

Final Minutes

27th MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINT NETWORK ZAGREB (Hotel Sheraton), 11TH-12TH MAY 2016

Chair: Jeff Moon

Members

Austria	<i>Johann Steinwider</i>
Belgium	<i>Laurence Ballieux</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Snezhana Todorova</i>
Croatia	<i>Sanja Miloš</i>
Croatia	<i>Andrea Gross-Bošković</i>
Croatia	<i>Vlatka Buzjak Služek</i>
Croatia	<i>Ivona Babić</i>
Cyprus	<i>Maro Christodoulidou</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Petr Beneš</i>
Denmark	<i>Birgitte Helwigh</i>
Estonia	<i>Piret Priisalu</i>
Finland	<i>Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen</i>
France	<i>Adrienne Pittman</i>
Germany	<i>Nicole Gollnick</i>
Greece	<i>Gorgias Garofalakis</i>
Hungary	<i>Judith Sali</i>
Iceland	<i>Àstfríður Sigurðardóttir</i>
Ireland	<i>Edel Smith</i>
Italy	<i>Luca Busani</i>
Latvia	<i>Elina Ciekure</i>
Lithuania	<i>Snieguole Scepdonaviciene</i>
Malta	<i>Ingrid Borg</i>
Netherlands	<i>Jacqueline Castenmiller</i>
Norway	<i>Gisle Solstad</i>
Poland	<i>Iwona Wisniewska</i>
Portugal	<i>Filipa Melo de Vasconcelos</i>
Romania	<i>Dida Cozachievici</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>Milo Bystrický</i>
Slovenia	<i>Blaža Nahtigal</i>

Spain	<i>Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry</i>
Sweden	<i>Karin Nyberg</i>
United Kingdom	<i>Tom Hollands</i>
United Kingdom	<i>Giorgia Albieri</i>

Observers

Albania	<i>Shpresa Ohri</i>
FYR of Macedonia	<i>Dušica Santa</i>
Montenegro	<i>Drago Marojevic</i>
Switzerland	<i>Barbara Engeli</i>
Turkey	<i>Muzaffer Nurseren Budak</i>

FP Secretariat

<i>Sérgio Potier Rodeia</i>	<i>Julia Finger</i>
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Apologies: Luxembourg, Serbia.

1. OPENING OF MEETING

Jeff Moon from EFSA's Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation Unit (AFSCO) and Chair of the meeting opened the 27th meeting of the Focal Point (FP) network, welcomed the participants and thanked the hosting country Croatia. The Chair welcomed FP participants from Croatia as hosts of the meeting and Milo Bystrický, from the Slovak Republic, attending a FP meeting for the first time.

The Chair informed that the minutes of the 26th FP meeting, which took place on 10th - 11th February in Parma were published on EFSA's website on 26th March 2016. The agenda for the current meeting was adopted by the participants without further issues being raised. Finally oral Declarations of Interest (ODoI) were asked at the beginning of the meeting and no additional interest was declared.

2. WELCOME BY CROATIAN REPRESENTATIVES

The Chair welcomed Ivona Babić, Head of Department for General Principles of Food Safety of the Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate of the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture. Ivona welcomed FPs to the meeting and expressed the honour of Croatia to host the meeting. She underlined the importance of FP meetings in the context of strengthening risk assessment and cooperation in food safety at EU level in order to

maintain and increase a high level of consumer protection and food safety across Europe.

3. ANNUAL ZOONOSES REPORT IN CROATIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Chair welcomed Andrea Gross-Bošković, Director of the Croatian Food Safety Agency and EFSA Advisory Forum (AF) member for Croatia, to the meeting. Andrea gave an overview of the comparison of the reporting systems for human and animal diseases leading to the conclusion that a strong cooperation between the veterinary and human health sectors is beneficial for the prevention of zoonoses. The analysis of data on human zoonotic diseases transmitted through food enables the improvement of control programs and reduces the transmission of illnesses, which in the long term lowers costs of animal production and healthcare and increases the production of safer food.

Upon question from the Chair, Andrea confirmed having an information system for the public regarding *Campylobacter spp.*, which is the most reported zoonoses in Croatia. Andrea also confirmed on question from Italy, having compared the prevalence of *Salmonella spp.* in humans and animals, a task concluded by a working group within the Institute of Public Health.

4. STRATEGIC ISSUES

4.1 Feedback from the last Advisory Forum meeting

The Chair provided feedback from the 59th AF meeting, which took place on 8th and 9th of March in Parma on the most relevant topics discussed. A dedicated session was held on improvement of data quality (more information under Agenda item 8). With regards to the EU Risk Assessment Agenda (EU RAA), the respective AF Discussion Group is considering the next steps on its implementation and will soon share a draft document with the AF suggesting the creation of clusters of Member States (MS) to work on priority topics, including a wider engagement of EU agencies and international organisations. The regular sharing of information on main forthcoming risk assessment (RA) activities experiences good steps forward, with MS discussing on-going activities, possible synergies and as well areas of divergence. Regarding the Customer Feedback exercise and the Fellowship programme, the Chair informed that detailed information was going to be shared with FPs at a later stage in the Agenda. On question from Spain, Jeff explained that, as a first step, the Customer Feedback exercise will be addressed to the main organisations in MS cooperating with EFSA; while a broader approach, including applicants or contact points from industry, will be considered later.

4.2 Advisory Forum Review implementation plan

As an outcome of the AF Review, a detailed implementation plan is being rolled out with revised Operating Rules of Procedures of the AF to be tabled at the AF meeting in June, along with a Declaration of Commitment (replacing the former Declaration of Intent) also to be tabled at the same meeting. The UK asked if in this context the agenda of meetings can be circulated earlier to the AF and in alignment also to FPs. The Chair confirmed that agendas will be sent as early as possible to participants. France added that the new indications on the agenda, labelling items "to be discussed" / "for information" are very useful for meeting preparation and should be kept, with materials "to be discussed" to be circulated ideally first. Germany asked on the objectives regarding national networking with Art.36 organisations and their possible involvement in the agenda setting. The Chair confirmed that AF members can and should bring forward topics raised by Art.36 organisations and other national bodies. Closer cooperation between EFSA and Art.36 organisations is currently being sought via the country visits being carried out by EFSA's Executive Director. In the same context, AF members and FPs are invited to stimulate the agenda setting and propose topics stemming from national events and discussions. Another possibility is to suggest topics for the circle of the four meetings per year, also for FP meetings.

5. SCIENTIFIC NETWORKS

5.1. Current state-of-play

The Chair gave the floor to Julia Finger, who briefed participants on the management of Scientific Networks from EFSA's side. Feedback was provided on a meeting held by AFSCO (as the coordinating Unit) with all EFSA Units dealing with Scientific Networks and taken place on the 29th of February 2016. On this occasion, feedback was provided on the national surveys made among network representatives and presented by FPs at the 26th FP meeting. An issue raised by FPs regarding shuttle services to network meetings was clarified: on those cases where more than one representative of a MS attend a network meeting, only one representative will get reimbursed by EFSA; however both can use the same shuttle to/ from EFSA when coming and/or leaving on the same flight. An update was given regarding training opportunities on advanced aspects of RA, which opened up for the participation of network representatives during 2015 and resumed in 2016. It was clarified that training attendance by external experts follows a hierarchy of priority. This hierarchy has been set up to ensure that those who collaborate directly with EFSA get an early option for attendance. It was finally clarified that, currently, EFSA offers two types of training courses: the so called "Specialized Training Courses on Advanced Aspects of RA", open to the participation of representatives of selected Scientific Networks; and other training courses on RA, open to the participation of representatives of all EFSA Scientific Networks. Invitation e-mails are sent to network representatives and alternates, and also to FPs. For a better overview, the training catalogue can be consulted.

Action Point 1: EFSA to share information with FPs on the hierachal procedure in place for the participation of Scientific Network experts on the EFSA RA training courses - for information only.

Action Point 2: EFSA to share the EFSA training catalogue with FPs.

5.2. Polish representatives in EFSA's Scientific Networks – results of survey

The Chair gave the floor to Iwona Wisniewska to present the conclusions of an internal survey made among representatives from Poland in EFSA's Scientific Networks. The survey was conducted in October 2015 and a survey report was shared with FPs. Iwona underlined the importance of the FP work in coordinating the information regarding the activities of the Scientific Networks at national level, which led to a much better national overview, better information on items discussed in the networks and thus a better opportunity to update network representation. The survey also revealed problems on the understanding of the role of network representatives as country representatives. Given the fact that appointment is made through AF members and not by the Government, there seems to be a lack of formal support to express views on behalf of the country (that might even differ from the views of the network institution). Spain and Greece confirmed this experience. The Chair acknowledged the issue and stressed the importance of empowering further the AF so that their nomination procedures are considered as country representations. The Chair further informed that, next year, an external evaluation of the functioning of EFSA's Scientific Networks will take place. Denmark and Switzerland noted that continuity in representation should not be weighed against the objective to send the right expert to a meeting. Austria added that experts may come from risk management institutions - and therefore take positions of a more political nature; others come from Academia - and therefore express typically scientific views; and some experts come from the national food safety authority - that mainly applies science, and thus combine the scientific and political views. Italy shared the national experience of capturing internally the necessary scientific views and have a governmental expert attending the network meetings to bridge the gap between the scientific and the political level.

5.3. National guideline on cooperation between experts from EFSA's Scientific Networks and Slovak Focal Point

The Chair introduced Milo Bystrický, FP from the Slovak Republic, who presented to participants the national guidelines for the selection of representatives to the Scientific Networks and the cooperation between the nominated experts and the FP. The selection is based on a database of national experts set up in 2007/2008 and now containing 340 experts of different areas. The selection itself takes place in close cooperation of the FP preparing the nomination and the AF (as the competent body to nominate the representative). The guidelines, which have been shared with FPs ahead of the meeting, also outline the cooperation and information flow that occurs between the nominated representatives and the FP.

The Chair noted that there's no model fitting all countries, and that the mechanisms for national networking are defined under a national framework keeping the overall objective of an optimal information flow. He suggested a dedicated discussion on the future of network management at an upcoming FP meeting.

Action Point 3: EFSA to include the discussion on the future of network management in the agenda of an upcoming FP meeting.

6. NEW COLLABORATION PLATFORM

6.1. Introduction

The Chair gave a brief introduction on the new collaboration platform Office 365, which has been identified as new tool for information sharing after the phasing out of EFSA's previous cooperation tools like ScienceNet, IEP and EDB. The main functionalities of Office 365 are the provision of various protected collaboration environments e.g. such file sharing, online calendar, newsfeed, word online, all operating and stored on the "Cloud" and accessible via a link.

6.2. Main forthcoming RA activities

Sérgio Potier Rodeia then provided details on the ongoing pilot for information sharing on main forthcoming RA activities. FPs were invited to test the updating of the Excel table used for this purpose and accessible on Office 365, with feedback to be sent until the end of June. Once concluded, and should views be favourable, the table shall start to be used and updated on Office 365 and no longer via DMS. For the upcoming AF meeting in June, the current DMS version should be used.

Action Point 4: FPs to test the updating of the table on main forthcoming RA activities on Office 365 and provide feedback by end of June.

Action Point 5: in preparation of the June AF meeting, FPs to update the table on main forthcoming RA activities available on DMS by 20th of May 2016.

6.3. Discussion

FPs from Belgium and Spain gave feedback on testing the platform: both confirmed that the platform is easy to handle, and that problems only occurred with error messages due to the fact that the link was only working for a limited period of time. Spain further asked if licenses will be needed and how confidentiality issues will be handled. The Chair explained that for end users (FPs) no licences are required; and only for administrators (EFSA) licenses are needed. Confidentiality is kept through the setting of access rights and upon invitation to access the files/workspaces. Therefore even if information is located on a "Cloud" owned by EFSA, the working environment remains protected.

Antonio Ciccarelli then answered some questions via videoconference: Germany asked if the file could be deleted by mistake and if management settings could be changed by FPs; Antonio replied that none of the activities is possible. Regarding safety issues also raised by Germany, Antonio explained that Office 365 is not an open "Cloud" but a virtual "Cloud" and only selected members of a group can access, read and edit files. A fully protected environment is envisaged in the future and FPs will then be asked to test

it. Italy asked for the compatibility of the tool and the number of licenses to be acquired. Antonio confirmed that the tool is compatible with any computer, device or operating system and that EFSA will acquire enough licenses to ensure that all relevant administrators have access. The UK asked if reverting to previous versions of files is possible and if the link giving access to files can be shared with colleagues. Antonio explained that a formal backup is available to administrators, as there is a constant saving of file versions. Regarding access rights, it is planned to allow multiple users in the future via generic credentials, though this is still not possible at the moment. On question from Romania, Antonio confirmed that access rights and restrictions to communities will stay the same as currently on DMS. Denmark questioned the usefulness of having DMS and Office 365 running in parallel as working platforms, underlining that poor and often malfunction of DMS causes frustration. The Chair explained that with the phasing out of ScienceNet a number of platforms was phased out, which generated the need for a new collaborative platform (since DMS is not intended for such purpose).

Croatia and Norway informed about having installed Office 365 in their institutions with success and strongly endorsed the working environment. In conclusion, if experiences made during the rest of the pilot continue to be positive, Office 365 should be further explored for additional sharing of information.

7. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1. Overview of information collected

The Chair gave the floor to Julia Finger, who introduced the session on funding opportunities across Europe, one of the main pillars of the EU RAA. As action item from the last meeting, FPs provided information on resources/funding opportunities at national, European and international level. This has helped to draw a portfolio of possible funders for each MS at national/European/international level, which will be the base of a "whole life-cycle" funding model, allowing for a more sustainable, transparent and long-term budget for RA activities in the EU. Julia then asked the following FPs to present their findings in order to share their different experiences in collating the data: Portugal, Finland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Croatia, Estonia, Czech Republic, Norway, Italy, Austria, Poland, Latvia, Luxembourg, and Cyprus.

7.2. Focal Point case studies

Two countries gave a presentation on information concerning funding opportunities for risk assessment in their countries: Germany and Greece.

a) Overview of opportunities covering Food Sciences topics offered by Germany:

The Chair gave the floor to Nicole Gollnick, FP from Germany, who presented funding opportunities in Germany. Nicole also gave concrete examples of possible funds and selection criteria for research proposals.

b) Funding opportunities identified by Greece:

The Chair gave the floor to Gorgias Garofalakis, FP from Greece, who presented a slightly different approach on the topic. Gorgias referred to challenges in identifying and building synergies between the EU RAA and national research priorities. He also informed about the set-up of a national Advisory Group to review research topics and propose priorities, to which EFET as the FP organisation has been invited. Gorgias also proposed possible next steps in cooperation and along with any refinement made on the EU RAA from EFSA's side.

7.3. Discussion and way forward

The plenary then engaged in a discussion on the way forward. Spain remarked that the exercise was difficult and the relation to the EU RAA was unclear, thus the usefulness of the activity remains questionable. Denmark agreed, adding that national funding is of no

interest for foreign researchers. Norway suggested a better definition of the activity and its connection to the EU RAA. The Chair acknowledged the difficulty of the exercise, as accessibility of information has boundaries. However, the activity helped to get a comprehensive list of different kinds of funds, and stimulates dialogue at national level for setting priorities. It also helps to get an overview on where funds are possibly available.

Germany remarked that, despite initial scepticism, the exercise has been useful to depict the different funding opportunities at MS level. As next step, it would be important to define how to handle projects that fall under the EUR AA and then define who will work in which group on the basis of the available funding. Austria confirmed that most research goes into innovation and thus it would be important to inform risk managers about the activities to focus on by working together with other MS. Italy added that information could be shared with various stakeholders, not only with governmental institutions.

The Chair thanked FPs for their contributions and concluded that the activity is work in progress. The tables will be presented to the AF and the AFCWG on their meeting in June to discuss the next steps.

8. DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

The Chair gave the floor to Stefano Cappè, from EFSA's Evidence Management Unit, to introduce a draft proposal to pilot the establishment of a strategic partnership with Art.36 organisations to improve data quality for data transmitted to EFSA. The purpose of the proposed project is to strengthen the process for engaging MS in data transmission to EFSA and is directly linked to EFSA's Strategic Objective 2 - "Widen EFSA's evidence base and optimise access to its data". The AF discussed the idea during its last meeting in March including the possible coordinating role of FPs for ensuring the co-ordination of the consortium of data providers at national level. It was then agreed the development of a scoping document, and as well the collection of expressions of interest for MS to pilot the project as of the beginning of 2017. Stefano explained the proposal details and benefits, and highlighted the crucial role of domain-specific responsible persons, the "Data Stewards", for ensuring the quality of the data and the implementation of the harmonisation initiatives. Stefano also clarified that the coordination at country level of the different data stewards involved in the partnership should fall under the general coordination role of the FPs. FPs raised several questions in the subsequent discussion.

Spain questioned the role of FPs in this project, as it would seem easier to collect data directly from the data stewards. In addition, data providers in Spain are mainly Autonomous Communities, with whom cooperation cannot be enforced due to a lack of a legal framework for data collection. Stefano further explained that the role of FPs would be to maintain a country overview on the data collection process on behalf of the AF members and not to deliver data to EFSA; and that all technical tasks would stay with the data stewards and the domain specific organisations. Stefano clarified that the framework contract will leave room to adapt the implementation to the particularities and necessities of each MS. The Italian FP added that data collection has a political side and many FPs agreed that a legal framework, mandating the collection of data in all domains, would be better than relying exclusively on a partnership contract as defined in the proposal. France and other FPs remarked that the agreement will just add another layer to the information flow, placing another institution on the data communication flow while adding to FP tasks. Furthermore, while the financing of data stewards is not yet clear at this point, FPs seem not to have extra funding for their increased workload. Stefano assured that the additional workload of FPs in relation to the partnership agreement is foreseen to be very limited and will be re-assessed after the pilot phase. Stefano remarked that FPs will need to maintain the country overview of the data collection process, while data communication will be performed directly by the data stewards, in line with the current terms of reference. They will be empowered with a coordinating role of the consortium of organisations established at country level. Sérgio

Potier Rodeia added that a review of the current FP agreements and respective tasks is envisaged at the end of the current cycle, and that any new tasks can be added to new FP agreements after this pilot is concluded in 2018. In fact, it is not planned to increase the FP workload but embed the coordination of data collection activities within the context of the current main FP tasks. Denmark remarked that the role of FPs should stay administrative and not concern aspects related with quality of data. It would also be good to discuss the proposal with the data providers, considering also that not all are Art.36 organisations and thus not eligible for a grant agreement. France agreed, adding that some Ministries will oppose to a formal inclusion in the Art.36 list just to this end.

Stefano further explained that the need for the provision to EFSA of a national overview of the data management processes at national level was raised by the networks of data providers and it is a benefit for AF members for whom FPs offer administrative support. The centralization of certain task on FPs mainly concerns communication between EFSA and the different data domains and players at national level. Furthermore, Stefano remarked that standardisation of data; transmission of data; data quality assurance; and related communication with EFSA of these activities would rely instead on the Data Stewards, who would then receive funding to perform this activity, leading to better data quality.

Germany asked how the size and complexity of MSs could be reflected in the grant as well, as the relation between Data Stewards and data providers. Stefano explained that the term "Data Steward" refers to a role rather than to a person, thus there can be several scenarios, such as the same person/entity acting as data provider and steward. Stefano indicated that EFSA is studying a cost model based on the number of data delivered to EFSA and on data quality KPIs achieved.

Austria and the Slovak Republic welcomed the proposal and suggested to contact the national officers working in the domains of data collection and get more input for refining and implementing the proposal. Italy recommended to keep the AF closely involved in the proceedings of the project.

Stefano concluded the discussion explaining that EFSA is currently preparing a scoping paper on the topic, to be shared with AF members and FPs for their comments in the weeks to come. On the base of comments received, the proposal will then be further refined in the course of 2016. A pilot with 5 MS selected between those who confirmed interest at the FP meeting - i.e. Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovak Republic - would then be signed before year end and begin as of 2017. The current plan is to run the pilot during 2017; carry out its evaluation, including MS feedback, during 2018; and finally submit a proposal for approval by EFSA Management and the AF by end of 2018. Should the proposal be approved, the new data quality grant agreements would start as of 2019. Stefano emphasized that the participation on the framework partnership agreements will not be mandatory for all countries and that it represents an opportunity to achieve better data management and data quality at MS level.

Action Point 6: EFSA to share the Scoping Document on the Data Quality Pilot Project with AF members and FPs, for comments, as soon as available.

9. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

9.1. Update on communication activities

The Chair gave the floor to Shira Tabachnikoff, who presented the activities of the AFCWG in 2016 via web-conference. Shira explained the main objectives for the AFCWG in 2016, in particular the further alignment with the AF and the work planning for 2016, comprising the EU Insights project and the 3rd edition of the Risk Communication Guidelines. Shira also informed about the review of the governance model of the AFCWG and the upcoming joint meeting with the AF in June in the Netherlands.

Portugal informed participants about a crisis simulation exercise, based on an initiative from Spain and involving a total of 5 countries.

Shira concluded the agenda item mentioning that volunteer countries interested in participating on the case study regarding the crisis guidelines should express their interest via their AFCWG member.

Action Point 7: FPs to liaise with the respective AFCWG members and inform them to express their interest in case they wish to participate on the case study concerning crisis guidelines.

9.2. Update on the EFSA Journal

The Chair gave the floor to Arthur Healy, who presented to FPs, via web-conference, an update on the EFSA Journal. Based on a review of the Journal carried out in 2014 by external consultants, a call for tender to outsource the Journal was launched. The contract with the successful applicant Wiley & Sons was signed in October 2015 and the Journal was moved to the Wiley online platform on the 1st of April 2016. The archive comprises all entries since 2003 and has a mobile-friendly version. Arthur then gave a live demonstration of the main functionalities of the online platform, explaining the user-based approach and the search function by keywords. An important innovation for policy makers is a feature that indicates where entries have been used on social media. The new EFSA Journal can be accessed via a link on the EFSA main webpage.

The Chair then closed the meeting of the first day.

10. ISSUES RAISED BY FOCAL POINTS

10.1. Feedback on the workshop on Foodborne Viruses

The Chair gave the floor to Giorgia Albieri, FP from the UK, who gave feedback on a workshop on Foodborne Viruses, held on 23-25 February in London, UK. The idea of this workshop initiated as a joint project on the occasion of the visit of EFSA's Executive Director to the UK on March 2015. The workshop was attended by 119 participants from countries in and outside the EU, focussing on Epidemiology, Methodologies and Control Options for Noroviruses, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis E. A summary report will be released soon and published by CEFAS, FSA and on EFSA's on their websites as a joint report.

Action Point 8: UK / EFSA to share link to report on workshop on Foodborne Viruses once published.

10.2. Feedback on workshop on Crisis Preparedness

The Chair gave the floor to Elina Ciekure - FP from Latvia - that provided feedback on the Baltic Countries Workshop on Crisis Preparedness occurred on 15th - 17th of March 2016 in Riga, Latvia. This workshop was agreed as a joint project during the ED visit to the Baltic countries in June 2015, and counted with contributions from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Germany and Poland, as well as EFSA, ECDC and the European Commission (EC). Participants were key players in the fields of risk assessment, management and communication that can potentially be involved in case of a foodborne outbreak. The positive feedback received underlined that the objective of capacity building in crisis preparedness in the Baltic countries was achieved. Piret Priisalu, FP from Estonia, added that the crisis preparedness guidelines have been tested during the workshop and participants requested a translation into Estonian language. Tilemachos Goumeris, who had attended the workshop from EFSA's side and attended the FP meeting via web-conference, informed that, currently, a report on the workshop is being prepared, with more details, conclusions and recommendations. The report will be shared with FPs.

Action Point 9: EFSA to share with FPs the report on the Workshop on Crisis Preparedness in the Baltic countries.

10.3. Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD): current situation and project activities – proposal for EFSA support

The Chair gave the floor to Snezhana Todorova, FP from Bulgaria, who provided an overview on the current situation and ongoing activities on this topic. Due to recent and important spread of LSD throughout the Middle East and Europe, the EC asked EFSA in 2015 to issue a scientific opinion on LSD. Shortly before the publication of the EFSA opinion, the disease had already been reported in Cyprus and Greece. Due to the alarming situation, the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) expressed to EFSA their concerns about the spread of LSD and about their interest in a regional cooperation project together with support from EFSA. Upon this request EFSA and the EC (DG SANTE) proposed to hold a preliminary workshop with the interested parties to review the latest information available and to establish synergies at regional level for the improvement of LSD surveillance, prevention and control, which took place on 11th - 12th of May, in Brussels, Belgium. Jelena Vracar from EFSA, who attended the FP meeting via web-conference, answered questions from FPs regarding the workshop and the project. In particular, Jelena informed that representatives from EU MS, as well as from Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Montenegro, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey), together with the EC, the Mediterranean Animal Health Network (REMESA), the Belgium Veterinary and Agrochemical Research Centre (CODA-CERVA), FAO and EFSA - attended the workshop. The initiative was funded by EFSA's Pre-Accession Programme 2015 - 2017. FPs welcomed the initiative; Romania, Greece and France stressed the importance of cooperation and the sharing of experiences regarding vaccination, which often seems to be unsuccessful. A summary of key messages and recommendations of the workshop will be issued in the following weeks and shared with FPs.

Action Point 10: EFSA to share with FPs the key messages and recommendations stemming from the LSD Workshop in Brussels.

10.4. Feedback on international seminar "Actual Problems of Risk Assessments in Food Safety"

The Chair gave the floor to Filipa Melo de Vasconcelos, FP from Portugal, to inform FPs about an international seminar on "Actual problems of Risk Assessment in Food Safety" which took place on the 21st - 22nd of March 2016, in Lisbon, Portugal. The seminar was organised in cooperation with BfR, from Germany, and aimed at capacity building, partnership and strengthening cooperation, particularly targeted to Portuguese speaking and Northern African countries. The seminar was one of the actions agreed on the occasion of the visit to Portugal of EFSA's Executive Director occurred in November 2015. It will likely be followed by a second event for further capacity building.

10.5. Promotion of cooperation between EFSA and Art.36 organisations in Italy: practicalities and opportunities

The Chair gave the floor to Luca Busani, FP from Italy, who informed FPs about the promotion of cooperation between EFSA and Art.36 organisations in Italy. Three events, two of which already took place, were scheduled for 2016 to promote cooperation and share experiences among Art.36 organisations. The events already occurred have received good feedback and underlined the role of FPs on national networking. On question from Spain, Luca added that the participation was not restricted to Art.36 organisations, but also had participants from local authorities, universities and laboratories providing advice on the topics discussed.

10.6. LIFE+PERSUADED Project: contribution to risk assessment for Phthalates and BPA

Luca Busani, FP from Italy, presented a project on Phthalates and Bisphenol A biomonitoring in Italian mother-child pairs. In recent studies, exposure to Phthalates, in particular to diethylhexyl phthalate (DEHP) as well as to Bisphenol A (BPA) has been

associated to endocrine related multi-factorial diseases in children, in particular to precocious puberty and obesity. The study aimed at setting reference ranges for DEHP and BPA exposure in Italian children and women; evaluate environmental factors, food habits and lifestyles as sources of exposure; and analysis of the relation between DEHP's metabolites and/or BPA internal levels and children diseases. The project started in 2014 and will run until 2018, with preliminary results of the first 18 month being already available. A second report is expected by end of May. FPs showed high interest in receiving the results of this study. On question from Germany concerning the follow-up of the study regarding children, Luca confirmed that it is planned to further monitor the children. Denmark informed about a research group on BPA in Denmark having concluded high amount of studies with rats. Two papers on these studies are about to be released and can also be shared with FPs.

Action Point 11: Italy to share reports on LIFE+PERSUADED project with FPs.

Action Point 12: Denmark to share papers of Danish BPA research group with FP.

10.7. ANSES highlights for European and international activities in 2016

The Chair gave the floor to Adrienne Pittman, FP from France, who highlighted participants regarding European and international activities foreseen in 2016 by ANSES.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1. Update on upcoming Grants & Procurement & launch of call for Thematic Grant

The Chair introduced Sosanna Tasiou and Kerstin Gross-Helmert, who attended the meeting via web-conference. Sosanna briefed FPs on the upcoming open calls for tenders (procurement) and calls for proposals (grants). An overview of open calls was shared with FPs as a background document ahead of the meeting. Sosanna invited FPs to revisit the EFSA website by the end of the week after the meeting, to gain information on new calls.

Kerstin Gross-Helmert updated FPs on the ongoing Thematic Grant concerning Methodology Development in risk assessment on Emerging Food Risks, Mycotoxin Mixtures in Food and Feed, and on Freedom from Animal Disease / Infection. FPs were reminded of the key actions required in this context, namely to support the formation of consortia and of the importance of a regular update of the Article 36 List. Sosanna informed that, currently, all partners and applicants undergo a check whether they are on the Art.36 list.

11.2. Launch of EFSA's 2016 Traineeship Programme

The Chair gave the floor to Anastasia Xaplanteri, who, via web-conference, informed FPs about the launch of the EFSA 2016 traineeship programme. Anastasia presented the objectives of the traineeship campaign and the planned activities. Info-sessions are being held at universities in Hungary, Austria, UK and France. The call will be launched beginning of June till end of July, and starting dates are foreseen between September and December 2016. France and Hungary asked about more information on the info-sessions taking place in their countries.

Action Point 13: EFSA to inform FPs about the info-sessions on the traineeship programme taking place in the MS.

11.3. Feedback from Focal Point evaluation of 26th FP meeting

The Chair gave the floor to Sérgio Potier Rodeia, who provided feedback on the FP evaluation of the 26th FP meeting. Since this meeting, a procedure to collect online feedback from FPs after each meeting was initiated with the aim to improve its format and content. In the same line, at the end of each year, a more broad survey will be launched. The evaluation received a high response rate (80% of participants) and reflected positive feedback. Sérgio also referred to the specific comments collected. After

the current meeting, FPs will be asked again for their feedback. Therefore, shortly after the meeting an e-mail will be sent to FPs containing a link to the new EC survey tool.

Action Point 14: FPs to provide feedback on the meeting via the online survey link.

11.4. Auditing of Focal Points Technical Reports

Sérgio Potier Rodeia informed FPs that the yearly FP Technical Reports will be audited as of 2016, in line with the provisions laid down on the current FP grant agreements. The countries that will be submitted to an audit process will be selected according a procedure being defined at EFSA. More details about the audit will be provided on the FP meeting in September.

The Spanish FP asked which period will be covered by the audit. Sérgio explained that the audit is meant to cover the current year, 2016, and will be done after the conclusion of the reporting period. On question from Greece, Sérgio explained that the audit will look into technical aspects concerning the implementation of the FP grant agreements.

11.5. Upcoming Focal Point meetings and events in 2016

The Chair gave the floor to Sérgio Potier Rodeia who presented to FPs an overview on upcoming FP and other national events. Spain informed about an event in the area of nanotechnology to be included in the shared calendar of national events.

The Chair then asked FPs to express interest in hosting a FP meeting in 2017. Czech Republic invited the FP network to organise a FP meeting in his country, which is to be confirmed officially. Both Romania and Finland also expressed their interest to host a FP event in their counties over 2017.

Action Point 15: Spain to include event on nanotechnology in table of FP and other national events available in DMS.

Action Point 16: FPs to express interest in hosting a FP meeting in 2017.

11.6. EU agencies video

At the end of the meeting, the Chair invited FPs to watch a short video promoting the work of the EU Agencies.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting, thanking participants for their attendance and active contribution. He expressed special thanks to the hosting country, Croatia, for their efforts and hospitality. The next meeting will take place on 15-16 September in Parma.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	EFSA	<i>to share information with FPs on the hierachal procedure in place for the participation of Scientific Network experts on the EFSA RA training courses - for information.</i>
Action 2	EFSA	<i>to share with FPs the EFSA training catalogue - for information.</i>
Action 3	EFSA	<i>to include the discussion on future network management in the agenda of an upcoming FP meeting.</i>
Action 4	FPs	<i>to test the updating of the table on main forthcoming RA activities on Office 365 and provide feedback by end of June.</i>
Action 5	FPs	<i>in preparation of the June AF meeting, to update the table on main forthcoming RA activities available on DMS by 20th of May 2016.</i>
Action 6	EFSA	<i>to share the Scoping Document on the Data Quality Pilot Project with AF members and FPs, for comments, as soon as available.</i>
Action 7	FPs	<i>to liaise with the respective AFCWG members and inform them to express their interest in case they wish to participate on the case study concerning crisis guidelines.</i>
Action 8	UK & EFSA	<i>to share link to report on the Workshop on Foodborne Viruses, once published.</i>
Action 9	EFSA	<i>to share with FPs the report on the Workshop on Crisis Preparedness in the Baltic countries, once available.</i>
Action 10	EFSA	<i>to share with FPs the key messages and recommendations stemming from the LSD Workshop in Brussels.</i>
Action 11	IT	<i>to share reports on LIFE+PERSUADED project with FPs.</i>
Action 12	DK	<i>to share papers of Danish BPA research group with FPs.</i>
Action 13	EFSA	<i>to inform FPs about the info-sessions on the traineeship programme taking place in the MS.</i>
Action 14	FPs	<i>to provide feedback on the meeting via the online survey link.</i>
Action 15	ES	<i>to include event on nanotechnology in table of FP and other national events available in DMS.</i>
Action 16	FPs	<i>to express interest in hosting a FP meeting in 2017</i>

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