

**Minutes**  
**SEVENTH MEETING BETWEEN FOCAL POINTS AND EFSA**  
**PARIS (FRANCE), 27-28 JANUARY 2010**

**Participants**

Chair: Bernhard Berger

Austria	<i>Johann Steinwider</i>	Italy	<i>Luca Busani</i>
Belgium	<i>Laurence Ballieux</i>	Latvia	<i>Dace Santare</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Teri Vrabcheva</i>	Lithuania	<i>Zenonas Stanevicius</i>
Cyprus	<i>Eleni Kakouri</i>	Luxembourg	<i>Nathalie Welschbillig</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Petr Beneš</i>	Malta	<i>Flavia Zammit</i>
Denmark	<i>Arne Büchert</i>	Netherlands	<i>Jacqueline Castenmiller</i>
Estonia	<i>Piret Priisalu</i>	Poland	<i>Iwona Wiśniewska</i>
Finland	<i>Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen</i>	Portugal	<i>Lubélia Maria Martins da Silva</i>
France	<i>Philippe Prigent</i>	Slovakia	<i>Zuzana Birošová</i>
Germany	<i>Klaus Jürgen Henning</i>	Slovenia	<i>Blaza Nahtigal</i>
Greece	<i>Eirini Tsigarida</i>	Spain	<i>Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry</i>
Hungary	<i>Judit Sali</i>	Sweden	<i>Lars Jorhem</i>
Ireland	<i>Anne-Marie Boland</i>	United Kingdom	<i>Alisdair Wotherspoon</i>

### Observers and Invitees

Croatia	<i>Sandra Bašić</i>	Switzerland	<i>Judith Beck</i>
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	<i>Marina Popovska-Domazetova</i>	Turkey	<i>Emine Güher Çeltek</i>
Norway	<i>Anne Finstad</i>		

### Staff of the European Food Safety Authority

<i>Bernhard Berger</i>	<i>Ilias Papatryfon</i>
<i>Stef Bronzwaer</i>	<i>Sérgio Potier Rodeia</i>
<i>Kerstin Gross-Helmert</i>	<i>Carola Sondermann</i>
<i>Torben Nilsson</i>	<i>Andras Szoradi</i>

## 1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Valérie Baduel, Deputy Director General of the French Food Safety Agency (AFSSA), opened the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting between Focal Points and EFSA. She welcomed the participants, and presented the French agency and its role in France. Whilst highlighting challenges in the coordination of risk assessment in the EU, she acknowledged the work of Focal Points (FPs) in this field and the progress made.

Bernhard Berger from EFSA's Scientific Cooperation Unit (SCO) and Chair of the meeting thanked Valérie Baduel for her words of welcome, AFSSA for hosting the meeting and last but not least Philippe Prigent for his support in organising this event.

The Chair expressed his appreciation that representatives from 26 Member States (MS), Norway, Switzerland, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey participated in this meeting and welcomed those MS representatives who attended a FP meeting for the first time.

## 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Three new items were raised by FPs under Any Other Business (AOB), namely: i) information on changes at the UK-FSA; ii) request for feedback from the crisis exercise; and iii) clarification on documents for the IEP. EFSA raised one additional item under AOB, namely: iv) requests for information/data from FPs to other FPs.

It was proposed to swap items 4 "EFSA Journal" and 5 "Panels, networks and scientific events at EFSA" on the agenda. Agenda item 6 was removed, as no subjects were raised by FPs. Participants agreed to the proposed changes and the agenda was adopted.

The draft minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting were distributed to FPs for comments on 25 September 2009. They were approved by written procedure, made available on Extranet on 20 October 2009 and have then been placed on the EFSA website.

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest (ADoI) filled in by the participants who were invited for the present meeting. With regard to the ADoIs and this meeting, no other interests than those already declared in the ADoI and screened by EFSA in accordance with its Policy on Declarations of Interests and implementing documents thereof were declared by experts. In addition, all participants were asked to fill in and sign the Declarations of Commitment.

### **3 FOCAL POINT ACTIVITIES 2009/2010**

#### **3.1 Focal Point reporting 2009**

Andras Szoradi from SCO summarised the general report on FP activities in 2009. The report was shared with FPs before the meeting and will also be presented to the Advisory Forum (AF) at its next meeting in February. FP activities related to the five priority areas of 2009 can be summarised as follows:

- i) exchanging of scientific information through requests for sharing scientific information and data, as well as uploading information on the Information Exchange Platform (IEP), such as risk assessment outputs and requests, work plans and country specific information;
- ii) supporting Article 36 activities;
- iii) promoting EFSA's Expert Database (EDB);
- iv) raising EFSA's scientific visibility through communication activities and organising national FP meetings; and
- v) expanding national networks.

As in the previous years, FPs will continue to support their AF member also in 2010. Five priority areas were suggested, which FPs agreed with. FPs were further informed that the reporting template would be adapted for the 2010 reporting, to better link financial costs to activities undertaken. FPs were reminded that they could only recover expenses having occurred after the date on which EFSA signed the FP Agreement. For further guidance on how to report on FP activities and payments in 2010, a session was planned for the next FP Meeting in May 2010.

In addition, the development of the IEP and its optimisation would feature as a topic at the next FP Meeting. Both FPs and EFSA agreed to the need for an IEP Working Group.

During the following discussion, questions were raised regarding access rights to the Extranet. It was clarified that while all AF Members have access to the FP workspace, access of FPs to the AF workspace is decided at national level. To request rights for a FP to access the AF workspace, the AF Member should send a message to the AF secretariat ([afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu)), asking for the allocation of access rights.

The FP report will be presented to the AF meeting on 11/12 February in Seville.

*Action 1: SCO to include session on FP reporting, including payments, at the FP Meeting in May 2010.*

*Action 2: SCO to include session on the IEP at the FP Meeting in May 2010.*

*Action 3: SCO to set up a new IEP Working Group.*

*Action 4: FP to ask their AF Member to send message to the AF secretariat ([afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu)) requesting the allocation of access rights for FP to access the AF Extranet, if applicable.*

### 3.2 Article 36 List - update

Ilias Papatryfon from SCO gave an update on the Article 36 activities, including:

- a summary of the Article 36 report “Evaluation of EFSA’s Science Grants and Procurement Schemes”;
- an overview of the two new IT tools, namely:
  1. the Article 36 platform on Extranet (Art36-NET) with the objective of facilitating the networking amongst Article 36 organisations and with EFSA, and enhancing the project implementation of signed grant agreements; and
  2. the Article 36 database with the aim to assist EFSA and the MS in the management (maintenance and updating) of the list of competent organisations; and
- an overview of the *status quo* of the Article 36 List.

In the following discussion Ilias Papatryfon pointed out that it is possible to receive an e-mail notification on the launch of calls for procurement. SCO would circulate the link for subscription and would look into the possibility of setting up e-mail notifications for calls for procurement. FPs pointed out that in 2009 a series of calls for proposals was launched in summer, an unfavourable timing, since it may have prevented some organisations from submitting a proposal. Ilias Papatryfon indicated that this issue has been taken up in the recommendations of the report on Evaluation of EFSA’s Science Grants and Procurement Scheme. FPs further raised difficulties with grant application procedures, firstly that for each application some documents are always the same and secondly that some potentially confidential information is requested, such as salary slips. SCO will bring these issues, along with other issues raised within the context of the recent survey on grant and procurement schemes, to the attention of EFSA’s legal and finance units, which are, however, bound to the EU financial regulation.

Regarding the procedure of new nominations to the Article 36 List, Ilias Papatryfon stressed that FPs could inform SCO at any time when new organisations were available to be designated, even if the list was currently ‘closed’. This would signal EFSA an existing interest to add a new organisation to the list. To facilitate the process of nominations, organisations should use the electronic questionnaire (word file) until the online questionnaire (Article 36 Database) is available. After having checked the completeness of the information, SCO would put the organisation in contact with the appropriate FP. It was, however, stressed that only the Permanent Representation can officially nominate organisations. Generally, the FP involvement in this context is to explain the procedure to the (potential) Article 36 organisations and to mediate between the organisation, the Permanent Representation and SCO, if necessary.

To address changes of existing organisations on the Article 36 List, FPs could notify SCO via the Article 36 mailbox ([cooperation.article36@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:cooperation.article36@efsa.europa.eu)) and discuss any necessary follow-up actions.

*Action 5: SCO to circulate the [link](#)*

*([http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/newsletters.htm?Newsletter\\_type=HIGHL](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/newsletters.htm?Newsletter_type=HIGHL))*

*for subscription to the EFSA Highlights newsletter to receive an e-mail notification on the launch of calls for procurements.*

### 3.3 Article 36 Cooperation – Pan-European research project on bee decline

Philippe Prigent from the French Focal Point presented the Pan-European research project on bee decline as a practical example of a successful proposal to an Article 36 project. He described the entire life-cycle of the project, starting with the background of the call, the decision-making at the organisation, and the preparation of the proposal, to the implementation of the project, the outputs and lessons learned. The aim of the presentation was to show the methods used and to stimulate applications to Article 36 calls.

To facilitate the search for project partners, EFSA had been active, following feedback from FPs, by developing the Art36 Database and Art36-Net platform on the Extranet.

### 3.4 Expert Database

Sérgio Potier Rodeia from SCO updated FPs on the growth of the EDB, as well as on the conclusions and recommendations of the 2009 evaluation report on the EDB. The EDB user survey showed that the EDB was in good use and the search tool was considered user-friendly by both EFSA staff and external users. To further increase the number of experts in the EDB, the continued support of FPs was sought. To further populate the EDB, SCO will individually get in touch with FPs to identify appropriate actions. At the same time, EFSA will continue its ongoing efforts to cooperate with European agencies and international organisations like ECDC, ECHA, EPPO, FAO, OIE, etc. to further populate EFSA's EDB.

### 3.5 Work Programmes

Stef Bronzwaer from SCO gave an overview on the status of sharing information regarding planned activities in MS. A total of 18 countries had provided information. Of these, eight countries had used a standard reporting table presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting. The information was summarized in the report on sharing information regarding planned activities; the main recommendations were:

- to replace the Excel table by an online reporting tool;
- to send monthly reminders to regularly share information on planned activities; and
- to review the sharing of planned activities after two years.

FPs appreciated the reporting table and the possibility of having an online tool. Spain suggested adding a column to the table to indicate the status of the activity (e.g. planned, on-going, concluded). FPs agreed to continue to share information on planned activities either by using the reporting table or by uploading work plans onto the IEP. SCO will check how to best develop the online tool.

*Action 6: SCO to work with IT to develop the online tool to sharing information on planned activities.*

### 3.6 Training on risk assessment

Stef Bronzwaer summarised the report on training activities on food safety risk assessment. It provides an overview of existing activities, identifies possible gaps or needs, and gives recommendations to EFSA, including:

- To develop a course module on ‘principles of risk assessment in food safety’;
- To explore with the European Commission on how to cooperate on this issue with the Better Training for Safer Food programme; and
- where possible, to share of information on training opportunities by national authorities.

The report will be shared with the AF and the Scientific Committee to discuss further steps.

The group exchanged ideas on how best to share information on training opportunities among national authorities. Information on training, where places are available, could be sent to FPs or placed on the IEP calendar. This would allow people interested in the announced training to contact the relevant FP for further details.

The Finish FP informed about a successful risk assessment training in Helsinki of which presentations and materials are available on-line ([http://www.evira.fi/portal/en/research\\_on\\_animal\\_diseases\\_and\\_food/risk\\_assessment/seminars/](http://www.evira.fi/portal/en/research_on_animal_diseases_and_food/risk_assessment/seminars/)).

### 3.7 Country profiles

Klaus Jürgen Henning from the German FP gave an update on BfR’s “EU Food Safety Almanac”. The first version of the Almanac was published as hard copy and electronically on BfR’s website on 29 October 2009, as well as uploaded onto the IEP. Hard copies were sent to the FPs, who could contact the BfR for further copies. He thanked the FPs for their contributions.

In 2010 it is planned to also develop country profiles for the three candidate countries (Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey). Moreover, existing country profiles will be updated in 2010 to include information such as National Codex Contact Points and authorities for pesticides, veterinary drugs and contaminants. It was agreed that the BfR would circulate an e-mail message with clear instructions on which input is needed from FPs and indicating deadlines.

*Action 7: BfR to circulate an e-mail message to FPs (copying SCO ([scientific.cooperation.@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:scientific.cooperation.@efsa.europa.eu))) regarding the update of the country profiles.*

#### **4 EFSA JOURNAL – NEW WEB AREA**

Carola Sondermann from SCO introduced the new EFSA Journal web area. Launched mid December 2009, it is considered the first milestone of a major project. With the new way of presenting EFSA's scientific work, EFSA focuses on particular scientific audiences and their needs and at the same time aims to meet the requirements of bibliographic databases to which EFSA will apply for indexation. The stepwise promotion of the new web area had already been started by sending letters to EFSA's Management Board, Panel members, the AF, and other networks. Also FPs had already been informed about the launch in January. FPs were called on to provide feedback on the new EFSA Journal web area by sending comments, suggestions and questions to the Editor-in-Chief mailbox: [editor-in-chief.efsjournal@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:editor-in-chief.efsjournal@efsa.europa.eu). In the following discussion, FPs asked whether it would be possible to receive a banner to be placed on the national websites, to link to the EFSA Journal. SCO will forward this request to EFSA's Communications Directorate to take action.

*Action 8: FP to send feedback on the new EFSA Journal web area to the Editor-in-Chief mailbox ([editor-in-chief.efsjournal@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:editor-in-chief.efsjournal@efsa.europa.eu)).*

*Action 9: SCO to inform COM about the FP request to receive a banner, for their national web pages, leading to the EFSA Journal.*

#### **5 PANELS, NETWORKS AND SCIENTIFIC EVENTS AT EFSA – AN OVERVIEW**

Bernhard Berger gave an overview of the Panels, Networks and scientific events at EFSA, where to find the information, and the role of FPs. The presentation set the basis for discussion in break-out groups, where FPs shared their experiences and reflected on possibilities to strengthen cooperating with the AF, the AF Communications Working Group, EFSA networks, EFSA Panels and their Working Groups and scientific events. The main points of the discussion will be summarised by SCO and circulated to FPs. The presentation on how EFSA operates was very much welcomed by FPs. FPs suggested to include further presentations on EFSA's work and its organisation, related to FP tasks, at future FP meetings.

*Action 10: SCO to summarise the main points of discussion at the break-out groups and circulate it to FPs.*

#### **6 SUBJECT(S) RAISED BY FOCAL POINTS**

No subject of particular interest was raised by FPs under agenda item 6.

## **7 RELEVANT ISSUES FROM THE AF MEETING**

Torben Nilsson informed participants on relevant issues from the AF Meeting held in Athens on 25-26 November 2009. The minutes of the meeting in Athens are available on EFSA's website.

## **8 AOB**

### **Changes at UK FSA**

The FP from the UK notified FPs about changes at the FSA, including the publishing of its Strategic Plan and new Science and Evidence Strategy 2010-15. It is described how the FSA will use science and evidence to meet the challenges of delivering safer food and healthier diets. FSA is inviting feedback from other organisations which may be interested in working with them, e.g. on research in the specific areas, or to discuss future partnerships. Both documents will be available on the FSA's website ([www.food.gov.uk/science/researchpolicy/scistrat](http://www.food.gov.uk/science/researchpolicy/scistrat)) and will be uploaded onto the IEP.

### **Sharing scientific information**

FPs were encouraged to further expand the sharing of scientific information, e.g. through requesting specific information/data. They were reminded to ensure that the topics of such requests are within the remit of EFSA and do not contain legislative matters. When sending out such requests, FPs were asked to copy the Scientific Cooperation mailbox ([scientific.cooperation@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:scientific.cooperation@efsa.europa.eu))

### **Future FP Meetings**

The dates and locations of the FP Meetings in 2010 are as follows:

- 8<sup>th</sup> FP meeting: 5-6 May 2010 (Madrid);
- 9<sup>th</sup> FP meeting: 6-7 October 2010 (Budapest).

FPs were reminded not to make any travel arrangements until receiving the formal invitation from EFSA.

## **9 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

The Chair closed the meeting. He thanked again AFSSA and the French FP for hosting the meeting and for their support in organising it. He also thanked the participants for attending the meeting and for their active contribution in the various discussions. He stressed the continued commitment of the SCO Unit in supporting the work of FPs.

## SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	SCO	to include session on FP reporting, including payments, at the FP Meeting in May 2010
Action 2	SCO	to include session on the IEP at the FP Meeting in May 2010
Action 3	SCO	to set up a new IEP Working Group
Action 4	FP	to ask their AF Member to send message to the AF secretariat ( <a href="mailto:afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu">afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu</a> ) requesting the allocation of access rights for FP to access the AF Extranet, if applicable
Action 5	SCO	to circulate the link for subscription to the EFSA Highlights newsletter to receive an e-mail notification on the launch of calls for procurements
Action 6	SCO	SCO to work with IT to develop the online tool to sharing information on planned activities
Action 7	BfR	to circulate an e-mail message to FPs (copying SCO ( <a href="mailto:scientific.cooperation.@efsa.europa.eu">scientific.cooperation.@efsa.europa.eu</a> )) regarding the update of the country profiles
Action 8	FPS	to send feedback on the new EFSA Journal web area to the Editor-in-Chief mailbox ( <a href="mailto:editor-in-chief.efsjournal@efsa.europa.eu">editor-in-chief.efsjournal@efsa.europa.eu</a> )
Action 9	SCO	to inform COM about the FP request to receive a banner, for their national web pages, leading to the EFSA Journal
Action 10	SCO	to summarise the main points of discussion at the break-out groups and circulate it to FPs