



## Minutes

### 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Focal Point Network 10 - 11 February 2021

**Chair: Victoria Villamar**

Members	
Austria	<i>Johann Steinwider</i>
Belgium	<i>Hind Afrikh</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Donka Popova</i> <i>Lilyana Polihronova</i>
Croatia	<i>Sanja Miloš</i> <i>Vlatka Buzjak Služek</i>
Cyprus	<i>Christophoros Papachrysosotomou</i> <i>Georgios Stavroulakis</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Petr Beneš</i>
Denmark	<i>Birgitte Helwich</i>
Estonia	<i>Piret Priisalu</i>
Finland	<i>Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen</i>
France	<i>Coralie Bultel</i> <i>Cèline Bahuon</i> <i>Julia Raeke</i>
Germany	<i>Julia Schöne</i> <i>Marina Lechleider</i> <i>Majlinda Lahaniatis</i>
Greece	<i>Foteini Tzoumanika</i> <i>Danai Papanastasiou</i>
Hungary	<i>Jundit Sali</i> <i>Renàta Prisztòka</i>
Iceland	<i>Grimur Olafsson</i>
Ireland	<i>Gráinne Redmond</i>
Italy	<i>Luca Busani</i> <i>Maria Girolama Falcone</i>
Latvia	<i>Elina Ciekure</i>
Lithuania	<i>Rima Zivatkauskaitė</i> <i>Giedre Čiuberkytė</i>
Luxembourg	<i>Elisa Barillozzi</i>
Malta	<i>Giannella Pisani</i>
Netherlands	<i>Linda Kox</i> <i>Timme van der Lugt</i>
Norway	<i>Gisle Solstad</i>
Poland	<i>Katarzyna Floryanowicz-Czekalska</i>
Portugal	<i>Filipa Melo De Vasconcelos</i>



Romania	<i>Alexandru Supeanu</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>Katarina Kromerova</i>
Slovenia	<i>Blaža Nahtigal Urška Bolha</i>
Spain	<i>Maria José Rubio</i>
Sweden	<i>Karin Nyberg Jenny Aasa Eva Warensjö Lemming</i>
<b>Observers</b>	
Switzerland	<i>Barbara Engeli</i>
Albania	<i>Shpresa Ohri</i>
Bosnia Herzegovina	<i>Dalibor Vidačak</i>
Kosovo*	<i>Mentor Mulaj</i>
Montenegro	<i>Ana Velimirovic</i>
North Macedonia	<i>Svetlana Tomeska Mickova Sanja Ilieva</i>
Serbia	<i>Nadežda Dukić</i>
Turkey	<i>Muzaffer Nurseren Budak</i>
<b>FP Secretariat</b>	
<i>Drago Marojević</i>	<i>Sofia Altesini</i>
<i>Annafranca Loparco</i>	<i>Clementina Piani</i>
<b>EFSA</b>	
<i>Sofia Altesini</i>	<i>Martina Kurišova</i>
<i>Stef Bronzwaer</i>	<i>Annafranca Loparco</i>
<i>Adrian Razquin Cesar</i>	<i>Drago Marojević</i>
<i>Gina Cioacata</i>	<i>Clementina Piani</i>
<i>Gorgias Garofalakis</i>	<i>Jane Richardson</i>
<i>Barbara Ghizzoni</i>	<i>Victoria Villamar</i>
<i>Rory Harrington</i>	<i>Gabriele Zancanaro</i>

**Apologies:** none

*\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence*

## 1. Welcome and Adoption of Agenda

Victoria Villamar, Head of Engagement and Scientific Cooperation (ENCO) opened the 45<sup>th</sup> FP meeting and welcomed FPs to the meeting. 13 countries have participated with both member and alternate (BG, CY, FR, DE, GR, HR, HU, LT, IT, MK, NL, SE, SI). The Chair welcomed Hind Afrikh, new FP member from Belgium; Marina Lechleider, new FP alternate from Germany; Katarína Kromerová, new FP member from Slovak Republic; Milo Bystrický, new FP alternate from Slovak Republic and Urška Bolha, new FP alternate from Slovenia.

The plenary adopted the agenda.

The Chair acknowledged the great commitment of Focal Point network in supporting the promotion and targeted dissemination of EU-FORA calls and thanked the French Focal Point team for the Annual Meeting of the French representatives in the EFSA Scientific and Communication Networks, enhancing EFSA-MSs cooperation.



## 2. Matters arising

### 2.1 Action Points

**Drago Marojevic** debriefed Focal Points about the fulfilment of the action points noted during the [44<sup>th</sup> Focal Point Network Meeting](#).

### 2.2 FP Reporting 2020

**Drago** provided an overview of the preliminary figures of the ongoing FP reporting 2020, presenting the first results on the selection and execution of initial and additional tasks. The outcome concerning initial tasks has been successful, showing how the activities consolidated throughout the years. Referring to the additional tasks, EFSA registered a positive tendency in their execution taking into consideration the impact of Covid pandemic and the novelty of the activities. EFSA identified possible areas of improvement that will be discussed with Focal Points during the check-point meeting in March. This latter will be the occasion to further address the outcome of the reporting for additional tasks, sharing best-practises and enhancing cooperation during 2021. Drago stressed the importance of the submission of a comprehensive report on yearly activities especially if discrepancies occurred; this is key for a better understanding of the FP work at national level, related challenges and close cooperation with FPs.

### 2.3 FP 2021 Uptake of Tasks

**Drago** provided an overview of the 2021 FP yearly plan figures and the general picture on the main activities for 2021. The planning exercise for initial and additional tasks 2021 confirmed the great commitment of MSs in enhancing the collaboration with EFSA, with an increased no. of countries that subscribed to the additional tasks. In addition, Drago thanked the Art.36 FP Task Force members for their reconfirmed commitment in supporting the implementation of Art.36 tool for 2021

In the context of task 4.5, Focal Points asked whether it is possible to organise joint EU-FORA training together with other Focal Points and to invite fellows from other countries; EFSA welcomed the proposals suggesting to directly liaise with tutors and FPs, stressing the importance of Member States cooperation in such type of initiatives.

### 2.4 Knowledge Broker and EU RAA Tasks

**Stef Bronzwaer** informed the plenary about the postponement of RARA 2021 from June to December 2021. Stef then provided an update on the submission of the national funding opportunities and national research activities. The aim of this activity is to formulate as far as possible research needs to inform national and EU research agendas, enhancing synergies between MS and EU Research Programmes. For this reason, FP are invited to keep the national funding opportunities overview up to date also in the coming months, and to share funding opportunities though the EFSA research platform – without any restriction on the 500-word limit.

In the context of strengthening MS exchange of scientific information, **Drago** presented the figures on the reporting 2020 and 2021 uptake of EU-RAA tasks. The submission of new risk assessment project ideas through the database, the dissemination of information within the national network and the collection of the expressions of interest of organisations are longstanding items to enhance the collaboration with MS and IPA Countries in the remit of EU Risk Assessment Agenda. To support FPs activities in the use of the database, a new **Q&A document** has been developed and uploaded in the dedicated channel in Teams. On the basis of the 78<sup>th</sup> Advisory Forum discussion and endorsement, **Drago** informed also Focal Point about foreseen changes of the EU-RAA database toward a V.2.0 of the tool and further developments during 2021.



**Action Point 1:** FPs to provide an overview of national funding opportunities by summer 2021 (task 2.6) and to collect and add new project ideas in the EU-RAA database, keeping the inputs up-to-date and sharing information at national level (task 1.6.A & 1.6.B).

## 2.5 Data Tasks (tasks 5.5, 5.6, 5.9)

**Adrian Razquin Cesar** provided the preliminary figures related to 2020 reporting of tasks 5.5, 5.6 and 5.9 on data timeliness, quality and training needs. Following an initial assessment of reports submitted by Focal Points during the reporting 2020, general challenges have been outlined and guidelines to enhance the collaboration during 2021 work were also discussed.

Some of the Focal Points mentioned difficulties to collect the relevant information at national level in order to meet the expectations in this domain. To further discuss the latter, EFSA offered to focus the upcoming check-point meeting in March on data tasks, sharing best practises and good examples of execution and reporting.

**Action Point 2:** EFSA to provide FPs with more information on funding opportunities related to data collection and modelling.

## 2.6 SIGMA Tasks (tasks 5.7, 5.8)

**Gabriele Zancanaro** thanked the FPs for their contribution in providing the inputs to the SIGMA project related tasks in 2020. Gabriele also presented the uptake for tasks n. 5.7 and 5.8 in 2021. The focus will be on the revision of the Country cards' information via EU survey performed by each FP; surveys to enhance the data flow for each domain with targeted interviews by the SIGMA Consortium; the submission of DDI questionnaires on laboratory data for the SIGMA EST tool.

**Action Point 3:** EFSA to set up a dedicated check point meeting to further address DATA and SIGMA tasks.

## 3. FP External Review: Introduction, Tasks, Deliverables and Timeliness

**Chair** introduced the topic, the framework under which the FP External Review will be carried-out and outlined main objectives. The initiative, driven by the implementation of Transparency Regulation with an increased 70% of budget invested in MSs cooperation as of 2020, is stemming also from a reflection on the sustainability of the risk assessment model involving also the Advisory Forum and Scientific and Communication Networks. The aim is to strengthen the activities of the Focal Points, setting-up a fit-for-purpose network that would deliver on the expectation from the Strategy 2027, with emphasis on building-up partnerships for science and communication and supporting preparedness. **Chair** stressed the importance of close collaboration between EFSA-FPs; FPs will be granted the chance of closely monitoring the progress throughout 2021 during FP meetings and ad hoc gatherings.

**Drago** debriefed the FP plenary on the scope, methodology and activities to perform the evaluation study successfully. Drago also presented the main steps and timeline of the review, explaining the expected outcomes, i.e involvement of AF/FPs though interviews and targeted surveys, the interim report by May 2021, the final recommendations for September 2021, to be discussed with external partners (Member States, particularly Advisory Forum and FP) until October/November 2021 with the final conclusions and recommendations delivered by year-end. More thorough details about the Focal Point network involvement will be provided in a dedicated meeting in due time.

**Maja Hranilovic** (*contractor*) briefly presented the international team involved in the project and thanked EFSA for the opportunity of participating to the FP meeting. The contractor



addressed mainly features, objectives and expectations of the review, with emphasis on the EFSA organisational culture, functioning of MSs-EFSA cooperation and differences among MSs, challenges and feasible solution for an enhanced network. The final report will be build-up on the basis of different lines of data input; among those latter, relevant stakeholders both external and internal will provide one of the most crucial contribution (provisional timeline for stakeholder involvement: March/April 2021).

**Action Point 4:** EFSA to create folder for the Focal Point External Review to share the relevant material and monitoring the review process.

**Action Point 5:** EFSA to share the Focal Point External Review time frame for the further involvement of AF members and FPs.

**\*\*\*End of meeting on Day 1\*\*\***

Victoria Villamar, Head of Engagement and Scientific Cooperation (ENCO), opened the second day of the FP meeting welcoming FPs.

**4. Knowledge Junction (task 1.2)**

**Jane Richardson** and **Gina Cioacata** provided information on the correct use of identifiers on the Knowledge Junction community. Jane and Gina thanked the FPs for their commitment in raising the awareness on data identifying and identifiers, increasing the understanding of current procedures in place in MS, and bringing success to the Knowledge Junction.

Johann Steinwider (Austria – FP member) and Gráinne Redmond (Ireland – FP member) presented their best practises on publishing and registration; other FPs shared their views on the matter, spotting similar issues. Jane Richardson recognized the need of changing the Knowledge Junction policy, nevertheless, and agreed approach on the management of unique identifiers should be found for previously published items.

**Action Point 6:** EFSA to establish targeted working groups on the Knowledge Junction to address the identified challenges based on MS and FPs' experience.

**5. Update on a new partnership approach and competence mapping: TIM tool**

**Gorgias Garofalakis** informed the FPs on the establishment of the Advisory Forum Discussion Group on the future of partnerships (AFDGFoP), outlining the background, the overall scope and the expectations of the joint EU RA culture. Gorgias outlined the next steps, namely the enhancement of partnership supporting tools (such as the TIM tool) and services based on the inputs collected with the Art.36 survey (carried out in October 2020). It will be crucial strengthen the cooperation with the AF and FPs; on this latter, FPs were encouraged to work closely with their AF member supporting the discussions and putting forward any idea that would help towards the evolution of a more sustainable RA system.

**Drago Marojević** and **Martina Kurišová** provided an in-depth presentation of TIM (Tools for Innovation Monitoring), an analytical tool that supports partnership. Drago and Martina updated the Focal Points on the further improvements, objectives and uses of TIM, with a focus on how to build, keep and activate EFSA's competence areas knowledge community in Member States.

**Action Point 7:** EFSA to monitor the progress of the 19 recommendations resulting from the Art.36 survey.

**6. COMMS priorities for 2021 and Transparency Regulation Comms plans**



**Rory Harrington** and **Barbara Ghizzoni** presented the overview of EFSA Communication Priority Topics for 2021. The main highlights will be the Transparency Regulation, bee health, sustainable and healthy food, chemicals in food, animal health and welfare. EFSA-MS partnership approach is crucial to promote the new Transparency Regulation implementation; in this context, FPs play a key role in contributing to the priority domains, also disseminating the communication materials, raising awareness and facilitating coordinated communication.

Barbara mentioned the EC - EFSA event to celebrate the entry into force of the Transparency Regulation. The initiative, organized by DG SANTE in collaboration with the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, will take place at the end of March 2021 and will involve the institutions involved in the TR negotiations and stakeholders of the food chain. More information will be shared with Focal Points in due time.

**Action Point 8:** EFSA to share at due time the digital information package for FPs' dissemination support.

## **7. AoB**

### **7.1 Cyprus: Feedback on the ImproRisk training workshop**

Georgios Stavroulakis (Cyprus – FP alternate) presented the follow up of the ImproRisk training workshop, which took place in December 2020 and involved participants from Greece and Montenegro. As the aim was to brief EU risk assessors on the ImproRisk model and to foster capacity building in dietary risk assessment for MS and IPA countries, the general outcome was very positive and much appreciated. The next step of the ImproRisk model will be the upgrade to a web application (Shiny Application).

### **7.2 Montenegro: Presentation of Center of Excellence for digitalisation of microbiological risk assessment-FOODHUB**

Ana Velimirovic (Montenegro – FP observer) presented the Centre of Excellence for Digitalization of Microbial Food Safety Risk Assessment and Quality Parameters for Accurate Food Authenticity Certification (FoodHub). The Center is hosted by the University of Donja Gorica and supported by a consortium of international universities and research centers; it aims at encouraging innovative and scientific-based developments of the food sector, boosting research activities and partnership, enhancing knowledge-transfer and creating financing opportunities.

### **7.3 COMMS: ONE – Health, Environment, Society – Conference 2022: promotion and dissemination**

Following the EFSA [web announcement](#), Drago informed Focal Points about the ONE – Health, Environment, Society – Conference 2022, organised by EFSA together with its sister Agencies – the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), the European Environment Agency (EEA), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) – and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). The event will take place in Brussels and online on 21-24 June 2022. FPs were invited to support the preparation of the initiative through the promotion to relevant national organisations, networks, and stakeholders with EFSA communication package.

### **7.4 Follow up of the Crisis Preparedness Exercise**

Addressing Norway's request, Drago provided a brief update on the follow up of the Crisis Preparedness Exercise, which involved the Focal Points in September 2020. The comprehensive



report of the activity was shared with Focal Points in December 2020 and the exercise facilitation documents were recently published on Zenodo platform.

**Action Point 9:** EFSA to reshare the material from the CPE 2020 and provide update on the Crisis Preparedness initiatives in one of the check point meetings.

### CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Victoria Villamar closed the meeting by thanking all FPs for their commitment and contribution during the workshop and FP meeting.

### SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	FPS	to provide an overview of national funding opportunities by summer 2021 (task 2.6) and to collect and add new project ideas in the EU-RAA database, keeping the inputs up-to-date and sharing information at national level (task 1.6.A & 1.6.B).
Action 2	EFSA	to provide FPs with more information on funding opportunities related to data collection and modelling.
Action 3	EFSA	to set up a dedicated check point meeting to further address DATA and SIGMA tasks.
Action 4	EFSA	to create folder for the Focal Point External Review to share the relevant material and monitoring the review process.
Action 5	EFSA	to share the Focal Point External Review time frame for the further involvement of AF members and FPs.
Action 6	EFSA	to establish targeted working groups on the Knowledge Junction to address the identified challenges based on MS and FPs' experience.
Action 7	EFSA	to monitor the progress of the 19 recommendations resulting from the Art.36 survey.
Action 8	EFSA	to share at due time the digital information package for FPs' dissemination support.
Action 9	EFSA	to reshare the material from the CPE 2020 and provide update on the Crisis Preparedness initiatives in one of the check point meetings.