
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY FORUM UNIT

Parma, 7 July 2008

EFSA/SGC/M/2008/156/PUB/FIN

Minutes**4TH MEETING OF THE STEERING GROUP ON COOPERATION
COPENHAGEN (DENMARK), 26 MAY 2008**

Chair: *Hubert Deluyker*, Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance, European Food Safety Authority.

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM (OR THEIR SUBSTITUTES)

Austria	<i>Roland Grossgut</i>
Belgium	<i>Charles Crémer</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Stefka Petrova</i>
Denmark	<i>Arne Büchert and Henrik Wegener</i>
Germany	<i>Andreas Hensel</i>
Ireland	<i>Alan Reilly</i>
Italy	<i>Agostino Macrì</i>
Latvia	<i>Dace Šantare</i>
Lithuania	<i>Ingrida Miliute</i>
Netherlands	<i>Evert Schouten</i>
Romania	<i>Alecsandra Dida Cozachievi</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>Zuzana Bírošová</i>
Norway	<i>Danica Grahek-Ogden</i>
European Commission	<i>Jeannie Vergnettes</i>

MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

SC Chair	<i>Vittorio Silano</i>
SC Vice-Chair	<i>Ada Knaap</i>

EFSA STAFF

<i>Bernhard Berger</i>
<i>Djien Liem</i>
<i>Elena Marani</i>
<i>Torben Nilsson</i>

1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

The host of the meeting, Henrik Wegener, welcomed the participants and opened the meeting. The Chair of the meeting, Hubert Deluyker, also welcomed the participants.

2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted without additional agenda items.

3 ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 3RD SGC MEETING AND FOLLOW UP STATUS

The minutes of the 3rd SGC meeting were adopted. The SGC agreed to adopt the minutes of future SGC meetings by written procedure.

4 UPDATE ON THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON FOSTERING HARMONISED RISK ASSESSMENT APPROACHES AND DISCUSSION OF THE FURTHER WORK

Roland Grossgut, Chair of the ESCO WG on fostering harmonised risk assessment approaches, updated the SGC on the progress of this ESCO WG. In particular, a draft questionnaire on risk assessments at Member State level was presented and discussed with an aim to further clarify and improve it before distribution to the Member States through their focal points. A number of suggestions on the questionnaire were made and the SGC agreed that it should focus on comprehensive risk assessment approaches only, *i.e.* not the rapid risk assessment advice often requested by risks managers in more urgent cases. Vittoria Silano briefed the SGC on the current work of the SC *ad hoc* WG on transparency, since its work is related with some of the same procedural aspects that are covered by the questionnaire. Some SGC members expressed concern over the slow progress of the work of the ESCO WG, while other SGC members emphasised that the ESCO WG was actually working in accordance with its terms of reference. The Chair concluded that the timelines should be clarified.

5 UPDATE ON THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF BOTANICALS AND BOTANICAL PREPARATIONS

Djien Liem informed the SGC that the SC has adopted the guidance document on botanicals and that the ESCO WG on safety assessment of botanicals and botanical preparations has started working in two sub-working groups focusing

on testing the proposed approach for the safety assessment of botanicals and botanical preparation on selected cases and updating the compendia, respectively.

The SC also discussed the current legislative developments regarding botanicals, food supplements and health claims. The botanicals compendia do not represent a negative list and EFSA will stay out of regulatory aspects, since its role is to produce the scientific basis for risk assessment. The situation is complicated by the fact that some products are registered as medical products and since the document that should have been prepared by the European Commission in July 2007 is delayed. The European Commission informed that the document is foreseen before the end of 2008. Germany suggested establishing a database and defining a systematic approach for Member States to feed into the database. The Chair concluded that there is a need to discuss the next steps at the SGC meeting in October 2008 and mentioned that establishing a database could possibly be considered as an article 36 project.

6 UPDATE ON THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON RISKS AND BENEFITS OF FORTIFICATION OF FOODS WITH FOLIC ACID

Alan Reilly, Chair of the ESCO WG on risks and benefits of fortification of foods with folic acid, informed the SGC that the work of this ESCO WG is progressing well and is expected to be completed by mid-2009 after a folic acid expert conference in Sweden in early 2009. He also said that a possible follow up on the work of this ESCO WG could be a request to EFSA for an opinion on the risks and benefits of fortification of foods with folic acid.

7 UPDATE ON THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON HORIZON SCANNING TO IDENTIFY EMERGING FOOD SAFETY RISKS

Djien Liem updated the SGC on the ESCO WG on emerging food safety risks and its further work in two sub-working groups focusing on indicators, data collection and analysis and existing networks and gaps, respectively. The SGC agreed on the importance of a broad cooperation in this field.

8 UPDATE AND FUTURE OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON HARMONISATION OF CHEMICAL OCCURRENCE DATA COLLECTION IN FOOD AND FEED

Hubert Deluyker informed that the first meeting would take place in June 2008 and that an update would be provided at the next SGC meeting in October 2008.

9 UPDATE AND FUTURE OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON FOOD CONSUMPTION DATA COLLECTION

Hubert Deluyker emphasised that the expert group on food consumption data collection existed prior to the ESCO concept and would continue to exist as a network beyond its present mandate. The SGC discussed the challenges in harmonising food consumption data sets. Bulgaria suggested that the database

should also focus on children and infants. Hubert Deluyker confirmed that an article 36 call had just been launched for that purpose.

10 CONCLUSION OF THE ESCO WORKING GROUP ON SETTING-UP A DATA BASE OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS IN EUROPE TO ASSIST EFSA

Bernhard Berger updated the SGC on the setting up a data base of scientific experts in Europe to assist EFSA. The ESCO WG had accomplished its work and fulfilled its terms of reference. Hence, the SGC agreed to close this ESCO WG. The database would be launched in June 2008. The SGC members also commented on the database and the selection of experts. The Chair referred to the discussions in the AF and the SC that had already been consulted on the related documents.

11 DISCUSSION OF NEW PROJECT IDEAS AND OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY EFSA AND THE SGC MEMBERS

The SGC agreed to discuss new project ideas at its next meeting in October 2008. At that time the EFSA opinion on nanotechnology would be available, so that there would be a better possibility to consider the usefulness of establishing an ESCO WG on nanotechnology. Vittorio Silano suggested a structured approach based on the SC work programme for the identification of ESCO ideas. Also the Member States should be invited to provide ideas. It was agreed that the SC&AF secretariat would prepare a list of possible subjects.

Germany mentioned the need to discuss further on the responsiveness of EFSA in a food safety crisis situation. The Chair referred this discussion to the AF, since it was related with the recent crisis exercise of the AF.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other issues were raised.

13 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Hubert Deluyker thanked the hosts and closed the meeting.