenges;
- The transparency of risk assessment methodologies and the roles of the various parties involved in the risk analysis process, including why EFSA is needed in addition to the national food safety agencies and how the scientific cooperation takes place;
- Where EFSA wants to take the lead, and where it would like to influence;
- How to make best use of the Panel experts, *e.g.* by strengthening the internal scientific capacity to handle applications.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle further said that even though the discussion on other factors was exciting, EFSA had no intention to change its remit and move to risk management. She concluded that it is important to take stock of the achievements

made together before looking ahead. Therefore, EFSA would consult the AF on its Science Strategy again in the autumn 2011 and a future draft version would be published on EFSA's website for a public consultation.

*Action 1: EFSA to consult the AF again on its Science Strategy in the autumn 2011.*

### **3.2 Cooperation in the area of animal health and animal welfare**

Philippe Vannier, Chair of EFSA's AHAW Panel, presented EFSA's work in the area of animal health and animal welfare, including its impact on EU legislation, Article 36 collaboration, and the activities of the AHAW Scientific Network. He noted overlaps between issues addressed by the Member States and EFSA and emphasised that access to data and sharing of confidential information remain critical points to enable precise, accurate and valuable risk assessments.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked Philippe Vannier for highlighting also the challenges and referred to agenda item 4.2 on the sharing of confidential information.

Finland sought clarification on the AHAW Scientific Network, questioning the balance between risk assessors and risk managers in the network and the fact that one expert would need to cover both animal health and animal welfare. Finland regretted that animal health and animal welfare was not included in the report on risk assessment training (agenda item 4.3) and was minimal in the grants and procurement work programme for 2012 (agenda item 4.4). Finally, Finland indicated a need to address the housing of farmed animals.

Italy emphasised the importance of the scientific work on animal welfare, expressed concerns over the possible influence of public consultations on the scientific conclusions, and suggested emphasising the evidence-based scientific method as the best way to evaluate the animal welfare status level.

France found that the presentation illustrated well the challenges that should be faced through institutional networking in the risk assessment area and cooperation on the elaboration of work plans. It would be important to take a holistic approach to animal health, prioritising diseases and considering the link with public health, and to ensure that enough experts in the area of animal welfare are involved.

Belgium found that the involvement of experts with different responsibilities in the AHAW Scientific Network would not constitute a problem, as long as the focus of the network was on risk assessment. Belgium also mentioned that the difficult access to data also affects other areas of EFSA's work.

Germany said that very few experts in Europe would be able to cover both animal health and animal welfare, so a solution could be to establish separate groups to deal with these different issues.

Bulgaria informed that three strains of foot-and-mouth disease were penetrating into Bulgaria with wild boars and proposed that EFSA should conduct scientific epidemiological work on the penetration of exotic diseases into the EU territory.

Philippe Vannier argued that it is important for the multi-disciplinary approach and transparency to bring the animal health and animal welfare experts together in the AHAW Panel instead of creating separate groups. He explained that the purpose of public consultations was to ensure completeness of the information on which EFSA's scientific outputs were based. The Panel's scientific conclusions would not be influenced by the views of stakeholders. He acknowledged that in some areas few experts are available. However, he said that the composition of the Panel is well balanced and there is good collaboration with other Panels, *e.g.* the CONTAM and BIOHAZ Panels. It is important to clearly distinguish EFSA's responsibility in risk assessment from the risk management, since there are often intensive discussions between risk assessors and risk managers in the AHAW area. The access to data remains a major challenge to be addressed jointly by EFSA and the European Commission. Philippe Vannier further agreed that the foot-and-mouth disease pose a real threat for Bulgaria and the EU, so EFSA could support Bulgaria in raising this important question. Finally, he added that many priority issues are not sufficiently targeted by monitoring studies, *e.g.* exotic diseases, the importance of animal health and animal welfare is often underestimated, and the link with zoonoses work could be strengthened. An example of a very good cooperation between EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) was the recent Q-fever opinion.

Franck Berthe added that EFSA is continuously liaising with the units in the European Commission responsible for animal health and animal welfare in order to improve EFSA's vision for the medium-term planning. Medium-term planning will also be discussed in the AHAW Scientific Network in order to coordinate with national planning and develop the medium-term planning of Article 36 projects. He agreed on the appropriateness of the current composition of the AHAW Panel, confirmed the good cooperation with the ECDC, shared the concerns regarding access to data, and emphasised that all comments received during public consultations were considered and a report published for transparency.

Hubert Deluyker provided some background on the particular difficulties in accessing data in the animal health and animal welfare area, said that in past years many Article 36 calls had been launched in this area, and agreed that it was unfortunate that animal health and animal welfare was not mentioned in the report on risk assessment training.

France suggested that EFSA should coordinate a European plan for the epidemiological surveillance of foot-and-mouth disease.

Hubert Deluyker replied that EFSA could help upon Member State request.

Finland appreciated the outlined medium-term planning, agreed with France on the need for a holistic approach, and supported Germany's comments on the need to guarantee expertise in all areas.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle summarised that:

- Improved medium-term planning in close cooperation with the European Commission would be needed as a basis for further investments in grants and procurement in the area of animal health and animal welfare;
- Animal health and animal welfare should not be forgotten in the context of risk assessment training;
- Member States should not hesitate to send questions to EFSA, especially on issues related with the protection of the EU territory.

She added that the work of the AF working group on data collection and the discussion on this topic at the next AF meeting would feed into EFSA's discussions with the European Commission.

### **3.3 Cooperation in the area of food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings, and processing aids**

Alexandre Feigenbaum presented EFSA's work in the area of food contact materials and food enzymes, including the ESCO working group on non-plastic food contact materials, with focus on the cooperation with Member States.

Karl-Heinz Engel, Vice-Chair of EFSA's CEF Panel, presented EFSA's work on flavouring substances.

Austria, Belgium and Cyprus were impressed by the workload of the Panel.

Austria asked for news on the discussion with the European Commission on fees.

Belgium asked about the expected follow-up on the ESCO working group on non-plastic food contact materials. Belgium and France expressed concerns over the lack of legislation in this area. France also enquired about "cocktail effects" and the toxicology of flavourings.

Cyprus asked about research proposals in the CEF area.

Alexandre Feigenbaum informed that all Member States had applied similar approaches for their risk assessments, so EFSA focuses on methodological aspects. Previously, different risk assessment approaches were used for food contact materials and flavourings. These were now being harmonised and the current work of EFSA's Scientific Committee on the threshold of toxicological concern (TTC) was expected to improve the risk assessment approaches.

Karl-Heinz Engel informed that the CEF Panel had proposed to fund research on the natural occurrence of flavourings, including the intake from non-food sources, to DG Research and Innovation.

The European Commission referred to the discussion on fees at the 39<sup>th</sup> AF meeting and added that a baseline study was ongoing upon request from the European Parliament and Council and that the European Commission was working with EFSA to assess the cost of applications.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked the Panel for its impressive work and concluded that the report of the ESCO working group on non-plastic food contact materials would be discussed at the next AF meeting to be proactive in this area.

*Action 2: EFSA to present the report of the ESCO working group on non-plastic food contact materials at the next AF meeting.*

### **3.4 Research proposals**

Jeffrey Moon provided an overview of the activities related with research proposals in 2010, shared the feedback received from DG Research and Innovation, and briefed the AF on the consultation on further research proposals under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme and suggested research areas for the 8<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme that the European Commission will be developing in 2011.

France supported this work, appreciated the detailed feedback from DG Research and Innovation, and suggested to continue providing such inputs every year.

Likewise, Germany and Belgium expressed appreciation of the work and support to the approach. Belgium requested further feedback on the specific research proposals from the Member States and the role of the AF.

Jeffrey Moon explained that all the detailed proposals received from Member States were submitted to DG Research and Innovation together with the prioritised research proposals from EFSA. The intention was also to engage in a discussion with the AF on broad themes for the 8<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle noted the good progress in the cooperation with DG Research and Innovation and concluded that EFSA would consult the AF on proposals for the 8<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme in the autumn 2011.

*Action 3: EFSA to discuss inputs for the 8<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of DG Research and Innovation with the AF in the autumn 2011.*

## 4 OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY EFSA AND THE MEMBER STATES

### 4.1 Review of EFSA's policy on declarations of interests

Dirk Detken updated the AF on the ongoing work on EFSA's policy on independence and scientific decision-making that will replace EFSA's policy on declarations of interests, since independence is more than declarations of interests and should be seen in the broader context of scientific quality.

France supported the approach, questioned the legal value of collective opinions, and suggested working with national agencies and strengthening EFSA's internal scientific capacity.

Sweden supported the approach too and said that scientific quality assurance is important.

Austria requested transparency on the criteria used for excluding some experts.

Germany agreed that scientific transparency is linked with quality assurance and argued that EFSA as an institution is accountable for its opinions.

Finland shared the German view, suggested simplifying procedures, and said that in order to ensure the best science more than one expert would be needed in every subarea.

The Netherlands supported the ideas brought forward, while questioning whether these would actually accomplish the desired changes in consumer perceptions about EFSA's independence. Ireland voiced similar concerns and Norway asked if EFSA had any plans on how to address consumer perceptions.

Denmark proposed to focus the independence discussion on commercial interests.

Dirk Detken said that EFSA shares the view expressed by Germany and agreed that even a good policy might not necessarily change perceptions.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that the new policy would focus on the quality of the whole scientific process, not just the independence of individual experts, and that a simplified policy would lead to a better enforcement.

Anne-Laure Gassin added that the new policy would address independence in the broader context and that public consultations with stakeholders were foreseen to better understand public perceptions regarding the independence of science.

The European Commission said that EFSA's implementation of its policy on declarations of interests had been good, while more could possibly be done on related communications.

Italy expressed concerns over EFSA's handling of the exclusion of some Italian experts and argued that transparency is more important than independence, so close contacts with Member States were requested.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that the AF, experts and stakeholders would be consulted further before submission of the new policy to the MB for adoption.

*Action 4: EFSA to consult the AF further on the new policy on independence and scientific decision-making before submitting the policy to the MB for adoption.*

#### **4.2 Confidentiality agreement on the sharing of information**

Dirk Detken shared initial reflections on EFSA's cooperation and confidentiality agreements with Member State organisations.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle added that EFSA would like to have confidentiality agreements with the Member State organisations similar to EFSA's agreement with the US Food and Drug Administration.

To illustrate the need for a clear and transparent solution, Germany provided an example of past limitations in sharing confidential data from the industry between EFSA and the Member States.

Austria enquired if confidentiality agreements would be signed with national food safety agencies or national authorities.

Sweden found it difficult to use confidential data for transparency reasons.

Finland expressed reservations about the ability of the Finnish Food Safety Authority to sign such a confidentiality agreement with EFSA due to national legislation as most information is publicly available in Finland.

France supported EFSA's proposal and found that the difficulties raised by Sweden could be successfully overcome.

Dirk Detken acknowledged that Scandinavian laws emphasise transparency, which has had a spinoff on EU legislation in terms of open access to EFSA documents. He said that the proposed confidentiality agreements were intended as statements of good will to share "whenever possible".

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded that EFSA would pursue its reflections and liaise with the European Commission before consulting the Member States on a draft agreement to be signed with interested parties on a voluntary basis.

#### **4.3 Risk assessment training**

Bernhard Berger presented the report on principles and methods of risk assessment training in food safety and acknowledged the need for training also in

the area of animal health and animal welfare. The report has been sent to DG Health and Consumers that will carry out such training courses through the European Commission's Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) Programme.

Austria commented that it would be important to cooperate with other institutions in developing the risk assessment training in order to develop a single system and “a common language” in EU risk assessments.

Finland reiterated the need to consider animal health and animal welfare. Apart from this, Finland was very pleased with the proposed risk assessment training and alumni network. Finland suggested that a Member State representative could ideally join EFSA and the European Commission in a steering committee.

Denmark reminded EFSA about the ECDC's European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (EPIET) as a good example of training combined with practical “on the job” experience. This could be a source of inspiration for EFSA.

Sweden supported EFSA's proposal as a good introduction to risk assessment, said that alumni activities were very important, and echoed Denmark's comments.

Cyprus appreciated the good structure of EFSA's report on risk assessment training and asked whether radioactive substances would be covered under the chemical risk assessment and if non-EU countries could attend the training to gain understanding of EU risk assessment approaches.

Germany welcomed the initiative, while emphasising the need to go further than a training course. In order to build risk assessment experience, an EU wide summer school was proposed in cooperation with Member States that already conduct such activities. Slovenia supported this proposal and asked who would cover the costs.

Spain and Norway welcomed EFSA's initiative and sought clarification on EFSA's role in organising and defining the risk assessment training. Norway further supported the need to include animal welfare.

Bernhard Berger thanked the AF for the positive feedback and clarified that EFSA may be involved in the selection of the contractor, while the BTSF Programme will organise and fund the training courses. He added that the report on risk assessment training was the outcome of a working group discussion with experts from EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels and experts from Member States and that priority setting was needed due to limited resources in the BTSF Programme. The report is based on a previous report with an initial screening of existing trainings and needs, identified by Member States via the Focal Point network. The recommendation from that report, endorsed by the Advisory Forum, was that training on general risk assessment methodology would be needed. The

now envisaged courses would be introductory courses, where Panel experts could be involved as trainers. The report had been prepared prior to the nuclear incidence in Japan and radioactive substances were outside EFSA's remit, so these were not reflected in the training proposal.

Belgium asked if the training would be open to risk managers. The Netherlands commented that such a general course could be relevant for risk managers.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle suggested starting with risk assessors and monitoring an appropriate balance between risk assessors and risk managers attending the training.

The European Commission informed that the BTSF Programme is for Member States and third countries, but not for the staff of the European Commission, since similar courses for EU risk managers already exist.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded on the need to avoid duplication and suggested assessing the training on the basis of first experiences and by learning from other successful trainings like the EPIET. She welcomed the proposal to include one or two Member State representatives in a steering committee and acknowledged the need to include animal health and animal welfare.

*Action 5: EFSA to follow up with the European Commission regarding the composition of a steering committee and on possibilities how to address animal health and animal welfare risk assessment training.*

#### **4.4 Outcome of the consultation on the grants and procurement work programme for 2012**

Bernhard Berger presented an overview of EFSA's draft grants and procurement work programme for 2012. He acknowledged receipt of written comments from Belgium and invited the Member States again to share information on national research activities via the specific tool on the Extranet.

France urged EFSA not to publish all the calls at the same time.

Sweden appreciated the move towards multiannual projects and asked for a list of all framework contracts.

Germany said that the results of the projects are very useful for the Member States and thus suggested distributing the results through the Focal Points.

Italy asked for information on calls related with the EU Menu project.

The United Kingdom endorsed the proposal to share information on national research.

Denmark supported the trend towards bigger, multiannual projects.

Bernhard Berger informed that all results of the projects are published on EFSA's website. He emphasised that progress has already been made to launch calls earlier, and that the efforts to launch earlier in the year will continue also in 2012. He reminded that the sharing of planned national research projects is important to avoid duplication of work.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that EFSA works with the European Commission towards a multiannual program to better engage with national institutions.

*Action 6: EFSA to send a list of existing framework contracts to AF members.*

#### **4.5 Food contact materials of melamine resins**

Germany briefed the AF on a recent BfR opinion concluding that cooking utensils of melamine resins are not suitable for cooking purposes and use in microwave ovens due to the high migration of melamine and formaldehyde upon heating.

Austria said that the German observations were in line with Austrian findings.

Upon requests from Luxembourg and Belgium, Germany provided further details on the testing conditions that reflected realistic cooking conditions.

The European Commission confirmed that contacts were ongoing with Germany on adequate risk management measures.

#### **4.6 BfR workshop on active substances in plant protection products**

Germany informed the AF about the outcomes of a BfR workshop on harmonised classification and labelling of active substances in plant protection products.

#### **4.7 Other matters raised by EFSA and the Member States**

Germany provided a detailed account of the ongoing outbreak of diarrhoeal illness caused by Shiga toxin producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) in Germany and addressed questions and comments from the Netherlands, Denmark and Luxembourg on the possible sources.

Upon request from Finland, EFSA provided a link to the scientific opinion of the BIOHAZ Panel on the "Monitoring of verotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC) and identification of human pathogenic VTEC types".

Based on Swedish findings, Sweden invited EFSA to look into manganese in baby food. However, Sweden indicated that they would wait for the discussion in the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health before deciding whether to submit a formal request to EFSA. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle replied that this question could be addressed as part of EFSA's work on micronutrients.

Hubert Deluyker updated the AF on the progress of the EU Menu project as requested by Belgium under agenda item 2 and Italy under agenda item 4.4.

Sweden informed that the final report of the working group on food classification was expected by the end of September 2011.

Slovakia shared information on two national meetings organised by the Focal Point on dioxins and nanotechnology, respectively.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle informed the AF that EFSA had received a new mandate from the European Commission to conduct a full re-evaluation of the safety of aspartame by July 2012 taking into account original raw data. EFSA had proposed an extension of the deadline in order to allow for a public call for data. By 2018, also other sweeteners will be reviewed as part of EFSA's systematic re-evaluation of all authorised food additives in the EU. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle added that EFSA would liaise with France on ANSES' ongoing work on sweeteners. France welcomed the cooperation.

France shared results on the occurrence of residues of pharmaceutical products in tap water intended for human consumption. Upon request from the Netherlands, France confirmed that tap water is used by the drink industry. France said that further studies were needed to obtain enough data for statistical analyses. Cyprus had made similar findings. Tobin Robinson informed that EFSA's Emerging Risks Unit had indentified pharmaceutical products in drinking water as a potential emerging risk in a technical report in 2010.

France also shared information on French national projects on endocrine disruptors and encouraged a close cooperation in this area. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle agreed to work together and informed that EFSA is also closely cooperating with DG Environment in this area.

Hubert Deluyker informed the AF about the progress of the AF working group on data collection that is preparing a document for a strategic discussion on data collection at the next AF meeting.

Hubert Deluyker also informed that EFSA is liaising with the European Commission on further input to EFSA's medium-term planning. The European Commission confirmed that internal consultation of relevant units was ongoing. Anne-Laure Gassin informed that following the discussion at the 39<sup>th</sup> AF meeting the summary brochure on scientific cooperation had been finalised and published on EFSA's website. The AFCWG members and the Focal Points had received copies and were encouraged to use the brochure to increase the knowledge on the cooperation between EFSA and Member States in their countries.

Hubert Deluyker drew the attention of the AF to the call to renew the membership of EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels and asked the AF members to assist in raising awareness about the call.

Denmark noted that EFSA's recent crisis exercise had demonstrated some deficiencies. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that the teleconference had indeed failed due to technical problems. This problem needs to be resolved, not just for crisis situations. Tobin Robinson informed that a report on the crisis exercise was under preparation. The report would address how to improve and learn from the crisis exercise.

*Action 7: AF members to assist in raising awareness about the call to renew the membership of EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels.*

## **5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle requested the AF members to book two full days for the 42<sup>nd</sup> AF meeting in Germany on 30 November-1 December 2011.

Poland reminded that the next AF meeting would take place in Krakow on 28-29 September 2011 during the Polish EU Presidency.

## **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

Before closing the AF meeting, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked Hungary for hosting the AF meeting. She also thanked the AF members and observers, the interpreters, and EFSA staff.