

Joint Statement

of EFSA and the members of EFSA's Advisory Forum

on the occasion of the first Risk Assessment Research
Assembly
in Utrecht, the Netherlands, February 2018

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was created to provide independent scientific advice to the risk managers and to inspire confidence in the decision-making process based on sound science.

As a networking organisation, EFSA works closely together with many partners, in particular with its Advisory Forum representatives of the national food safety authorities of the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway, as well as from Switzerland and the EU Candidate Countries.

The partners and EFSA cooperate on food safety risk assessment issues (including food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, plant health, nutrition and sector-specific environmental aspects) and form a risk assessment community in support of the **European Research Area**.

EFSA's 2020 Strategy is based on collaboration with its strategic partners, including the identification of the common research needs. National authorities and EFSA together have developed an EU Risk Assessment Agenda (EURAA), identifying common priorities which can be addressed through joint projects.

In line with our commitment to supporting scientific cooperation, in 2016 Advisory Forum members signed a '[Declaration of Commitment](#)' in Bratislava.

Recent discussions and statements (incl. the "[Lamy report](#)", [Council Conclusions COMPET 851](#), [background paper to the FOOD2030 High Level Conference](#), and the [Tallinn call for Action 2017](#)) call to actively drive the development of research and innovation in the EU, align better EU/national R&I investments and facilitate collaborative approaches, also globally with reference to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. There is a shared responsibility of policy makers, researchers, businesses and others in ensuring research is a real priority in EU policy making and in increasing trust in research.

Numerous recent issues around food integrity and authenticity call to invest more in the public control, assessment and preparedness functions to ensure the safety of the food system and safeguard consumer confidence in the food supply.

The joint paper of EFSA and other EU agencies that provide scientific advice (EU-ANSA) provides an overview of their engagement in the research knowledge cycle. The paper makes concrete suggestions on how to support the EU research agenda, by EU funders drawing more systematically on the knowledge and expertise of the Agencies, to identify common research and development needs. Indeed, there are many mutual benefits for structured interaction between funders, EU agencies and national partners, including:

- More efficient and sustainable use of the expertise and infrastructure ensuring a greater return of investment thereby avoiding fragmentation;
- Joined up thinking to generate more impactful research outputs from calls for proposals at national and European level;
- Building broader and deeper capacity and capability within Europe;
- Enhancement of networks and geographical balance, through the use of research clusters with other EU agencies and international partners;
- Enhancement of synergies between MS and EU Research programmes.

In view of the above, EFSA and its Advisory Forum wish to declare their commitment to supporting the European Research Area by:

- Stimulating new partnerships in food safety risk assessment
- Supporting the formation of research consortia, for example through the network of EFSA national Focal Points
- Informing the setting of research agendas based on the knowledge and research gaps identified in risk assessments
- Offering the regulatory science context that assesses the latest scientific findings to inform policy decisions
- Maintaining operational scientific networks with representatives from all Member States that identify knowledge gaps and establish partnerships
- Being active partners in international cooperation
- Training and enabling the mobility of researchers
- Contributing to Open Data portals and improving data interoperability, advancing the application of machine learning and artificial intelligence

Therefore the Advisory Forum welcomes the Risk Assessment Research Assembly (RARA) which brings together the wider scientific community, regulatory scientists and policy makers, to promote dialogue; exchange of ideas and approaches, in support of the European Research Area and calling for more public funding for food safety research that can be used to underpin risk assessments and identify emerging risks.

The Advisory Forum invites the Commission services and national research policy makers and funding programmes to use the outcomes of the RARA to inform their future research agenda setting activities.

Furthermore, EFSA and the Advisory Forum call for more public investment in food safety research, including the formation of strategic partnerships in the area of food safety, such as European Joint Programmes, European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs), and other initiatives.

**Made at the 67th meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum,
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