

**Minutes**  
**TENTH MEETING BETWEEN FOCAL POINTS AND EFSA**  
**PARMA (ITALY), 2-3 FEBRUARY 2011**

**Participants**

Chair: Bernhard Berger

Austria	<i>Johann Steinwider</i>	Italy	<i>Luca Busani</i>
Belgium	<i>Charles Denonne</i>	Latvia	<i>Dace Vilcāne</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Teri Vrabcheva</i>	Lithuania	<i>Zenonas Stanevičius</i>
Cyprus	<i>Giorgos Stavroulakis</i>	Luxembourg	<i>Nathalie Welschbillig</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Petr Beneš</i>	Malta	<i>Ingrid Busuttil</i>
Denmark	<i>Arne Büchert</i>	Netherlands	<i>Hub Noteborn</i>
Estonia	<i>Piret Priisalu</i>	Norway	<i>Marie Louise Wiborg</i>
Finland	<i>Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen</i>	Poland	<i>Iwona Wiśniewska</i>
France	<i>Philippe Prigent</i>	Portugal	<i>Jorge Proença Reis</i>
Germany	<i>Brigitte Graf</i>	Slovakia	<i>Marica Theiszová</i>
Greece	<i>Stamatina Louka</i>	Slovenia	<i>Blaža Nahtigal</i>
Hungary	<i>Judit Sali</i>	Spain	<i>Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry</i>
Iceland	<i>Ástfríður Sigurðardóttir</i>	Sweden	<i>Irene Mattisson</i>
Ireland	<i>Anne-Marie Boland</i>	United Kingdom	<i>Alisdair Wotherspoon</i>

**Observers and Invitees**

Switzerland	<i>Judith Beck</i>
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## Staff of the European Food Safety Authority

<i>Bernhard Berger</i>	<i>Riitta Maijala<sup>1</sup></i>
<i>Stef Bronzwaer<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Jeff Moon<sup>1</sup></i>
<i>Christoph Buller<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Saadia Noorani<sup>1</sup></i>
<i>David Carlander<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Ilias Papatryfon<sup>1</sup></i>
<i>Hubert Deluyker<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Carola Sondermann</i>
<i>Kerstin Gross-Helmert</i>	<i>Andras Szoradi<sup>1</sup></i>

## 1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Bernhard Berger from EFSA's Scientific Cooperation Unit (SCO) and Chair of the meeting opened the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting between Focal Points (FPs) and EFSA. He expressed his appreciation that representatives from 28 Member States (MS)<sup>2</sup> and Switzerland participated in this meeting. The EU Candidate Countries could not attend this meeting, due to budget unavailability. Apologies were received from Romania. Bernhard Berger highlighted that Iceland had nominated its Focal Point at the end of last year and welcomed the representative, Ástfríður Sigurðardóttir, as well as Charles Denonne (Belgium), Marie Louise Wiborg (Norway), and Irene Mattisson (Sweden) who attended a FP Meeting for the first time.

## 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The agenda was adopted after inclusion of four items under "Subjects Raised by FPs", namely: i) questions on the consolidation of the Article 36 list; ii) definition of food quality; iii) UK's Food Safety Authority's (FSA's) Forward Evidence Plan and changes at the FSA; and iv) organisational changes at the Swedish National Food Administration; and five items under "Any Other Business" (AOB), namely: i) EFSA Journal; ii) scientific colloquia; iii) expert satisfaction survey; iv) working group on training activities on principles and methods of risk assessment in food safety; vi) requests for information; and v) FP meetings in 2011.

The draft minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting were sent to FPs for comments on 29 November 2010. The minutes were approved without comments from participants and will shortly be placed on EFSA's website.

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of interest (ADoI) filled in by the participants invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the beginning of this meeting.

<sup>1</sup> Attended part of the meeting

<sup>2</sup> Since the EEA Joint Committee Decision No 134/2007 entered into force, Iceland and Norway are considered as MS by EFSA.

FPs were reminded to immediately update their ADoIs whenever applicable. Participants were asked to fill in the Declaration of Commitment. In addition, new participants were also requested to fill in the Declaration of Confidentiality.

### 3 MEDIUM-TERM PLANNING

Hubert Deluyker, Director of EFSA's Scientific Cooperation and Assistance Directorate, presented the report on medium-term planning<sup>3</sup>, which summarises past scientific cooperation activities and achievements of EFSA and MS and gives an overview of planned activities and challenges of scientific cooperation in the medium-term future. An Excel table is annexed to the report, listing foreseen scientific cooperation activities in more detail. Hubert Deluyker specified the need for scientific cooperation between MS and EFSA and gave examples of tools developed to support this cooperation, including the Expert Database (EDB), the grants and procurement schemes, the Information Exchange Platform (IEP), data collection schemes, and EFSA scientific networks.

The medium-term planning is a key tool for EFSA, to be further developed internally and agreed with the Commission. The discussion on medium-term planning in the Advisory Forum (AF) can be taken back by MS and considered nationally to help discussions later (bilateral or wider) on areas where MS could be involved. FPs were asked to:

- Draw attention of their national networks to the report; and
- Discuss with their AF member how the FP can support the AF in medium-term planning.

*Action 1: FPs to disseminate the "Technical Report of EFSA on Scientific Cooperation between EFSA and Member States: taking stock and looking ahead" to their networks.*

*Action 2: FPs to discuss with their AF Members how FPs can support them with regard to the medium-term planning.*

### 4 RENEWAL OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND PANELS

Riitta Maijala, Director of EFSA's Risk Assessment Directorate, informed FPs about the upcoming renewal of EFSA's Scientific Committee and eight Panels. The new term will start in summer 2012. The experts, their expertise, as well as managerial and communication skills are crucial for high quality risk assessment and therefore highly important for food safety in Europe. Riitta Maijala explained the profiles of experts which EFSA is looking for; the advantages of the work with EFSA for experts and employing organisations; the selection procedure; as well as the timeline.

FPs had been very helpful during the last renewal procedure three years ago and EFSA is again counting on the FP support in 2011. They can disseminate information on the renewal in a number of ways, including by:

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<sup>3</sup>Technical Report of EFSA on Scientific Cooperation between EFSA and Member States: taking stock and looking ahead: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/97e.htm>

- Giving presentations at scientific conferences;
- Organising national FP events, involving, e.g. current Panel members;
- Distributing EFSA's promotion materials, e.g. postcards and holders, posters;
- Publishing information via FP web pages, national scientific journals, and newsletters; and
- Personally contacting and encouraging national experts to apply.

*Action 3: EFSA's Communications Department to send FPs the promotion materials for the renewal of the Scientific Committee and Panels.*

## 5 COMMUNICATIONS

Christoph Buller from EFSA's Public Information & Events Unit (PI&E) addressed four areas:

1. Overview of the 2010 Eurobarometer (EB) on food related risks, including the research objectives, methodology and key findings: While the results show how the public perceives risks, the study was not set out to analyse the reasons for the perception. The Eurobarometer report, summary and fact sheets have been published on EFSA's website<sup>4</sup>. The raw data is also available for free on the Eurobarometer website. It is planned to repeat the Eurobarometer study in five years, pending financial resources.
2. EFSA's risk assessment video: it explains EFSA's work in giving independent advice on food and feed safety. FPs welcomed the video. Using melamine as an example to describe the risk assessment process in EFSA was discussed. The video is available on EFSA's website in English<sup>5</sup> and a DVD will be sent to FPs. In addition, the Advisory Forum Communication Working Group (AFCWG) Members will receive a CD with the source files, allowing the video to be translated and dubbed.
3. Correct use of the EFSA logo: It was stressed that EFSA needs to approve the use of its logo, whenever utilised in print and at events. The guidelines will again be made available to FPs.
4. Digital asset management tool: EFSA presented this tool to AFCWG members. This tool includes pictures which can be shared with others free of charge. MS can send photos to EFSA. Thus, FPs were asked to get in touch with their AFCWG members to check if pictures can be made available.

*Action 4: PI&E Unit of EFSA to send FPs the DVD with EFSA's risk assessment video.*

*Action 5: PI&E Unit of EFSA to make available the guidelines for the use of the EFSA logo by external parties or at events.*

*Action 6: FPs to get in touch with their AFCWG members to check if pictures, free of copyright restrictions, can be made available for EFSA's digital asset management tool.*

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/riskcommunication/riskperception.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/aboutefsa.htm>

## 6 NANOTECHNOLOGY – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

David Carlander from EFSA's Scientific Committee Secretariat informed FPs about the ongoing public consultation of the draft guidance document on nanotechnology<sup>66</sup>. He gave some background information on the risk assessment of nano applications, the issues to consider and the main uncertainties and challenges. FPs were invited to forward the information on the public consultation to experts in their countries. Comments are welcome by 25 February 2011 using the online submission form<sup>7</sup>.

## 7 RELEVANT ISSUES FROM THE AF MEETING

Jeff Moon from the Advisory Forum Secretariat informed participants on relevant issues from the AF Meeting held in Brussels on 25-26 November 2010. The minutes of the meeting in Brussels will be available on EFSA's website soon.

In the following discussion a question was raised in relation to the methodology for the prioritisation of animal diseases. If possible, the presentation given at the AF meeting will be made available to FPs.

*Action 7: SC&AF / SCO to make presentation on the methodology for the prioritisation of animal diseases available to FPs, if possible.*

## 8 FOCAL POINT ACTIVITIES

### 8.1 FOCAL POINT ACTIVITIES 2011

Kerstin Gross-Helmert from SCO congratulated FPs for their achievements in 2010 and thanked them for their continued support. She gave a summary of the report of FP activities in 2010, which is based on the national FP reports. The report was shared with FPs before the meeting. The FP activities related to the five priority areas of 2010 can be summarised as follows:

- i. Exchange scientific information by uploading information on the IEP;
- ii. Support Article 36 activities;
- iii. Promote EFSA's Expert Database;
- iv. Extend networks in cooperation with the AFCWG members to disseminate information and developing national FP web pages;
- v. Organise national scientific FP events.

The report will be shared with the AF.

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<sup>66</sup> Draft Guidance on Risk Assessment Concerning Potential Risk Arising from Applications of Nanoscience and Nanotechnologies to Food and Feed:

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/consultations/call/scaf110114.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/consultations/call/scaf110114.htm>

As in the previous years, FPs will continue to support their AF member also in 2011. FPs agreed with the six priority areas suggested in the report, which are, in summary to:

- i. Support medium-term planning at MS-level;
- ii. Support the renewal of EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels;
- iii. Support consolidation of the Article 36 list;
- iv. Stimulate Article 36 organisations to apply for Article 36 calls and foster the networking between Article 36 organisations;
- v. Increase outreach in MS;
- vi. Continue their work to:
  - share information on risk assessment via the IEP
  - promote the Expert Database
  - use Focal Point web pages and national events to disseminate information

## 8.2 NATIONAL FOCAL POINT EVENTS

In 2010, 21 FPs indicated in their national FP Reports that they had organised more than 50 FP events in total. At the current meeting, eight countries gave a brief overview of the events they had organised in 2010, presenting a range of different approaches. The presentations and following discussion were much welcomed by FPs, as they emphasised that FPs had similar challenges, despite the different types of meetings, and FPs saw the achievements of other FPs and could discuss ideas for future meetings. In order to further share experiences amongst each others, FPs agreed to create a folder on Extranet where information and presentations of FP events can be uploaded.

In summary, despite the amount of work involved, the organisers strongly encouraged other FPs to organise such meetings, particularly as:

- Feedback of the audience showed that there was a high interest in such events;
- Meeting other participants in person improves personal contact and is important for good cooperation, e.g. with national networks, neighbouring countries and EFSA; and
- It offers an opportunity to exchange information and raise the level of knowledge and awareness at national level.

Another recommendation of meeting organisers was to involve EFSA staff, other FPs and Panel members in the events. In past meetings, their participation was much appreciated by the organisers as well as the audience, as it substantially supported the meetings, e.g. by giving more clarity on how EFSA works and increasing the appreciation of each others' work. Similarly, inviting experienced Article 36 organisations was very helpful. The SCO Unit will continue to offer its support to FPs, e.g. by participating or finding potential speakers for the events.

*Action 8: SCO to create a folder on Extranet to share information on national Focal Point events.*

### 8.3 INFORMATION EXCHANGE PLATFORM

Saadia Noorani from SCO presented the evaluation of the IEP in 2010. Data used in the evaluation was derived from site statistics of the IEP and from a questionnaire which was sent to all users of the IEP in June 2010. A report on the results of the evaluation had been drafted in collaboration with the IEP Working Group and was distributed to FPs before the meeting. The discussion focussed mainly on the recommendations in the report, including:

- *Broadening the access to the IEP:* currently EFSA staff, FPs, AF members, Panel experts, network members and persons nominated by AF members have access to the IEP. It was highlighted that only non-confidential documents are uploaded onto the IEP and that broadened access would provide read-only rights. FPs felt that the decision of broadening access to the IEP was strategic and should therefore be taken by the AF.
- *Carrying out promotion activities to increase awareness of the IEP:* to increase the use of the site and possibility to share documents.
- *Distributing the monthly reports:* a good way of informing people about the documents on the IEP. Dissemination of the report should be broadened, but the decision should be taken by the AF.
- *Technically improving the site:* the Working Group will be involved in reflecting on the best ways of technically improving the IEP.

The FPs endorsed the recommendations of the report, which will be passed to the AF.

## 9 SUBJECT(S) RAISED BY FOCAL POINTS

### Definition of food quality

Arne Büchert, the Danish FP, thanked the other FPs for their help in finding a good definition of “food quality”. Quality is a very broad term with a range of definitions at different levels. No single definition on food quality is available. Food quality is a dynamic concept that has and will change over time.

### FSA’s Forward Evidence Plan

Alisdair Wotherspoon from the UK FP informed FPs that the FSA had just published its Forward Evidence Plan<sup>8</sup>. It outlines priority activities planned for the coming year, including potential areas for research funding and workshops. The first calls for research arising from this plan are expected to be published in the next few weeks. FPs were asked to disseminate the document to inform people what is planned and to encourage feedback to be sent to the FSA by 16 February 2011, if possible, to [CST@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CST@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk).

*Action 9: SCO to send message with the FSA’s Forward Evidence Plan to FPs.*

*Action 10: UK FP to upload the FSA’s Forward Evidence Plan onto the IEP.*

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2011/feb/evidenceplan2011>

## Changes at the FSA

Alisdair Wotherspoon gave a brief overview of the recent changes that occurred at the FSA. Its Strategic Plan will be reviewed accordingly. The new version is expected to be available by the end of March and it will be uploaded onto the IEP.

*Action 11: UK FP to upload the FSA's Strategic Plan onto the IEP.*

## Article 36 List

Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry from the Spanish FP raised the harmonisation and new designations concerning the Article 36 list. It was clarified that for new designations for the list, print-outs of the questionnaires still need to be submitted to EFSA by the Permanent Representation. For changes to existing organisations on the list, EFSA will inform the organisation and FP, should the formal transmission of the new questionnaire be necessary. Article 36 items will again be included on the agenda of the next FP Meeting in May.

## Changes at the Swedish National Food Administration (NFA)

Irene Mattisson from the Swedish FP informed participants of the changes at the NFA. A new Department on risk benefit assessment was created, which is where the FP contact person is now located. She asked for information on risk benefit assessment, particularly regarding methods and experiences.

*Action 12: FPs to contact Irene Mattisson ([efsa.focalpoint@slv.se](mailto:efsa.focalpoint@slv.se)) to provide information on risk benefit assessments.*

## 10 AOB

### EFSA Journal

Carola Sondermann from SCO informed participants that the EFSA website has been restructured. A new publication section has been created, which hosts the EFSA Journal. It is now a unique point of access for EFSA's scientific outputs. The new publications section also hosts supporting publications and corporate publications. FPs were encouraged to visit the new section. FPs were also informed that the EFSA Journal is now indexed in several bibliographic databases (CABI, FSTA and soon SciFinder), making EFSA's output more searchable and increasing EFSA's scientific visibility.

### Scientific Colloquia

Stef Bronzwaer from SCO informed FPs that the following items have been published on EFSA's website:

- Summary report of the Colloquium on Food Classification "Unambiguous ambiguity – the challenge of describing food" on 23-24 June 2010 in Parma<sup>9</sup>, in booklet form;

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/colloquiafoodclassification.htm>

- Summary report and presentations of the Colloquium on Emerging Risks in Food “From Identification to Communication” on 12 -13 October 2010 in Parma<sup>10</sup>; and
- Pre-announcement of the 16<sup>th</sup> Colloquium on Emerging Issues in Plant Health on 9 - 10 June 2011 in Parma<sup>11</sup>.

## 2011 EFSA Scientific Expert Satisfaction Survey

Andras Szoradi from SCO informed FPs about the upcoming EFSA Scientific Expert Satisfaction Survey, which will be launched in the coming week. A similar survey has been conducted back in 2008 and the current one is designed to allow comparison of results with those of the previous survey. The 2011 survey is implemented by an external service provider, while the internal management and coordination of the survey is conducted by SCO.

## Requests for information

EFSA’s CONTAM Unit is asking, particularly new MS that joined the EU in 2004 or afterwards, whether they have national legislation in force for Fusarium toxins (T-2 toxin, HT-2 toxin, Nivalenol, Diacetoxyscirpenol, Moniliformin, Enniatins, Beauvericin) in food and/or feed. FPs were asked to contact the CONTAM Unit directly<sup>12</sup>.

The EC Joint Research Centre (JRC), Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (IRMM), in the capacity as contractor from EFSA, had sent FPs a request for contact details of institutions dealing with official controls and monitoring (survey) on food and feed. Upon hearing that this request had been sent directly to FPs, SCO informed the JCR about the EU Food Safety Almanac on the BfR website. It was highlighted that FPs could send further information, if they wish.

Based on this experience, the Chair reiterated the plea to copy the scientific cooperation mailbox ([scientific.cooperation@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:scientific.cooperation@efsa.europa.eu)) when replying to requests for information.

*Action 13: FPs to send information on national legislation on Fusarium toxins to Mari Eskola from EFSA’s CONTAM Unit ([mari.eskola@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:mari.eskola@efsa.europa.eu)).*

## Future FP Meetings

For 2011, the preliminary dates are as follows:

- 11<sup>th</sup> FP meeting: 11-12 May 2011, Copenhagen, Denmark;
- 12<sup>th</sup> FP meeting: 19-20 October 2011, Gdansk, Poland;

FPs were reminded not to make any travel arrangements until receiving the formal invitation from EFSA. FPs were also reminded that they should have an approved ADoI before registering for a meeting.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/colloque101012.htm>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/colloque110609.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Mari Eskola ([mari.eskola@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:mari.eskola@efsa.europa.eu))

## 11 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting. He 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	FPS	<i>to disseminate the “Technical Report of EFSA on Scientific Cooperation between EFSA and Member States: taking stock and looking ahead” to their networks.</i>
Action 2	FPS	<i>to discuss with their AF Members how FPS can support them with regard to the medium-term planning.</i>
Action 3	EFSA’s Communications Department	<i>to send FPS the promotion materials for the renewal of the Scientific Committee and Panels.</i>
Action 4	EFSA’s PI&E Unit	<i>to send FPS the DVD with EFSA’s risk assessment video.</i>
Action 5	EFSA’s PI&E Unit	<i>to make available the guidelines for the use of the EFSA logo by external parties or at events.</i>
Action 6	FPS	<i>to get in touch with their AFCWG members to check if pictures, free of copyright restrictions, can be made available for EFSA’s digital asset management tool.</i>
Action 7	SC&AF and SCO	<i>to make presentation on the methodology for the prioritisation of animal diseases available to FPS, if possible.</i>
Action 8	SCO	<i>to create a folder on Extranet to share information on national Focal Point events.</i>
Action 9	SCO	<i>to send message with the FSA’s Forward Evidence Plan to FPS.</i>
Action 10	UK FP	<i>to upload the FSA’s Forward Evidence Plan onto the IEP.</i>
Action 11	UK FP	<i>to upload the FSA’s Strategic Plan onto the IEP.</i>
Action 12	FPS	<i>to contact Irene Mattisson (<a href="mailto:efsa.focalpoint@slv.se">efsa.focalpoint@slv.se</a>) to provide information on risk benefit assessments.</i>
Action 13	FPS	<i>to send information on national legislation on Fusarium toxins to Mari Eskola from EFSA’s CONTAM Unit (<a href="mailto:mari.eskola@efsa.europa.eu">mari.eskola@efsa.europa.eu</a>).</i>