



UNIT ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS and CONTAMINANTS

# SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN

## MINUTES OF THE 116<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY MEETING

**Audio-web conference, 13-15 July 2021**

**(Agreed on 30 July 2021)**

### Participants

#### ■ Panel Members:

Margherita Bignami, Laurent Bodin, Jesús Del Mazo, Bettina Grasl-Kraupp, Christer Hogstrand, Ron Hoogenboom, Jean-Charles Leblanc, Carlo Nebbia, Evangelia Ntzani, Annette Petersen, Salomon Sand, Dieter Schrenk, Tanja Schwerdtle, Christiane Vleminckx and Heather Wallace.

#### ■ Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:

Not applicable

#### ■ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Frans Verstraete, Ivana Poustkova (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit E2) and Patricia Herrero Sancho (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit G4).

#### ■ EFSA:

##### **BIOCONTAM Unit:**

Maria Anastassiadou, Marco Binaglia, Gina Cioacata, Federico Cruciani, Winy Messens, Ernesto Liebana Criado, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Katja Schirmer and Hans Steinkellner.

##### **AMU Unit:**

Olaf Mosbach-Schulz (for Item 10.).

##### **DATA Unit:**

Claudia Cascio (for Item 9.2.).

---

<sup>1</sup> As defined in Article 17 of the Decision of the Executive Director concerning the selection of members of the Scientific Committee, the Scientific Panels, and the selection of external experts to assist EFSA with its scientific work: [http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/expertselection.pdf](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/expertselection.pdf)

■ **Observers:**

See Annex I.

■ **Others:**

Not applicable.

## **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Kevin Chipman and Elsa Nielsen (CONTAM Panel), Veerle Vanheusden (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit E2) and Paolo Caricato (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit G4).

## **2. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence<sup>2</sup> and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management<sup>3</sup>, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Panel members invited to the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the members at the beginning of this meeting.

## **4. Election of Chair and Vice Chairs**

The Panel confirmed by unanimous decision Dieter Schrenk as Panel Chair and Christer Hogstrand and Heather Wallace as Panel vice-Chairs.

## **5. Brief introduction of Panel members to Observers**

The meeting participants introduced themselves to the Observers.

## **6. Presentation of the EFSA Guidelines for Observers**

The CONTAM Team Leader presented the Guidelines for Observers.

## **7. Agreement of the minutes of the 115<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting held on 18-20.05.2021**

The minutes of the 115<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting<sup>4</sup> held on 18-20 May 2021 were agreed by the CONTAM Panel on 6 June 2021.

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/policy\\_independence.pdf](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>

[http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/competing\\_interest\\_management\\_17.pdf](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/115th-plenary-meeting-contam-panel>

## **8. Report on written procedures since the 115<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting held on 18-20.05.2021**

Not applicable.

## **9. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption**

### **9.1. Update of the risk assessment of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in food (EFSA-Q-2018-0432)<sup>5</sup>**

The Chair of the WG on Brominated flame retardants (BFRs) presented selected sections of the draft Opinion on PBDEs in Food for discussion and possible endorsement. The Panel agreed on the structure and level of detail of the description of the studies in the section on Toxicity in experimental animals. The Panel provided feedback on the sections on Supporting information for the assessment, Toxicokinetics in experimental animals and in humans that will be taken into account by the WG to continue with the development of the risk assessment.

### **9.2. Evaluation of the shucking of certain species of scallops contaminated with domoic acid (EFSA-Q-2020-00246)<sup>6</sup>**

The Chair of the WG on Scallops introduced the changes implemented in the opinion based on the comments received during the consultation with the EU Members States. The CONTAM Panel adopted the opinion including the proposed changes. The Chair of the Panel thanked the WG and EFSA staff for their work.

### **9.3. High Pressure Processing (EFSA-Q-2020-00380)<sup>7</sup>**

The EFSA coordinator of the opinion for the BIOHAZ Panel presented the mandate, the risk assessment questions and the context of the evaluation of the High-Pressure Processing (HPP). The CONTAM Panel discussed the sections prepared by its appointed member and the EFSA staff involved regarding the chemical safety of the HPP in relation to contaminants and endorsed them. The deadline for the adoption of the full opinion by the BIOHAZ Panel is on 31 January 2022.

### **9.4. Hydroxymethylfurfural in feed for bees (EFSA-Q-2020-00510)<sup>8</sup>**

The Chair of the WG on hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) introduced the background for the mandate and provided an overview of the available occurrence dataset and the scenarios proposed for the exposure assessment. The possible approach to extrapolate chronic toxicity in bees from the available 20-day toxicity studies was also presented to the Panel. The WG is considering the use of time-reinforced toxicity models currently under development by the EFSA PPR Panel. The WG will further work on this approach and will also address the uncertainties related to the differences in toxicity of HMF observed in different short-term studies.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2018-00432>

<sup>6</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00246>

<sup>7</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00380>

<sup>8</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00510>

## **10. Presentation on the use of Expert Knowledge Elicitation in uncertainty analysis**

The Scientific Officers of the AMU Unit introduced to the CONTAM Panel the Expert Knowledge Elicitation methods and their use in the uncertainty analysis of scientific assessments.

## **11. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/ Scientific Panels, CONTAM Working Groups, EFSA, the European Commission**

### **11.1. European Commission**

The European Commission representative gave an extensive update on the activities in relation to the scientific opinions of the CONTAM Panel. Several amendments of current legislation are under discussion with the Member States as an outcome of the CONTAM Panel scientific opinions. In addition, a list of upcoming mandates was provided.

### **11.2. Update from CONTAM Panel Working Groups**

- **WG on Brominated flame retardants in food**

See item 9.1.

- **WG on Scallops**

See item 9.2.

- **WG on Feed detoxification**

The WG Chair informed the Panel that the opinions on groundnuts detoxification from aflatoxins via ammoniation and on oilseed processing making Ambrosia seeds unviable will be presented to the Panel for possible adoption at its 118<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting.

- **WG on Hydroxymethyl furfural in bees**

See item 9.4.

- **WG on High pressure processing**

See item 9.3.

- **WG on Mineral oil hydrocarbons**

The WG vice Chair informed the Panel that the activity is proceeding well and the next WG meeting will take place on 22 July 2021. The WG aims to present some sections for first reading and the possible approach proposed for hazard identification and characterization at the 117<sup>th</sup> CONTAM Panel meeting.

- **WG on N-nitrosamines**

The WG Chair informed the Panel that the first draft of the opinion is under finalisation and it will be available soon and that the next WG meeting to discuss the occurrence data will take place on 8 September 2021.

### **11.3. EFSA**

The CONTAM Team Leader informed the CONTAM Panel that following an exchange of view with the Member State representatives the European Commission amended the mandate on inorganic arsenic in food, broadening its scope to inorganic and organic arsenic species. The CONTAM Team Leader

informed the Panel about a meeting with the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES) to discuss the on-going mandates on N-nitrosamines (EFSA) and nitrites and nitrates (ANSES). The scope of the mandate was to mutually inform on the scopes and timelines of the two on-going assessments with the aim to identify at an early stage possible diverging views. A presentation was provided on the use and purpose of the EFSA Knowledge Junction community on Zenodo<sup>9</sup>.

#### **11.4. Scientific Committee and Working groups of interest to the CONTAM Panel**

The Panel Chair reported on the main points discussed at the 103<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the EFSA Scientific Committee<sup>10</sup>. In particular, the Scientific Committee adopted the guidance document on human health risk assessment of nanomaterials in the food and feed chain and the Guidance document on aneugenicity assessment.

For the Working groups of interest for the CONTAM Panel, updates were given on the activities of the WG on Genotoxicity, the WG on the update of the Benchmark Dose guidance, the WG on Uncertainty, WG on Copper and the WG on Chemical mixtures.

## **12. Answers to questions from observers**

See Annex II.

## **13. Any other business**

Not applicable.

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://zenodo.org/communities/efsa-kj>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/it/events/event/104th-plenary-meeting-scientific-committee-open-observers>



## UNIT ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS and CONTAMINANTS

### Annex I – List of registered observers

Family name	Name	Affiliation
Kalinichenko	Marharyta	University/public research institute
María Del Carmen	Peña	Other
Kraehenbuehl	Karin	Private sector
Reinik	Mari	National authority
Hdaifeh	Ammar	University/public research institute
Kaya	Esra	Other
Bissacco	Elisa	Private sector
Baharuddin	Azan Azuwan	Private sector
Rodrigues	Andreia	University/public research institute
Morandin	Matilde	Other
Verbeek	Uta	Private sector
Rose	Martin	University/public research institute
Danneels	Dirk	Private sector
Rose	Martin	EFSA Panel/WG/Network
Seong	Yujin	Private sector
Konnant	Foncham Linda	Private sector
Roila	Rossana	University/public research institute
Saraiva	Sónia	National authority
Norliza	Saparin	International organisation
Roiz	Julie	Private sector
Hajjar	Kalila	Private sector
González Pérez De Medina	Luisbel	University/public research institute
Stamenitis	Stamatios	Private sector
Anselmo	Henrique	Private sector
Spanu	Gabriel	Private sector
Rodarte	Alejandro	Other
Jud	Michael	National authority
Kshirsagar	Nitin	Private sector
Turek	Ewa	National authority
Cogalniceanu	Elena	Private sector
Soviero	Giovanna	Private sector
Wang	SI	Private sector
Spitznagel	Diana	Private sector
Kumrija	Laura	Private sector



## UNIT ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS and CONTAMINANTS

### Annex II – Questions from observers

**Question 1** (Michael Jud): (in relation to agenda item 9.1., editor's note) Would it make sense to include Brominated Flame Retardants in the Risk benefit analysis mandated for 2024? Or is there a concern that the risk would outweigh the benefit for fish consumption?

Answer (F. Verstraete – DG SANTE): Indeed in the current draft mandate on the risk benefit assessment of fish consumption in relation to the presence of dioxins (PCDD/Fs) and dioxin-like PCBs (DL-PCBs) EFSA has been requested to include an assessment of the influence of the presence of other contaminants in fish such as methylmercury, brominated flame retardants and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) on the outcome of the risk-benefit assessment.

**Question 2** (Michael Jud): (in relation to agenda item 9.3., editor's note) Was the opinion related to a Novel Food application acc. Reg. EC 2283/2015? Could be different evaluations necessary for liquid food (juices, no adulteration) and raw meat (cell structure may alter).

Answer (Anna Christodoulidou – CONTAM Team): The mandate on high pressure processing is related to its application on traditional foods, including juices, sauces, dips, fishery products, meat products and ready-to-eat meals.

Answer (Frans Verstraete – DG SANTE): in case following the high pressure processing the food would fall within the scope of the Novel Food Regulation (EU) 2015/2283, (in particular according to Article 3 2) (a) (vii) *"food resulting from a production process not used for food production within the Union before 15 May 1997, which gives rise to significant changes in the composition or structure of a food, affecting its nutritional value, metabolism or level of undesirable substances"*, then an application for authorisation before marketing has to be submitted and the food can only be authorised to be marketed in the EU following a favourable assessment of the safety of the novel food by EFSA.

**Question 3** (Julie Roiz): Are there new information related to toxicity considered by the WG (on mineral oil hydrocarbons, editor's note) compared to the 2012 EFSA opinion, especially regarding MOAH?

Answer (Marco Binaglia – CONTAM Team): For the moment no new data were retrieved on toxicity of mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH), whereas new studies were published on the toxicity of mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH) since the previous CONTAM Panel opinion. The review of the toxicological data is still on-going.

**Question 4** (Saparin Norliza): Any indicative date for regulatory for MOH?

Answers (Frans Verstraete – DG SANTE): Regulatory provisions on the presence of MOH in food can only be established after the finalization of the on-going CONTAM opinion (with deadline at end 2022) as the outcome of the opinion shall be taken into account in the discussions on the possible regulatory provisions on the presence of mineral oil hydrocarbons in food to ensure a high level of public health protection.

**Question 5** (Kalila Hajjar): Is it the intention to also publish data shared by stakeholders once the EFSA opinion is published also there on Zenodo?

Answer (Marco Binaglia – CONTAM Team): All the occurrence data related to a specific opinion and received through the EFSA's data collections will be published in the EFSA Knowledge Junction in Zenodo.

**Question 6** (Azan Azuwan): What are the specific criteria to address the importance of food safety issues when they need to be discussed, which is the critical stage for discussing these issues in Europe? How long estimated is the panel working group expected to complete its work before the written report is made public?

Answers (Frans Verstraete – DG SANTE): The decision to issue new mandates requesting EFSA to perform scientific assessments can be due to different factors, such as the emergence of new scientific evidence justifying a new assessment or an update of a previous one, or the exchange of views with Member

States' representatives on risk management or regulatory issues related to identified food safety risks/hazards for which regulatory measures might be needed to ensure a high level of human health protection.

Answer (Marco Binaglia – CONTAM Team): Generally, the time needed to publish CONTAM Panel opinions ranges approximately from six to eighteen months, depending on the scientific complexity of the topic. The majority of the CONTAM Panel opinions are subject to public consultation, which can take an additional three-six months period before the final adopted opinion is available.