COMMUNICATION UNIT

Network on Communications Experts
Minutes of the 10th meeting

Held on 6-7 October 2021, Microsoft Teams meeting

(Agreed on 05 11 2021)

Participants

- **Network Representatives of Member States:**

Country	Name
Austria	Roland Achatz
Belgium	Jean-Sebastien Walhin
Bulgaria	Mariela Pchelinska
Croatia	Sara Mikrut
Cyprus	Charitini Frenaritou,
Czech Republic	Vladimir Brychta
Denmark	Heidi Kornholt
Estonia	Martin Erich Torjus
Finland	Jari Eloranta
France	Sophie Le Quellec
Germany	Suzan Fiack
Greece	Nikolaos Katerelos
Hungary	Erika Országh, Edit Tothne Lippai
Ireland	Jane Ryder
Italy	Barbara Tiozzo
Latvia	-
Lithuania	Aiste Prielgauskaite
Luxembourg	Elisa Barilozzi
Malta	-
Netherlands	Carla Geijskes
Poland	Katarzyna Floryanowicz
Portugal	Ana Oliveira, Filipa Melo De Vasconcelos
Romania	Alina Monea
Slovak Republic	Zuzana Sevcikova
Slovenia	Spela Fristic
Spain	César Casado De Santiago
Sweden	Karin Gustaffson

Iceland	-
Norway	Ingrid Hoie
Switzerland	-

- **Representatives of Pre-accession Countries:**

Country	**Name**
Albania	Pamela Radovani
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Dalibor Vidacak
Kosovo	Lamir Thaci
Montenegro	Jelena Vracar/Milan Rogisic
North Macedonia	Nikola Savovski and Sanja Ilieva
Turkey	Nevra Ozcan

- **European Commission:**

Anastasia Alvizou, Fatima Daragov, Edward Demicoli, Frederic Vincent

- **EFSA:**

COMCO Department (Barbara Gallani, Alessandra Triulzi)

COM Unit (Francesca Avanzini, Edward Bray, Elisa Corsini, Alessandra Fantini, Rory Harrington, Giovanni Mancarella, Francesca Matteucci, Sharon Monti, Johanna Nemes, Paul Ortega, Matthias Rasche, James Ramsay, Claire Rogers, Tony Smith, Domagoj Vrbos)

ENCO Unit (Flavio Fergnani, Drago Marojevic)

1. Welcome from EFSA and adoption of the agenda

Chair welcomed attendees and ran through the agenda. The agenda was agreed and confirmed.

2. Advisory Forum (AF) and Focal Points (FP) update. Overview of the Focal Point review

Barbara Gallani summarised the ongoing review of the Focal Point network, providing context on how it supports the development of an EU framework for coordinated communications. She outlined the overarching vision for this as developing "a *community of communication professionals working together for coordinated, accessible and localised food safety information for European citizens."*

Explained that efforts in 2022 would focus on creating a harmonised way for FP and CEN to work more closely together in a coordinated way, including plans for a joint face-to-face CEN and FP meeting in May 2022; that a proposal to fund a dedicated Coordinated Communication resource in each MS was currently under consideration.

ACTION: CEN members to brief their country's Advisory Forum representatives on the opportunity offered by the FP review to coordinated communications.

3. Update on CEN Work Plan (WP) 2021 and endorsement of CEN Terms of Reference

- **Work Plan (WP)**

  Rory Harrington gave an update on the 2021 WP, noting very good progress has been made across each objective. Highlighted: Ob.1- Coordinated communication – CEN support for the March 2021 report to provide Technical assistance on risk comms to the EC; joint campaign work; sharing of info such as media lines. (ii) Ob.2 - Sharing best practice – co-creation of a checklist for communicating on uncertainty (iii) Ob.3 - Targeted Communication – joint working on Hazard vs Risk project: social research on dietary sugars & microplastics.

  Reminded CEN members they that can post articles on the shared Portal.

- **Terms of Reference (ToR) for 2021-23**

  Rory Harrington explained that all MS expert network ToRs needed to be revised following a EFSA's Management Board-led review ensure a harmonised approach. A revised draft would be circulated for comment in the coming weeks.

  ACTION: EFSA to circulate revised Terms of Reference for comment by CEN members by 31.10.21

4. Media Round-up

Francesca Avanzini outlined the EFSA-related topics that had attracted most media coverage in Q2 2021: food ingredients; nutrition, glyphosate and bee health. Edward Bray shared insights on Q2 coverage, noting titanium dioxide, bee health and edible insects had also generated media interest. Estimated likely upcoming topics of interest as: front of pack labelling, glyphosate, novel food, dietary sugars, animal health/welfare.

MS Highlights: CEN members shared insights on prominent issues in their countries: Sweden – dietary sugars; France - pesticides in general including Glyphosate, bees, nitrites, labelling, vegan diet, nano in food, new biotechnology (NBT). Germany and Ireland highlighted CBD; Lithuania -novel foods, animal health and welfare, pesticides, Portugal – salmonella; Norway, fish consumption and undesirable contaminants.

Ethylene oxide (EIO2) highted by several MS, including Norway, Belgium, Spain, Austria & Lithuania. Germany shared a link to its EIO2 opinion. Barbara noted the EIO2 issue is being managed by EU and MS risk managers. EC has published a dedicated web page on the issue. There has been no request to EFSA for a risk assessment to date but we will keep CEN fully informed via usual channels if this changes.

ACTIONS: EFSA to keep MS informed of any developments on ethylene oxide;

EFSA to share the weekly round-up of media coverage on the CEN platform.

5. Social Science update

5.1 Consumer survey on dietary sugars – findings at EU level, data access via dashboard, and country reports for MS

Matthias Rasche & Paul Ortega summarised the methodology, scope and findings of this EU-wide survey gauging interest/awareness and risk perception on the topic; explained how CEN could access this information – including country-specific reports. Carla Geijskes noted recent social research had highlighted significant consumer concern in the Neths. regarding dietary sugars.

ACTIONS: (i) Circulate links to Power BI dashboard, knowledge index and risk perception index to CEN (also accessible via the Research section) (ii) EFSA to make country reports available by end of October. (iii) EFSA to identify and contact MS interested in a working session on drafting "Tips from Society" for risk communicators on dietary sugars – session to be held late Nov/early Dec

5.2 Update on Hazard vs Risk project – focus groups status and way forward

Claire Rogers and Domagoj Vrbos gave an overview of the project objectives, progress and timeline for completion. A status update on the ongoing focus groups was provided. CEN members were offered the opportunity to participate.

Charitini Frenaritou (Cyprus) expressed appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to a focus group to develop a localised communication product on the topic

ACTIONS: (i) EFSA seeks CEN volunteers to participate in the next batch of short focus group to support the creation of localised communication products (Oct 21 – Jan 22) (ii) EFSA to invite feedback on the drafted communication products before the finalisation of the project (Summer 2022).

5.3 EU Insights study on "Understanding of scientific information about risk and uncertainty"

Tony Smith outlined the project objectives and approach and asked the CEN for support in two areas: propose scientific areas to include in the study and share risk manager contacts in their country.

ACTIONS: (i) EFSA to provide CEN Members with further details about the topics for inclusion in the study once available (by end Oct 2021) (ii) CEN Members to provide contacts of risk managers (send to this email) for possible participation in the online study.

6. Crisis comms roadmap and Update of crisis communication guidelines

Giovanni Mancarella summarised EFSA's ongoing review of crisis communication that will – in close partnership with MS - produce a Roadmap and updated communication guidelines. Objectives, timelines and opportunities for MS input were outlined.

ACTIONS: (i) EFSA to organise an Info Session on crisis communication & guidelines update and share the document for comments (ii) CEN members to

contribute to guidelines' update by providing input/examples following Info Session.

7. Campaigns

7.1 African Swine Fever - progress update on 2021 activities

Francesca Matteucci and Drago Marojevic explained this campaign has been extended to nine further MS in south eastern Europe its second year; incorporating a larger outreach to a more specific audience and employing a coordinated communication approach – partnership with MS to implement a mix of shared, earned and owned media. It is due to run until mid-Oct. Austria shared a link to its previous communication work on this topic as did Finland.

7.2 #EUChooseSafeFood – update on 2021 campaign

Sharon Monti provided a summary of the campaign objectives and approach; shared a sample of the communication products being used and explained CEN would be asked to respond to a survey on the paid media aspect. Rory reaffirmed the centrality of close working with MSs to develop national communication plans and gave examples. Croatia (Sara), Portugal (Filipa) , Italy (Barbara) and Spain (Cesar) shared the spectrum of activities carried out to reach & tailor content to national audiences: press conferences, TV/radio appearances, use of social media influencers translation into regional languages within national borders etc).

CEN Comments: Much positive feedback, with Cyprus requesting clarification on how to share campaign material and express an interest to be involved in future efforts; SWE (Karin) – asked how SoMe influencers were vetted as audience trust remains key for organisations; importance of planning in advance by EFSA to allow CEN to discuss with their national institutions and allocate resources; Austria – highlighted importance of compliance with accessibility standards.

7.3 #EUChooseSafeFood 2022 – discussion on topics and 'focus' countries

James Ramsay explained that preparation for 2022 #EUChooseSafeFood was already underway, including possible focus countries and topics; set out topics under consideration and criteria for their inclusion (combination of MS/ EU priorities & relevance to target audiences – based on social research). CEN voted on preferred topics via an online survey tool.

ACTION: (i) EFSA to share survey results and approach MS for inclusion in 2022 campaign (ii) CEN members to consider being one of the 'focus countries' in 2022.

8. Communication activities

James gave an update on the most important communication activities planned by EFSA in the next 6 months.

It was agreed to hold **'hot topic calls'** prior to publication of the following: Front of pack labelling public consultation (mid-Nov); Bisphenol A – launch of public consultation (early Dec); Dietary sugars – scientific opinion (Jan 2022); Revised bee guidance (March 2022); Front of pack labelling (mid-March 2022)

ACTION: EFSA to circulate list of Hot Topic Calls as above. CEN to propose others as necessary.

9. Social media listening project

Matthias Rasche summarised EFSA's social media listening project launched in 2020, setting out (i) objectives - **track reputation, perform concern scanning, provide insights for Analytics** and (ii) methodology - use of two tools Pulsar and Audiense. EFSA offered the opportunity for three MS to take part in a pilot cooperation initiative for social listening and noted tentative interest from Austria, Germany and Sweden.
ACTION: EFSA seeks CEN members to join forces in social media listening and requests members to express their interest (and any questions) by 29 October 2021 via email to socialscience@efsa.europa.eu.

10. Update on EFSA multilingualism project

Alessandra Fantini set out EFSA's approach to multilingualism - including the extent to which the Authority publishes translated materials and tools used to monitor and report on use of these. Different types of machine translation technologies were explained. Alessandra highlighted that a free automated machine translation tool from the EC is available for EU public bodies; how CEN members could access the tool and help to improve it by submitting language data via the ELRC consortium. EFSA is currently testing the neural machine translation(MT) 'eTranslation' tool**.** Germany said they were piloting a MT translation tool while Elisa (LUX) explained national rules prohibit use of MT on government websites.

ACTION: EFSA to follow up with MS interested in knowing more about the 'eTranslation' tool or multilingualism.

13 Transparency Regulation Update

13.1 Informing the General Plan for Risk Communication – EFSA's work to date

Barbara Gallani presented a brief recap of the context for the General Plan for Risk Communication (GPRC) in the context of the four pillars of the Transparency Regulation. She highlighted the four reports delivered to the EC in March 2020 to help inform the GPRC; highlighted ongoing initiatives such as Food.eu (see below) and social media listening, hazards vs risks communication tools and ENCOMRAN – a MS-led project to optimise communication and coordination between national risk assessors and risk managers.

13.2 Risk profiles

Domagoj Vrbos outlined the methodology currently under development by EFSA within the risk profiling framework proposed in its scientific report: explaining the scientific principles of profiling risks through perception; how

these inform a framework that takes account of hazard and socio-cultural factors to provide relevant and targeted information on specific food-related topics. Rich discussion on how the combination of perception, values and types of 'interactive exchange' should all be considered in how to develop such risk profiles based on societal insights. Austria shared the link to its own risk barometer that enables comparison of risk perception on topics among groups such as consumers, scientists, journalists and doctors. Carla requested that we revisit this topic at a future meeting.

ACTION: EFSA to explore the possibility of applying methodologies from the AGES Risk Barometer to its analysis and visualisation of social research data (pilot in the context of risk profile work, with EB data in 2022)

13.3 Roadmap for Food.eu

Rory Harrington recapped on the initiative to develop a pan-EU website on food safety. Following approval from a Joint Steering Committee of 3 MS (Croatia, Germany and the Neths) and the EC, EFSA has developed a Roadmap setting out a step-by-step multi-partner approach to develop a working prototype of the website. EFSA is actively seeking partners to work together to implement the Roadmap**.** Fruitful discussion on whether a consumer-facing web portal should focus on outcomes of risk analysis or processes that build trust among citizens in how the findings were made. Mariela Pchelinska (Bulgaria) supported importance of incorporating risk manager elements into the portal**.**

ACTION: EFSA to follow up with MS to gauge interest; CEN members to consider if their organisation would participate.

13.4 Questions & discussions (see above in 11.2 and 11.3)

14. Key Countries Issues

14.1 Communication of hazard and risk - FAQ, infographics

Suzan Fiack presented efforts by the BfR to help audiences understand the difference between hazard (the potential of something to cause damage/harm) versus risk (the probability of whether – and how severely – health is damaged by something); shared communication materials that use examples tailored to the BfR's national audiences (bears, prussic acid, pesticides etc).

14.2 Belgian AESCA's 2020 annual report: from reporting to telling stories

Jean-Sébastien Walhin outlined how AFSCA had changed the way it communicated on its 2020 Annual Report – presenting it as a digital story rather than a document-based report. The microsite contains engaging information on the main issues tackled by the authority in 2020 – including COVID, food fraud, ASF & Brexit. However, despite the innovative format and strong outreach efforts, audience interest was limited and AFSCA is reviewing whether the ROI means it is desirable or sustainable to continue.

14.3 Chatbot simulation & exercise game

Edit Tothne Lippai presented a simulation exercise game developed by NEBIH to help officials such as food inspectors role play scenarios and solve real-life problems. Users interact with a Chatbot on Facebook Messenger and progress through a multi-format exercise by answering questions and making choices. The too, which uses gamification methods to highlight the importance of communication and problem-solving, should be launched in 2022**.**

ACTION: CEN to consider topics to present as part of Key Country Issues for the next meeting (Q2 2022)

15.EFSA logo workshop update

As a follow up to the email to the CEN on 21/9/21, Elisa Corsini updated the group on the rationale for EFSA's rebranding project (Transparency Regulation, a new organisational strategy & its upcoming 20th anniversary). MS input – as close partners - into shaping the new identity was flagged as crucial and CEN members are invited to attend a dedicated 2-hour workshop on 21 October.
ACTION: CEN members to consider attending the workshop on 21/10/21 following EFSA's invitation to be sent soon.

16.Glyphosate – fostering two-way communication

Flavio Fergnani gave an update on latest developments in the glyphosate reauthorisation process. He highlighted the need for ongoing two-way communication between EFSA and MS during this process and proposed that EFSA and interested MS could meet regularly to share relevant information and discuss joint actions to meet stakeholder and audience's needs.

ACTION: CEN members to contact Flavio if interested in being part of this group.

17.Conclusions and housekeeping

Barbara Gallani thanked all participants for a highly stimulating and fruitful meeting before closing the meeting**.**

MEETING ACTIONS SUMMARY	WHO	DATE

Item 2. Focal Point Review

CEN members to brief their country's Advisory Forum representatives on the opportunity offered by the FP review to coordinated communications	CEN	Q4 2021

Item 3. CEN ToR

EFSA to circulate revised Terms of Reference for comment by CEN members by 31.10.21	EFSA & CEN	31.10.21

Item 4. Media Round-up

EFSA to inform MS of developments on ethylene oxide EFSA to share the weekly round-up of media coverage on the CEN platform	EFSA	Ongoing

Item 5. Social science

5.1 Consumer survey on dietary sugars

(i) Circulate links to Power BI dashboard, knowledge index and risk perception index to CEN (also accessible via the Research section) EFSA to make country reports available by end of October	EFSA	31.10.2021
ii) EFSA to seek MSs interested in a working session on drafting "Tips from Society" for risk communicators on dietary sugars – session to be held late Nov/early Dec.	EFSA	31.10.2021

5.2 Update on Hazard vs Risk project

(i) EFSA to seek CEN volunteers to participate in short focus groups to create localised communication products	EFSA & CEN	Q4 2021
(ii) EFSA to invite feedback on the drafted communication products before the finalisation of the project (Summer 2022)	EFSA	Q2 2022

5.3 Study -Understanding of scientific information about risk and uncertainty

(i) EFSA to provide CEN Members with further details about the topics for inclusion in the study once available.	EFSA	31.10.2021
(ii) CEN Members to provide contacts of risk managers (send to this email) for possible participation in the online study	CEN	

Item 6. Crisis comms roadmap and Update of crisis communication guidelines

i) EFSA to organise an info session on crisis communication & guidelines update and share the document for comments	EFSA	31.10.21
(ii) CEN members to contribute to guidelines' update by providing input/examples following info session	CEN	30.11.21

Item 7.2 Campaigns EUChooseSafeFood 2022

(i) EFSA to share survey results and approach MS for inclusion in 2022 campaign	EFSA	15.11.2021
(ii) CEN members to consider being one of the 'focus countries' in 2022	CEN	Q4

Item 8 Communication activities

(i) EFSA to circulate list of Hot Topic Calls as above	EFSA	31.10.21
(ii) CEN to propose others hot topic if necessary	CEN	Ongoing

Item 9 Analytics - Social media listening

CEN members to express interest in partnering in social media listening by via socialscience@efsa.europa.eu	CEN	29.10.21

Item 10 Multilingualism

EFSA to follow up with MS interested in knowing more about the 'eTranslation' tool or multilingualism	CEN & EFSA	Ongoing

Item 13. Transparency Regulation

13.2 Risk profiles

EFSA to explore applying methodologies from the AGES Risk Barometer to its analysis and visualisation of social research data (pilot in the context of risk profile work, with EB data in 2022)	EFSA	Q1 2022

Item 13.3 Food.eu Roadmap

EFSA to follow up with MS to gauge interest; CEN members to consider if their organisation would participate	EFSA & CEN	Q4 2021

Item 14. Key Country Issues

CEN to consider topics to present as part of Key Country Issues for the next meeting (Q2 2022)	CEN	Q2 2022

Item 15. EFSA logo/rebranding

CEN members to consider attending the workshop on 21/10/21 following EFSA's invitation to be sent soon	CEN & EFSA	20.10.21

Item 16. Glyphosate

CEN members to contact Flavio if interested in being part of an EFSA/MS information sharing group	CEN	Q4