



## European Food Safety Authority

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Brussels, 6 July 2004  
EFSA/CONTAM/149 final

**MINUTES OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY MEETING OF THE  
SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM)  
HELD ON 1 AND 2 JUNE 2004 IN BRUSSELS**

(adopted by written procedure on 6 July 2004)

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### **PARTICIPANTS**

#### *Panel Members:*

Jan Alexander, Herman Autrup, Denis Bard, Angelo Carere, Lucio Guido Costa, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Roberto Fanelli, Johanna Fink-Gremmels, John Gilbert, Philippe Grandjean, Niklas Johansson, Agneta Oskarsson, Andrew Renwick, Jiri Ruprich, Josef Schlatter (Chair), Greet Schoeters, Dieter Schrenk, Rolaf van Leeuwen<sup>1</sup> (Vice-Chair), Philippe Verger (Vice-Chair).

#### *EFSA*

Juliane Kleiner, Ulla Bertelsen (Scientific Co-ordination CONTAM Panel), Tlaitmass Bounou (Administrative Secretariat CONTAM Panel)

#### *European Commission*

DG Health and Consumer Protection: Taina Sateri, Almut Bitterhof, Frans Verstraete, Martin Slayne

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<sup>1</sup> Only present on 2 June 2004

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair of the Panel opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Apologies for absence were received from Alessandro di Domenico. The chair welcomed Almut Bitterhof from DG Health and Consumer Protection (Unit on the Relations with the EFSA) who will replace Taina Sateri in this Panel, as well as Ulla Bertelsen, assistant scientific coordinator to the Panel.

**2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The proposed agenda was adopted.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no interests declared.

**4. FEEDBACK FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

The Chair updated the members of the CONTAM Panel on the last meeting of the Scientific Committee held on 13 May 2004. Details can be found in the minutes of the Scientific Committee

[http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/sc\\_committee/sc\\_meetings/419\\_en.html](http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/sc_committee/sc_meetings/419_en.html)

**5. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM EFSA**

*EFSA Scientific Colloquium*

A draft programme was presented for the EFSA Scientific Colloquium on “methodologies and principles for setting tolerable intake levels for dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCBs: revisiting the process”, which will take place on 28-29 June 2004. Participation is limited to 60 experts and as this number has been reached, the registration is now closed.

*Methylmercury in fish and fishery products*

An information note by the European Commission on methylmercury in fish and fishery products was sent to the Panel members for information.

*Furan in Food*

On 7 May 2004, the US FDA published the results of a survey of furan in food and the Panel considered toxicology and occurrence data so far available. Furan is

thought to be a product of heat processing but hardly any information is available on the mode of formation of furan in food. It was agreed to establish an ad hoc working group to gather and summarise all available data on furan (methods of analysis, occurrence, formation, exposure, toxicology), to indicate the uncertainties in the risk assessment, and to identify gaps and research needs. Assistance will be asked from national authorities and industry to collect and collate occurrence data in a wide variety of food samples to serve as a basis for a more comprehensive exposure assessment. Also interactive information exchange with experts from US FDA and other international bodies will be ensured in order to be kept abreast on any progress in the field. The Panel also took note of a project funded within the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework programme of EC DG Research, which is dealing with health risks associated with hazardous compounds in heat treated carbohydrate-rich foods (HEATOX). The project focuses on acrylamide, but the Commission representative advised that DG SANCO had asked DG Research to include work on furan in the project. Also, the Commission's Working group of Experts on Contaminants would discuss this issue on 10 June. EFSA was invited to participate in the meeting.

*Report on Interface between Risk Assessment and Risk Management*

A copy of the summary report of a European workshop on the interface between risk assessment and risk management, which was held in September 2003 in Noordwijkerhout was distributed at the meeting and members were asked to provide their written comments on the possibilities of implementing the recommendations of the report in the Panel's work. All EFSA Panels are asked to provide comments by end June 2004 and the comments will be forwarded to the EFSA Scientific Committee for further considerations.

## **6. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION**

The Commission representative informed the Panel on recent developments in legislation:

- \* Maximum levels, sampling methods and methods of analysis for the fusarium toxins in foodstuffs are still under discussion.
- \* Activities have started on increased monitoring of aflatoxin B1 in feed intended for goats and sheep following the EFSA opinion.
- \* Options for future legislation on the presences of dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCBs in food are under consideration, in particular with a view to the inclusion of dioxin –like PCBs in the level to be set.
- \* Proposed legislation to set maximum levels for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in certain foods was under consultation, responding to the opinion of the SCF, 2002.

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME**

### **7.1 Official requests for scientific opinions of EFSA**

There were no new official requests by the Commission.

### **7.2 Toxicity of fishery products belonging to the gempylidae family**

An expert summarised an opinion of the German Federal Office for Risk assessment (BfR) on health consequences of the consumption products belonging to the gempylidae familiae, i.e. escolar and oilfish. Case reports from the literature indicate that the consumption of these fishes may cause diarrhoea and other gastrointestinal disturbance due to the high content of wax esters. However the reports do not reveal which quantities were ingested and which other factors possibly played an additional role. Therefore, it was not possible to establish the minimum amount of such fish to be consumed to elicits effects. Up to now poisonings due to the consumption of such fish have not been reported officially in Germany. After discussing this opinion and other national statements, the Panel concluded that the consumers should be informed on the potential risk but considered the question as to whether a ban on the placing on the market of these fishery products is justified, to be a risk management decision. A draft response to the Commission will be prepared for adoption by written procedure, taking all available national statements into account and highlighting the difference to real fish toxins such as tetrodotoxin.

### **7.3 Update on undesirable substances in animal feed (USAF)**

#### **7.3.1 Draft opinion on Lead**

The chair of the working group on USAF introduced the final draft opinion on lead and the opinion was adopted subject to minor editorial changes. Available data on companion animals including dogs and cats will be added. In the meantime, the opinion was released on the EFSA website.

#### **7.3.2 Draft opinion on Cadmium**

The chair of the working group on USAF introduced the final draft opinion on cadmium and the opinion was adopted subject to minor editorial changes. Available data on companion animals including dogs and cats will be added. In the meantime, the opinion was released on the EFSA website.

#### **7.3.3 Draft opinion on Deoxynivalenol**

The chair of the Working group on USAF introduced the final draft opinion on deoxynivalenol. The opinion was adopted pending (next to some editorial changes) to some modifications in the summary, human exposure and conclusions and

recommendation chapters. In the meantime, the opinion was released on the EFSA website.

#### **7.3.4 Draft opinion on Zearalenone**

The chair on the working group on USAF introduced the final draft opinion on zearalenone. The discussion revealed that there are some amendments to be made before the opinion can be adopted. The chair of the working group will include the comments and the opinion will be sent to the Panel members for adoption by written procedure.

#### **7.3.5 Update on further progress of the heavy metal subgroup**

Members were informed that draft opinions on arsenic and fluorine as undesirable substances in animal feed will be presented to the Panel for discussion and possible adoption at the next meeting in September 2004.

#### **7.3.6 Update on progress of the mycotoxin subgroup**

A draft opinion on ochratoxin A as undesirable substances in animal feed will be submitted to the Panel for discussion and possible adoption at the next meeting in September 2004. First draft opinions on ergot and on fumonisins will be discussed at the working group meeting in September 2004.

#### **7.3.7 Update on progress of the persistent organic pollutants (POP) subgroup**

A first meeting of the working group on POPs as undesirable substances in animal feed was held and draft opinions on camphechlor, endosulfan and lindane are currently being prepared. It is planned to finalise these draft opinions by December 2004. The Panel was informed by the Commission Services that there will be additional requests for scientific opinions on the alpha and beta isomers of hexachlorohexanes, chlordane, aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, hexachlorbenzene and DDT as the whole annex of the Directive 2002/32/EC on undesirable substances in animal feed has to be revised.

#### **7.3.8 Risk assessment on botanical impurities**

It was agreed that the current working group on Mycotoxins will also deal with botanical impurities as undesirable substances in animal feed. However, the proposed deadline for completion of the assessments on glucosinolates, tropane alkaloids, ricin, hydrocyanic acid and pyrrolizidine alkaloids in animal feed by December 2004 cannot be met.

### **7.4. Draft opinion on organotin compounds**

As there are still some amendments to the draft opinion to be made (inclusion of DOT in the proposed group TDI), the adoption of the opinion on organotin

compounds is delayed. However, the Contaminants Panel adopted the following minute-statement on the provisional outcome of the evaluation:

The EFSA Scientific Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain has been asked by the European Commission to assess the health risks to consumers associated with exposure to organotin (OTCs) in foodstuffs. Based on an overall evaluation of the relevant toxicological properties of OTCs, the Panel considered immunotoxicity as the most critical endpoint in terms of risk assessment and discussed a tolerable daily intake (TDI) of 0.25 µg/kg bw, based on the most extensively studied compound, Tributyltin (TBT). This TDI was derived by applying an uncertainty factor of 100 to the NOAEL of 0.025 mg TBTO/kg bw in a chronic immunotoxicity study in rats. As TBT, dibutyltin (DBT), triphenyltin (TPT), and Di-*n*-octyltin (DOT) exert their immunotoxic effects by a similar mode of action, the Panel decided to include all these OTC in its TDI. In the absence of studies on combined effects on these OTC, the Panel considered the immunotoxic effects to be additive and proposed a group TDI for the sum of TBT, DBT, TPT and DOT of 0.25 µg/kg bw. Based on TBTO molecular mass, this group-TDI can be expressed as 0.1 µg/kg-bw or 0.27 µg/kg bw with reference either to Sn content or to chemical conversion to chloride (TBT-Cl).

The Panel also considered the 2003 EU SCOOP report on the assessment of the dietary exposure to OTC, which is based on data provided by eight European Countries. The statistical analysis of the data has shown that, based on full aggregation of fish and fishery products, the estimated concentration medians of TBT, DBT, and TPT distributions were 7.0, 2.5, and 4.0 µg/kg of fresh product, respectively, and the corresponding mean values being about 4- to 7-fold higher. The EU SCOOP report contains very few data on DOT, which were always below the limit of determination. For specific food aggregations, seafood other than fish is in general more contaminated than fish. Intake calculations based on the Norwegian fish and seafood other than fish consumption pattern, taken as paradigm of high consumption in Europe, showed that the combined TBT, DBT, and TPT intake of the general adult population is approximately 3-fold lower than the proposed group-TDI, when calculated from mean values. The corresponding intake for high consumers was approximately 70 % of the group-TDI. However, the Panel noted that the consumption of fish, mussels, and other marine animals from highly contaminated areas, such as the vicinity of harbours and heavily used shipping routes, may lead to intakes of OTCs that exceed the proposed group-TDI.

As still some substantial amendments to the opinion are pending, the final draft opinion will be presented to the CONTAM Panel for possible adoption to its September meeting.

## **7.5 Update on non-dioxin-like PCBs (NDL-PCB)**

The Chair of the Working Group informed the Panel on the outcome of the 4th meeting of the WG held in May 2004. The occurrence database for food and feed was discussed extensively and due to the inherent uncertainties in the occurrence and consumption data available it was agreed not to apply more sophisticated exposure assessment methods. If possible the database should be complemented with data from Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Data from human studies only correlates to total PCB exposure and no differentiation between effects caused by dioxin-like and non-dioxin-like PCBs can be made. However it will be looked at on how these human studies can be included in the overall risk assessment of non-dioxin-like PCBs. It appears that the carcinogenicity of commercial PCB mixtures is related to dioxin-like PCBs and the working group will now concentrate on the non-carcinogenic effects. It is planned to submit a first draft opinion, in which all the current uncertainties will be highlighted, to the September Plenary meeting for discussion and input by the Panel members. It is still hoped to finalise the opinion by the end of the year.

## **7.6 Update on safety of wild and farmed fish**

The outcome of a core group meeting to elaborate an outline for an activity on the safety of wild and farmed fish was discussed. Members of the Scientific Committee and of the Panels on Nutrition and on Animal Health and Welfare will also participate in the working group. The opinion will target on fish species which are farmed in a significant amount and placed on the European market. Wild and farmed fish will be compared with respect to the nutritional composition (e.g. fat content, fatty acid pattern, minerals) and the pattern of contaminants, their nature and levels and farming and feeding practice. The opinion will also address the evidence for beneficial effects of fish consumption. The opinion will be finalised in spring 2005. It was mentioned that several Member States have also started to compare the possible risks and the benefits of fish consumption and these ongoing activities will be closely followed.

## **7.7 Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and its salts**

Members were informed that a mandate for self tasking on PFOS and its salts, focusing on the exposure assessment, has been accepted by EFSA. Taking into account the current workload and in particular the number of outstanding opinions, a medium priority is attached to this task. A chair for the working group has been appointed and a working group will be set up in the fall of 2004.

**8. MEETING DATES 2004**

The next meeting will be held in September 2004 in Parma. The meeting dates for 2005 will be fixed at the next meeting.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no any other business and the meeting was adjourned at 17.00.