



Final Minutes

81st MEETING OF THE EFSA ADVISORY FORUM

Meeting details

Venue: Virtual meeting, Teams

Meeting hours: 9:30 – 13:00 (27.10.2021)

9:30 – 13:00 (28.10.2021)

Members	
Austria (AT)	Klemens Fuch
Belgium (BE)	Fabien Bolle Xavier Van Huffel
Bulgaria (BG)	Iliyan Kostov (1 st Day) Donka Popova (2 nd Day)
Croatia (HR)	Darja Sokolić
Cyprus (CY)	Charitini Frenaritou Stelios Yiannopoulos<
Czech Republic (CZ)	Jitka Götzová (1 st Day)
Denmark (DK)	Christine Nellemann
Estonia (EE)	Piret Priisalu
Finland (FI)	Pia Mäkelä (1 st Day)
France (FR)	Matthieu Schuler (1 st attendance at AF) Salma Elreedy
Germany (DE)	Andreas Hensel Tanja Schwerdtle
Greece (EL)	Stavros Zannopoulos (2 nd Day)
Hungary (HU)	Akos Józwiak
Iceland (IS)	Hrönn Ólína Jörundsdóttir
Ireland (IE)	Pamela Byrne
Italy (IT)	Alessandra Perella
Latvia (LV)	Vadims Bartkevics
Lithuania (LT)	Deimante Bikneryte (1 st attendance at AF)
Luxembourg (LU)	Marc Fischer
Malta (MT)	Ingrid Busuttil
Netherlands (NL)	Antoon Opperhuizen
Poland (PL)	Jacek Postupolski
Portugal (PT)	Pedro Portugal Gaspar (1 st Day) Filipa Melo de Vasconcelos
Romania (RO)	Simona Radulescu
Slovak Republic (SK)	Milo Bystricky Katarina Kromerová
Slovenia (SI)	Urška Blaznik
Spain (ES)	Isabel Peña Rey Icía Fierros Sánchez-Cuenca
Sweden (SE)	Per Bergman (1 st Day) Cecilia Hulten (2 nd Day)



Observers & Other Participants	
Albania (AL)	Pamela Radovani
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA)	Dzemil Hajric
Iceland (IS)	Hrönn Ólína Jörundsdóttir
Montenegro (ME)	Vladimir Djakovic (1 st attendance at AF) Ana Velimirovic (1 st Day)
Norway (NO)	Harald Gjein (1 st attendance at AF) Danica Grahek-Ogden
Republic of North Macedonia (MK)	Nikolche Babovski
Serbia (RS)	Tamara Bošković
Switzerland (CH)	Vincent Dudler (1 st Day)
Turkey (TR)	Serap Hanci
European Commission – DG SANTE (Observer)	Anastasia Alvizou (1 st Day)
European Commission – DG SANTE (Observer)	Athanasios Raikos
European Commission – DG SANTE (Observer)	Luis Vivas-Alegre (1 st Day)

EFSA Representatives	
Barbara Gallani (Chair)	Eileen O'Dea
Juliane Kleiner (Co-Chair)	Domagoj Vrbos
Guilhem de Seze (Co-Chair)	Sérgio Potier Rodeia (Advisory Forum Secretariat)
Claudia Heppner	Maria Azevedo Mendes (Advisory Forum Secretariat)
Marta Hugas	Cristina Alonso Andicoberry (Advisory Forum Secretariat)
Victoria Villamar	Sofia Altesini (Advisory Forum Secretariat)
Donna Lucas	

Apologies	
Kosovo ¹ (XK)	Naser Krasniqi

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of agenda

Barbara Gallani, Chair of the meeting, welcomed all the participants to the 81st Advisory Forum (AF) meeting, noting EFSA's Executive Director apologies for his absence due to the EU Agencies Network (EUAN). The Chair particularly welcomed:

- **Mr Matthieu Schuler** – new **AF Member** for **France** (Managing Director General of the "Science for Expertise Division", The French Agency for Food, Environmental, and Occupational Health & Safety – ANSES, replacing **Moez Sanaa**)
- **Mr Vladimir Djakovic** – new **AF observer** for **Montenegro** (director of the Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Affairs, replacing **Vesna Dakovic**)

¹ 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.



- **Ms Deimantė Biknerytė** – new **AF Member** for **Lithuania** (Advisor of the Veterinary Sanitary Division of the State Food and Veterinary Service, replacing **Jurgita Bakasėnienė**)
- **Mr Harald Gjein** – new **AF Member** for **Norway** (Director- Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety and Environment (VKM) – Secretariat, replacing **Cecilie Rolstad Denby**)
- **Ms Andreea Ion** – new **AF Alternate** for **Romania** (The National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority of Romania – ANSVSA, replacing **Ioana Neghirlă**) – was also acknowledged by the Chair *in spite of her absence*.

The Chair also welcomed:

- **Anastasia Alvizou, Athanasios Raikos and Luis Vivas-Alegre** representatives of the European Commission (EC);

The Chair informed the plenary that:

- the minutes from the 80th AF Forum were published on EFSA website and on MS Teams on 06.08.2021.
- all 7 Action Items agreed at the previous meeting were implemented.
- the meeting would be recorded for minute-taking purposes.

The Plenary didn't raise any objection to the recording of the meeting.

Under AOB, no additional items were raised.

2. Update on the implementation of the new Transparency Regulation in the Food Chain

■ 2.1 - Update on the new EFSA's Management Board (MB)

The Chair, Barbara Gallani, gave the floor to the EC to update the Plenary on the current and new EFSA's MB, including specific information on the areas where the EC has the lead.

Regarding the current MB, a renewal procedure was launched last spring to fill the existing empty seat (mandate until the end of June 2022). Two (2) successful candidates were identified and proposed to the Council on 13.07.2021. Following consultation with the European Parliament (EP), the Council Decision on the appointment of the new member is expected at the end of November 2021.

Regarding the new EFSA MB, the EC remarked that, as of 1.07.2022, and as foreseen in the new governance model in the Transparency Regulation (TR), the composition of the MB will consist of:

- EU Member States (MS) representatives – twenty-seven (27) members and twenty-seven (27) alternate members;
- EC representatives – two (2) members and two (2) alternate members;
- EP representatives - two members (2);
- Representatives of civil society and food chain interests – four (4) members and four (4) alternate members: one (1) member and one (1) alternate member from each of the following areas - consumer organisations, environmental non-governmental organisations, farmers' organisations and industry organisations.

The EC noted its role in the establishment of a list of successful candidates for the representatives of civil society and food chain interests, following a call for applications, in the next EFSA MB. According to the latter procedure, set out in the General Food Law Regulation, as amended, this list is forwarded to the Council who is responsible, after consultation with the EP, to appoint the new EFSA MB members.



More specifically, the call for applications was launched over summer; it resulted in a total of 32 applications (11 from industry, 7 from consumers, 8 from farmers and 6 from environmental NGOs). Evaluation is still ongoing, and the list of successful candidates is expected to be finalised by the end of the year/early next year. Upon finalisation, it will be forwarded to the Council early next year, which will then consult the EP. Consultation with the EP will indicatively last until March-April 2022. The Council's Decision on the appointment of representatives of civil society and food chain interests is indicatively expected early June 2022.

Regarding the appointment of representatives from EU MS, the EC emphasised that this falls under the domain of the Council. According to the TR, representatives are nominated by MS, following an invitation by the Council, and are appointed by the Council. MS have been invited to nominate members and alternate members by 31.01.2022. The Council plans to appoint the members of the MS representatives in early June 2022 as well.

The Chair thanked the EC for the detailed update on EFSA's MB and opened the floor for comments.

Norway inquired about the position of the European Economic Area (EEA) countries in the MB. The EC confirmed that, as per recent provisions, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein will be able to attend MB meetings as observers.

■ 2.2 – Update on the implementation of the TR

The Chair gave the floor to Guilhem de Seze to update the Plenary on the state of play of the:

- TR implementation, including information on new IT tools and processes;
- the architecture transformation programme (ART) running to adapt EFSA to deliver requirements of the TR and Strategy 2027;
- engagement and communication initiatives;
- new EFSA organisation design that will be enforced as of 1st of January 2022.

Guilhem provided the Plenary with an overview on the number of received dossiers, submitted through the new IT submission system in electronic format. He noted that based on the collected information, the implementation of the TR is proceeding as planned. He also touched upon the challenges, reassuring the audience that existing constraints are proportional to the changes that have been introduced to the processes. He further emphasised the additional work ahead in order to go from minimum viable solution into a more sustainable long-term system; this will include all actors (EFSA/EC/Stakeholders/Applicants), analysis of the processes and implementational of the new organisation chart of EFSA.

Guilhem reported on the Transformation Programme for the upcoming year (ART 2022) and described the six projects which intend to cover all the continuous improvements needed namely: Organisational Design Project (ODP); Risk Assessment Project (RAP); IUCLID Release 2; Confidentiality Assessment and Sanitisation Project (CASA); Customer Relationship Management Project (CRM); and Enabling Services Project (ESP).

On communication and engagement actions, Guilhem briefly outlined the continuous targeted communication and engagement initiatives linked to the above 6 projects via multiple channels (EFSA website, target communication, social media and open.EFSA portal) to ensure a timely update and engagement with EFSA's stakeholders, MS and the public. On this regard, he also stressed the joint work with EC at multiple levels.

Guilhem also provided an overview on the EFSA's new organisational design aimed at better preparing EFSA to deliver the TR and new EFSA's strategy requirements. Guilhem visually presented the rationale for redesigning EFSA's organisation, particularly noting the changes related to the new RA Departments: i) Risk Assessment Production, which will be supporting the 10 sectoral panels focusing on delivering scientific advice and the ii) the Risk Assessment Service - scientific, regulatory and administration services to the scientific production. He also noted that in the Communication and



Partnership Department a notable change is the creation of the KNOW Unit – a unit aimed at reflecting the central role of partnerships in the new EFSA strategy. Guilhem emphasised that changes are ongoing with work that will be carried-out in upcoming months (in 2022).

The Chair thanked Guilhem for the comprehensive overview on the state of play of the TR implementation and organisational change and opened the floor for questions.

Germany expressed appreciation for the approach taken, namely going into the structures, and focusing on enhancing the service function of EFSA. He inquired for further elaboration on the organisation of processes and the nature of the new approach taken regarding the implemented changes (e.g. customer or EFSA-orientated) and how the processes velocity is being analysed.

Guilhem addressed the comment by elaborating on the rationale behind the changes – a decision to start back from the fundamentals and harmonise the procedures between all panels, considering the commonality of their task - receiving a mandate and publishing an opinion at the end. The new approach of End-to-End risk assessment is the result of leaning into a top-down design.

On the changes in the organisational design, Guilhem noted that all 10 panels are part of the same department (Risk Assessment) and are being supported by the ASSESS department, tasked with providing scientific and administrative support to the panels. The introduced changes facilitate continuous improvement through the transfer of best practices between the panels. Furthermore, the existence of one end-to-end process permits the use of an IT system, based on the commercial software Appian – leader in case management workflows. The use of such system provides a high degree of reporting and monitoring.

Efficiency gain and timeliness are expected as a result of the new organisational structure. However, the resource challenge of EFSA, stemming from the increased complexity and increased expectations from Risk Managers in the form of mandates, applications and established processes pose a challenge the future.

The Netherlands praised EFSA for the progresses made and emphasised their willingness to collaborate with the new KNOW, Unit. Barbara provided clarifications on the new KNOW unit's scope, pointing out that processes are being developed on horizon scanning knowledge organisation and partnerships.

Germany raised a comment on Crisis Management and the importance of adapting the existing procedures through short-cuts and measures in a way that accelerate the process, for a timely response. Barbara informed the Plenary that Crisis Preparedness are part of the agenda for the next AF meeting. Additionally, work is being done on the crisis communication roadmap to improve the timely cooperation and coordination during a crisis.

Hungary commented that the provided overview on the organisational changes seems static and it does not provide sufficient information on how the processes are shaped and how the changes reflect on the Units. Barbara confirmed that the organigramme indeed does not portray the complexity of the processes which go beyond units and departments. She further commented on the KNOW and ENREL units and noted on the overall need to provide a better description of the processes.

Barbara thanked Guilhem for his presentation and participants for the comments and closed the item.

■ 2.3 - Update on SPIDO

The Chair introduced Claudia Heppner to present the progress and the next steps on the SPIDO (Studies and Project Identification & Development Office) work.

Claudia expressed her gratitude for the contributions submitted in June, related to the themes of this year (omics and insect pollinators). In October the open call to develop the respective roadmap for actions was launched and the relevant information has been shared with the AF, Focal Points (FP) and Article 36 organisations. The deadline for submission of offers and closing of the open call is 18.01.2022.

Claudia informed the Plenary that she would provide an update on the following points:



- Last signed contract related to the 1st wave of roadmaps for action;
- Solicit the feedback of the AF for the future themes;
- Feedback on a proposed revision regarding the process of shaping the scope of future themes.

She went on providing an update on the last contract in the 1st wave of roadmaps for action - risk assessment of combined exposure to multiple chemicals (RACEMiC) which aims to develop and implement a harmonised approach for human health risk assessment from both dietary and non-dietary exposure to multiple chemicals. She also informed the Plenary that the contract was awarded to a consortium of 4 MS institutions and that the work is expected to be finalised by June 2022.

On the proposed themes for 2022, Claudia noted that the AF has received the scoping documents which outline the challenges for communication science and for animal welfare, but not for exposure science as the latter is on a slightly different timeline. In case of support to move forward with these proposed themes, the next steps will be to develop the theme papers which provide the vision, the objectives, work areas and opportunities for collaboration and desired impact.

1) Communication science: "Evidence-based risk communication in the EU food safety system"

On this theme, originally proposed for 2021 but deferred to 2022 at the EC's request, the main goals are to i) use evidence from social sciences to meet the TR provisions, as evidenced by EFSA's technical report on risk communications (2021) where research needs have been identified, ii) clarify the roles of different actors in risk analysis roles and to explain the key concepts and iii) work towards risk communication models to achieve coherent communication at EU and MS level. Claudia also outlined the proposed work areas and the draft timelines:

- Development of theme paper: - November 2021 – March 2022;
- Open call for roadmap development: April – July 2022;
- Preparation of roadmap: October 2022 – June 2023.

Claudia anticipated that the current timeline period for finishing the roadmap is currently set at 8 months, however possible revision of the length (from 8 to 10 months) of the period might be needed, due to the very tight timeframe. She emphasised that it is important to align with EC, who has already provided their input with the observation that trade-offs should be addressed as part risk managers' risk communication tasks, and thus perhaps not for the scope of this EFSA SPIDO Theme.

2) Animal Welfare: Quantitative Risk assessment and Data Collection in Animal Welfare

On this theme, Claudia remarked the growing need and interest on the topic of Animal Welfare. She noted that the increased desire among consumers for a fairer and more transparent treatment of livestock is evidenced in the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy. Moreover, the EC is currently in the process of revising the European legislation on Animal Welfare and currently there is a public consultation ongoing to solicit feedback on options addressing the shortcomings identified in the current legislation.

Claudia mentioned that the main drivers of change related to the large gap of knowledge on the rearing conditions and welfare state as well as the little access to consistent data, and the lack of scientific golden-standard method for the evaluation of welfare. Thus, there is a clear need to update the current guidelines considering further components of animal welfare parameters and move towards a quantitative assessment methodology for animal welfare. She also informed the Plenary about main goals, proposed work areas and timelines. On the latter, Claudia noted the following draft timelines in order to allow for the preparation of the roadmap in 10 months:

- Development of theme paper: - November 2021 – March 2022
- Open call for roadmap development: April – July 2022
- Preparation of roadmap: October 2022 – June 2023.



Claudia emphasised that the EC (DG SANTE) supports the development of this theme.

3) Exposure science: “Advancing aggregated Exposure assessment”

Claudia informed the Plenary that the scoping of the theme is ongoing and provided some insights on the thought process. She clarified that exposure does not stay within regulatory silos – non-dietary exposure assessment is difficult and EFSA gets increasingly challenged to address the contribution also from non-dietary exposure sources and address aggregated exposure. Currently this is done in a more qualitative way but not in a quantitative manner, therefore it is important to engage in this area. She underlined that there is no harmonised methodology or guidance related to aggregated exposure assessment to chemicals available from EFSA or other EU agencies and that this is an important driver for the One Substance – One Assessment initiative.

She further expanded on goals and working areas of the theme, highlighted the importance of integrating new data streams such as biomonitoring data into exposure assessment and the need to develop a framework for exposure reconstruction of chemicals and to implement aggregated exposure assessment at European level.

Claudia also noted the need to ensure complementarity and build upon the existing activities currently ongoing or future ones such as the Horizon Europe Partnerships for the assessment of risks from chemicals (PARC). Therefore, EFSA will organise a workshop in 2022 to co-design the scope the theme together with other partners and encouraged the participation of AF, FP and Art 36 organisations on the topic.

Last part of Claudia’s intervention focused on the current engagement tools using EU surveys to trigger feedback from different actors on the draft theme papers. Based on the positive experience of a pilot project related to the Animal Welfare theme, she highlighted that the consultation of theme papers will be replaced by workshops as this is more meaningful and effective. Claudia informed the plenary on an ongoing horizon scanning exercise which aims to identify future regulatory science needs and challenges which may trigger scientific divergence together with a wide range of different actors (EU institutions, MS, Academia, Stakeholders, and international organisations).

France praised SPIDO’s mechanism which allows to build knowledge and data where needed and acknowledged the ‘communication science’ and ‘animal welfare’ themes as very well placed on the agenda. Regarding the third theme on ‘exposure science’ France expressed the need of carefully aligning it with PARC to avoid overlaps, all the more as some topics further on SPIDO’s roadmap (such as microbiome for food/environment) are more specific to meet EFSA needs that are not addressed elsewhere. Claudia agreed and noted that having already awarded the RACEMIC contract to 4 MS institutions involved in PARC, is already a good base to avoid overlapping and identifying complementary works areas. Additionally, the planned workshop would facilitate the right framing of the topic and to identify work areas in regulatory science which are not tackled by PARC taking also into account the difference in terms of financial resources.

Claudia asked the Plenary an endorsement on the three proposed themes for 2022 and respective roadmaps; the Plenary agreed on the endorsement with no objections.

Action Point 1: EFSA to: provide information on the Workshop on Exposure Science (possible date 24/02/2022); MSs to: express interest in workshop participation, including experts’ name, contact details and short information on scientific competence in exposure assessment by **30.11.2021** (post-meeting note: deadline has been adjusted to the **20.12.2021**)

3. Update on Risk Assessment Research Assembly (RARA)

The Chair gave the floor to Marta Hugas to inform the Plenary about the organisation of the Risk Assessment Research Assembly (RARA).



She started with the milestones achieved since the first RARA event, in 2018 and EFSA's vision for RARA22. In particular, Marta outlined the key elements and functions which can be summarised in the concepts of "broaden and bridge" stressing how RARA is aimed at broadening i) the scope in order to be seen as knowledge-broker role together with MS/national food safety agencies, ii) the narrative from food safety centric to food safety in support of safe and sustainable food systems (i.e. support SDGs & Green Deal), and iii) participation – to be more attractive to national funding agencies.

In addition, RARA has a bridge function: i) science & policy (=regulatory science) and how to give together the best advice to risk managers; ii) MS authorities - how to share this broker function with FP/national food agencies; iii) EU and national (and regional) research funding which has been identified as a weak point in RARA 2018. Horizon 2020 evaluation found lack of synergy between MS funding so with next RARA the aim is to tackle also this gap EFSA aims to bridge this in food safety; and iv) different scientific disciplines in the food chain (beyond traditional food safety actors to food system actors).

On the objectives of RARA, she noted the importance of building a greater understanding and promote synergies to enable research outputs to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and relevant European policies, including the Green Deal.

Marta informed the Plenary that, in agreement with the BfR, the date of the physical meeting in Berlin was postponed to 7.12.2022, back to back with the AF and FP meetings. She indicated that the main reason for this rescheduling was the still on-going travel restrictions and frozen travel budget which would not allow to get all participants to come in person, undermining objective 3 of the RARA (networking).

She pointed out that the postponement presents the opportunity to reflect on the One Conference (June 2022) and referred that overall, the RARA programme should remain similar and that speakers were asked to remain available for next year. However, the programme committee will resume work in the beginning of 2022.

Marta thanked again the FP for their work on the national funding opportunities (now published on the Research Platform on EFSA's website²) and suggested to the AF to encourage the FPs to reach out to national funders about aligning of national and EU funding, and to possibly involve them in the RARA ()

The Chair gave the floor to Juliane Kleiner as co-Chair of the session.

4. Focal Point Review

The Chair, Juliane Kleiner, gave the floor to Barbara Gallani, who reported back on the Focal Point Review process and presented the proposed approach to developing a new Focal Point operational framework.

Barbara highlighted the extensive and inclusive review process, where both the AF and FP participated. She referred to its main drivers, in particular, the TR, with its call for an enhanced cooperation with MS and financial boost of €1M in the budget allocated to MS in 2020, and EFSA Strategy 2027, where MS have a more prominent role in contributing to its sustainability dimension.

Barbara informed that the review process had led to the development of recommendations that could be divided into three groups:

- "EFSA strategy", representing what EFSA needs from the FP network.
- "FP operational framework", representing what EFSA can offer and provide to MS.

² <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/engage/research-platform>



- “Added value”, including what the FP can get out from the review process, since the proposed change in the framework must also be of benefit for FP.

Taking the above as a starting point, Barbara explained that three scenarios were developed: Scenario 0: no changes to the current FP framework but with five new areas of work; Scenario 1: changes in the funding framework to allow core tasks plus clusters of MS advancing the work on specific domains; and Scenario 2: individual contracts between EFSA and MS with specific and different tasks per MS.

The proposed FP Network operational framework presented here combines the scenarios above to achieve, in a gradual way, a strengthened Focal Point network for a more effective cooperation between EFSA and MS. During 2022, five work packages (WP) will be introduced, addressing areas identified as “quick-wins” during the review process, namely: i) data collection support; ii) digital ecosystem orchestrators; iii) crisis preparedness; iv) coordinated risk communication; and v) partnerships facilitation. During 2022, these WP will be piloted together with MS (4 to 6 per WP) with the aim of testing a cluster approach that will be the basis of interaction from 2023 onwards, thus allowing for a smooth transition from the current model to the new one.

To support this, in 2022, additional budget of 100.000 € per working package will be allocated, with a total investment of €2.5M. The ambition of an increased budget as of 2023 was also stressed.

The Chair opened the floor for questions and comments.

Germany raised a question on the design of the content of the working packages and its state-of-play, asking whether there is still space for input from MS to structure them. Barbara clarified that the idea is to kick-off a process during the remaining of 2021 to define together with MS the scope of the WPs.

The Netherlands praised the work carried out in the framework of the review and stressed its relevance as a mechanism to strengthen the role of the FP also in areas such as partnerships and capacity building, where the network can assume a central role. The importance of taking the angle of MS’ needs and priorities was also welcome. To this end, EFSA aims at introducing a strong focus on working with clusters of MS in specific domains.

Norway stressed the relevance of adopting a framework for the FP operation which ensures predictability when it comes to topics and the use of FP resources. Barbara confirmed that this is also an EFSA priority and the proposal is to adopt, as of 2023, multiannual agreements supporting the planning of the FPs work in groups of MS.

France underlined that the timeframe for the work is tight since EFSA Management Team discussed the new FP Operational framework on the 22 October 2021 with little time for AF members to receive the proposal and reflect on it. A clarification was also requested for what related to potential mix of the different scenarios. He supported the proposal of an evolution of the network according to MS possibilities and found interesting the idea of introducing working packages to be tested during 2022 by groups of MS. The relevance of the area of Crisis Preparedness for the work of the FP Network was questioned since in any country there is a clear scheme for crisis response, including rapid risk assessment capacities, and then risk management decision to be taken up subsequently involving various national actors. Emergency preparedness has to be set up in accordance with crisis response schemes, which are rather complex, and not as a standalone topic.

Italy intervened asking a clarification on the scenarios presented and requested more time to elaborate internally on the provided background documents and asked for a rescheduling of the endorsement in December. Barbara clarified that reaching an agreement on the proposed approach would allow time during 2022 to develop the framework together with MS, thus enabling a gradual implementation.

Sweden acknowledged the relevance of introducing the working packages but asked for clarification on the three scenarios and the proposal to be endorsed. Barbara clarified that the final framework which will be in place as of 2023, will be developed also on the basis of a learning-by doing process with MS carried-out during 2022. The Chair stressed that the endorsement is not related to a selected scenario but on the gradual approach and way forward; further discussion on the framework will occur in 2022 based on the experience of the working package.



The Plenary was also informed that in 2022, grants will remain as they are and that, for the new framework to be adopted as of 2023 the financial instrument will be reviewed together with the introduction of multiannual plans with a very strong focus on coordinated work in small groups of MS. Barbara also clarified that the introduction of the cluster approach supported by additional budget and a new operational framework as of 2023 should mean a shift from a FP network of individuals to a FP network of MS functions with broader outreach to expertise in each country. In the case of data for example, FPs are not meant to be experts on this remit but to be structured as a function that reaches out to individuals, experts and organisations in the countries providing the input supporting EFSA's and MS work.

Spain and Ireland expressed concerns on the current workload of the FP and the risk of overloading the Network as an element to be considered when scoping the WPs. The relevance of clarifying as much as possible what is expected is fundamental as well as providing a clear set of indicators, particularly when referring to complex domains like data collection.

Finland congratulated EFSA for the FP review work and raised a comment on the need of clarifying the objectives and expectations of the working packages, allowing MS to facilitate planning and alignment with their national strategies; the complexity of data collection as a WP theme was also raised.

Victoria indicated that the WP topics were introduced and discussed during the last FP meeting and that further input on them, stemming from future FP review discussions and experience gained with the implementation of current FP additional tasks, would help in setting of main clusters to be established in new FP Agreements as of 2023.

Ireland and Portugal raised a comment on the importance of ensuring the process is inclusive and that a clustered approach does not lead to exclusivity. Portugal also commented that the current intersection between the areas of risk assessment and risk management makes the timing of the review adequate for a prompt reaction. Moreover, a shift from EFSA-centric approach to a more inclusive one is needed.

Victoria and Barbara clarified that diversity is an opportunity: the work carried out by a cluster of MS should produce knowledge and expertise to be put at disposal of the others, so everybody is able to move forward.

Germany commented on the importance of considering the AF perspective when defining the scope of the WPs, addressing the feasibility of the activities envisaged under each area of work.

To this end, EFSA proposed to have a dedicated follow-up right after the Plenary for setting up a volunteer group of MS to work on the scope of the WP and to report back at the 82nd AF meeting, in December 2021.

The Netherlands raised concern on the tight timelines to carry-out the work. Barbara acknowledged the time constrains issue proposing to adopt a double step approach with a phase of reporting back on the scoping of the working packages by the group during the 82nd AF in December and the continuation of the work in the following months and beginning of 2022.

The suggestion of a volunteer group of MS was welcomed by the Plenary and interest was received already in the meeting from Germany, France, and the Netherlands to join the MS volunteer group.

The Chair summarised that the plenary agreed on the high-level plan for EFSA and MS to continue working together during 2022 for establishing a new FP operational framework as of 2023. This included i) the implementation, during 2022, of current FP agreements; ii) further discussions among EFSA and MSs on the draft FP operational framework and proposed WPs for 2022; and iii) the implementation of new FP agreements as of 2023. The Plenary also agreed to launch a call for expressions of interest for a group of MS volunteers to further reflect on the draft FP operational framework and proposed 5 WPs, and report back to the Plenary at the 82nd AF meeting in December 2021. The Chair thanked Barbara and all MS for fruitful discussion and closed the agenda item.



Action Point 2: EFSA to: request expressions of interest for MS volunteers (AF, FP) to scope activities for the proposed 5 WPs (1-week deadline) **by end of 10.2021** (post-meeting note: deadline has been adjusted to the **05.11.2021**); EFSA and MS to: work on the five WPs during November 2021 for reporting at 82nd AF meeting.

5. Outcome of EFSA technical report on the Science of Risk Communication

The Chair gave the floor to Barbara Gallani and Domagoj Vrbos to provide a summary of the EFSA technical report on Risk Communication and share progresses on other initiatives, including the pilot for a joint EFSA-MS pan-EU website Food.eu.

Barbara informed the Plenary that, in response to the EC mandate on a General Plan on Risk Communication (GPRC), EFSA has produced four reports to inform the discussion between EC, MS and EFSA on the future of risk communication in Europe. Barbara noted two streams of work: a first one related to the production of the Scientific Report on the technical assistance in the field of risk communication, driven by a working group on social research methods and advice, and a second one which led to the development of three supporting reports commissioned to an external contractor, focused on i) communication product catalogue & Dissemination guidelines, ii) engagement toolkit and on iii) mapping communication capacities.

Regarding the Scientific Report, Barbara briefly outlined the structure and content, noting the in-depth involvement of the Communication Experts Network (CEN) through a steering committee that actively contributed to the work on the report. Recommendations stemming from the report are divided in two groups: 1) Specific recommendations for the development of the GPRC and 2) Recommendations on future research that have led to development of a proposal for a SPIDO topic on risk communication.

On the “communication product catalogue & dissemination guidelines” report, Barbara noted that it represents a practical catalogue intended to be a living document with examples of products, dissemination channels, campaigns that national authorities in the food sector are using effectively to communicate about risk. The catalogue is aimed at supporting communication professionals with advice and examples.

When coming to the report on “mapping of coordination capacities for EU risk communication”, Barbara stressed how, through the use of flowcharts per country, the report shows the diversity among MS in the structure of the communication flow at national level, hence explaining why coordinated communication represents such a challenging issue. The role of FP and CEN members to develop the flowcharts was praised. Barbara highlighted the main findings and challenges identified in the report, particularly the good communication flow between EFSA and MS but also limited resources in MS, hence a need for more investment and support for communications professionals working in this area.

Recommendations from the reports can be divided in two parts: those specific for the EC and risk managers, and those where we can advance as EFSA. A more detailed overview of the latter was presented, including ongoing work on audience segmentation and coordinated campaigns.

Barbara informed the Plenary about discussions at FP and CEN level which led to proposals on how to strengthen the interaction and coordinated communication between the two networks in the short-medium term. The FP network review represents a great opportunity to set-up an enhanced communications function funded by EFSA and embedded in MS existing structure. The importance of building a community of communication specialist in the MS would ensure adequate capacity to develop consistent but localised content and campaigns.

To conclude, Barbara stressed how all the different aspects presented during the meeting, from the audience segmentation to food.eu and joint campaigns, a strengthened FP and additional research are aimed to support the EU general plan for risk communication.



France raised a concern on the importance of clarifying expectations related to the involvement of FPs in a possible coordinated communication function given the distinction within institutions between FP staff and communication teams who have their own availability constraints; the need to work jointly with EFSA on communication was also acknowledged. Barbara clarified that, in the context of a shift from FP individuals toward a FP function, the aim is to make available funding through which communication specialists could support the function in national authorities, providing a bridge between the EU level and the national one when creating content and choosing communication channels.

Netherlands intervened asking clarification on how EFSA plans to consider the instability and variety of audiences and the dynamics of audiences itself in a changing environment. Germany highlighted the relevance of comparative information Europe and MS between different risk perceptions (as it is performed through the Eurobarometer), putting the focus on how EFSA can ensure scientific research on risk perception and analysis available to adopt tailor-made approaches.

Barbara informed the Plenary that EFSA aims to increase the investment in shared methodologies in social science research in the areas of food safety, which will provide Europe with a repository of comparable data on perspectives and views of citizens to prioritize specific topics for communication and engagement. Domagoj stressed how, besides the Eurobarometer, collecting information from national level with MS on board is crucial. Having a repository of periodically updated data will support EFSA, the EC and MS in adapting the way we communicate with citizens.

The Chair thanked Barbara and Domagoj for the presentation and closed the agenda item.

6. Thematic discussion on Partnerships

The Chair, Guilhem de Seze, welcomed the participants for the 2nd day of the meeting and presented an overview of the sessions and topics.

■ 6.1 – Introduction

Guilhem opened the thematic discussion setting the scene by providing an overview on the main drivers that led to the EFSA strategy 2027, where partnerships assume a central role. Among the main points, Guilhem noted i) the need to be responsive to policy makers and to the society, ii) the importance of being able to address complexity, which – increasingly – is a challenge for risk assessment, iii) the need to inspire trust across the food safety scene and society, something which is supported by our commitment to engagement, partnering and communication, and (iv) the opportunities that may emerge via increased interaction with other ecosystem actors.

He pointed out that Partnerships are a common answer to address these challenges and, in this context, he further detailed the role partnerships play in EFSA's Strategy 2027, by contributing to its Strategic Objectives (SOs).

He expanded on the concept of Partnerships and on the differences and paths between cooperation and partnerships – moving from an *ad-hoc*, short-lived and transactional relationship to one based on trust, common investment, co-creation, shared risks and benefits which eventually will enable us to align strategies .

From previous discussions in the AF, AF Discussion Group on Partnerships and FP network, as well as the indications provided by the Art. 36 survey, several challenges have been identified, among others: lack of staff resources and sufficient funding for joint actions, complexity of administrative processes, lack of joint work planning leading to not synchronised activities, limited visibility or uptake of MS work in national initiatives, diversity and limited interoperability of tools and processes and limitations in engaging with ecosystem actors.

The Chair proceeded with a brief presentation of the session's topics and speakers and gave the floor to Claudia Heppner to inform AF members about engagement opportunities under the G&P umbrella.



■ 6.2 - Engagement opportunities in envisioned calls for grant and procurement

Claudia opened this agenda topic by noting the importance of grants and procurements (G&P) as an opportunity for engagement. She referred to Guilhem's introduction, highlighting partnerships in the food safety ecosystem as part of EFSA's vision, evidenced in its 2027 strategy through the 3 SOs. As one of the drivers for change, she outlined the Green Deal ambition, which will require improving food safety while moving to sustainable food systems. Another driver for change is the new TR which provides and increases G&P budget. She proceeded by highlighting the aim of her presentation – 1) to share with the participants EFSA's ambition on the draft multi-annual G&P calls plan covering the period 2022-to 2024, and 2) to raise awareness and interest in participation in these upcoming calls but also to explore synergies with MS initiatives

She informed the Plenary on the budgetary envelope: overall budget of 41.3 million per year, which does not include ongoing activities.

Claudia, noted that is a forecast for envisaged calls to be coming within next years which could be subject to change, and proceeded by exemplifying calls which were not covered. She informed that the multiannual G&P plan for 2022-2024 is a planning table of envisioned calls that will be published on EFSA's website.

EFSA intends to launch more than 50 calls either as grants or procurements over 2022-2024 in the main the following domains new approach methodologies (NAMs), artificial intelligence (AI), animal welfare, plant health, capacity building, evidence management, omics, emerging risk, insect pollinators, environmental risk assessment, exposure science, data infrastructure, biotechnology, toxicology, reoccurring scientific needs and risk communication.

She proceeded with some examples of the roadmaps, asking participants to consider the background note shared which gives a comprehensive overview of the envisioned calls and the G&P table. Three of the roadmaps are quite advanced, i) Artificial intelligence for evidence management in RA, ii) New approach methodologies (NAM) in RA, and iii) EU Partnership for systems-based environmental RA. She highlighted the key objectives, key deliverables, and timelines for each of the roadmaps (to be finalised between January and March 2022), as well as challenges identified. The latter will serve as a basis for commissioned project calls in the identified work areas from 2022 onwards. She went on with examples of the shortcomings encountered and of the foreseen launched project calls to fill in these gaps.

Claudia shared some information on EFSA's ambitions related to reoccurring scientific needs, in 3 areas: i) Hazard characterisation of microorganisms and chemicals, ii) RA for support of enzymes, and iii) Pesticides sectorial guidance drafting. On the area of RA of enzymes, Claudia mentioned that several MSs have contributed to the drafting of the guidance, successfully concluded, but that now EFSA would like to conduct a pilot project with the aim of building expertise and capacity in order to support enzymes risk assessment and the work of the WG on enzymes. On the Pesticides sectorial guidance drafting, she underlined the real need for additional expertise and MS involvement.

The Chair thanked Claudia for the comprehensive presentation and proceeded giving the floor for interventions.

Iceland asked clarifications when the multi-annual G&P plan will be published and on the timeframe for applicants to apply to calls. Belgium expressed appreciation and considered the new plan very ambitious. It was asked whether there was also any strategy behind this for the implementation of new findings resulting from all these new G&P, because each MS also has other plans for implementing certain new activities and maybe EFSA has some ideas on that.

Claudia clarified that EFSA would publish the information with indicative timelines for launching the calls in the beginning of the year after the MB endorsed the Financing Decision. The timelines for submission of offers depending on the requirements are laid down in each specific call.

On the question on how we can team up to better align initiatives, she indicated that under the roadmaps for SPIDO, when the recommendations for project calls are available, EFSA has foreseen



to involve external partners in the prioritisation. EFSA will come out with some specific proposals on how we can explore the needs we have identified and the needs that are stemming from MS.

The Netherlands intervened questioning about the gap between the long-term strategy and objectives and the selection of themes, since the involvement from MS side is limited. From their side there is a need to be more involved in filling that gap and align with EFSA.

France raised a comment on the importance of having 'clusters' of MS applying for calls i.e. some proposals could be put forward by several countries and not only one and asked if and how EFSA could stimulate countries in applying jointly so as to work together.

Norway intervened on the criteria for the evaluation of the application to the grants asking whether EFSA would prefer the application to be just connected to the topic of the grant or rather have the application fulfilling the other potential areas like capacity building.

Claudia gave the floor back to Guilhem to clarify the remaining questions.

Guilhem referred back to the explanation Claudia had done the day before on how we come up to launch those calls for the roadmaps. In the beginning, with little involvement from MS - proposed by EFSA and consulted with EC, with proposals made in different *fora* of discussion where MS are well presented - but later on, EFSA consulted MS. Relevance of moving toward the direction of co-creation has been acknowledged and noted.

Answering to Belgium, Guilhem clarified that the roadmaps developed under SPIDO would be transformed into a set of projects to advance our capability in all the areas. He highlighted that we need to think more concretely on plans on how to translate this into regulatory actions. However, he said that we do have projects where we launch grants for developing methodology and with the results, we update our guidance which then is pragmatically implemented in the produced opinions. He clarified France's question on bilateral vs clusters referring that by default EFSA would like to have applications from clusters as this is the spirit of Partnerships. EFSA makes the calls trying to have as many candidates as possible. He also acknowledged that different MS have distinct areas of expertise, different capacity etc and that EFSA has interest in having these bilateral discussions with MS with specific interests. Moreover, MS can take the lead in areas with specific expertise jointly with another partner MS.

On strategies alignment, he noted that synchronisation is crucial, since opportunities can be missed because when calls are published, MS have already allocated people and budget on other priorities. He referred that EFSA has started to have a multi-annual planning – 2-year plan of G&P taking on board the message conveyed by the Article 36 survey and the need to give a long-term visibility on what EFSA will do.

Barbara took the floor and encouraged participants who had examples from research organisations or similar on how this alignment could be better captured at an early stage, to present them. She further asked participants if there are any mechanisms that EFSA has not yet implemented to facilitate this synchronisation and to put them forward.

The EC intervened thanking EFSA for bringing this theme on Partnerships to the AF and referring its importance and high expectations for the EC. They concluded by noting that apart from being foreseen in the TR as one of the tools for sustainability of the RA, it is also a mean to assist EFSA's capacity on the RA and also to respond to future needs for the implementation of the EC strategies.

The Chair thanked all and gave the floor to Donna Lucas to outline EFSA's G&P mechanism.

Action Point 3: EFSA and MS (AF & FP) to: support wide dissemination of multi-annual G&P plan once published on EFSA's website.

■ 6.3 - EFSA's grants and procurement mechanism in a nutshell



Donna provided an overview of modalities that apply for grants and procurement calls, namely information on the determination of the funding to beneficiaries, explaining the 'Financing not linked to cost' as an attractive model that can support partnership for tasks.

She outlined the factors EFSA takes into consideration when deciding to launch a grant or procurement and provided details on who could apply for the distinct calls. She then informed the Plenary where to find information and how to apply.

She proceeded informing on the actions that stemmed from the article 36 survey launched in Q4 2020 with the aim of obtaining feedback from article 36 organisations on working in partnership with EFSA through grants, procurement and staff involvement as experts in Panels and WGs. The feedback from the survey was analysed and shared with the FP and the AF and was used to develop and inform a list of specific "improving actions" to be investigated for feasibility and eventually implemented as part of individual EFSA Unit work programmes during 2021/22.

Following the art.36 survey, improvements have been introduced. Actions to facilitate strategic alignment of EFSA & Article 36 activities are under implementation and include 1) earlier identification of EFSA activities for N+2; 2) sharing information on activities as early as possible and 3) outsourcing task force initiatives. EFSA is also pursuing means through which to develop a leaner application process and to reduce administrative burden for EFSA calls by, among others, ongoing work on future E-submission for grants hopefully in place Q3/Q4 2022, developing clearer application guidance, further training and allowing more time for applicants to submit proposals.

Dissemination of call information has also been improved. EFSA foresees to include more detail in G&P Scientific Cooperation plan and has been exploring the use of the Tools for Innovation Monitoring (TIM) of JRC for an earlier identification and targeting of potential call applicants. It is also currently exploring the functionalities of the Optimisation of Competent Organisation Tool to facilitate direct outreach to Article 36 organisations as well as the use of Scientific Networks for increased outreach.

Donna highlighted that EFSA has been taking steps to simplify participation in its outsourced activities and sees an important role for FP to further support the promotion of and participation in G&P calls. She went on by noting that EFSA is working on allowing more time for applicants and that EFSA is keen to be informed on challenges to participation as well as to receive suggestions on how participation could be further encouraged.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion.

Denmark raised a comment on an issue that jeopardises the possibility to participate in more projects. In Denmark the salaries of senior experts relevant for the tasks are higher than the allowed salaries. Thus, they can only apply for a few of the possible tasks because DK can only co-fund a certain number of initiatives despite the willingness to collaborate and participate in more projects. Donna highlighted that the new financing not linked to cost form should allow for profit and non-co-funding. This could maybe address the concern identified about the funding not being enough to cover the actual costs.

The Chair thanked Donna and participants and gave the floor to Eileen O'Dea, to provide an overview of the digital ecosystem.

■ 6.4 - Knowledge-sharing in our risk assessment community: What can a food safety digital ecosystem do for you?

Eileen provided some background information on the ecosystem concept and definitions, highlighting the 3 common characteristics to all business ecosystems – they must deliver value for partners, encourage interactions among partners and leverage technology to enable participation.

She proceeded by explaining what that means in EFSA's context, underlining the need to identify the content and functionality that will deliver value to our partners and the contribution that partners can make to EFSA and others.

She proceeded by explaining that to inspire participation, the ecosystem should be seen as easy, fast, personal and valuable. The users' journey should be easy and the navigation intuitive, so a single



point of entry should deliver accessibility to all content. The users should receive value in real time - faster user experience. Users should see prioritised content based on their experience and their declared interests and they should perceive value towards their objectives – EFSA needs to offer what participants want.

She further expanded detailing the aspects participants perceive as value as well as the functionalities that enable participation.

Eileen explained that based on deliberations, research and consultation, EFSA proposes a series of 8 eco system architecture recommendations to start to build on and enable an evolution of existing initiatives. She mentioned that EFSA's implementation planning for Strategy 2027 proposes to focus in delivering an improved platform experience to its partners and to deliver functionality that makes valuable content accessible and at their fingertips. She remarked that to this end EFSA needs partners' expertise to bring their work, their knowledge, technology and tools for shared use. She referred that EFSA had already launched calls for participation in tasking grants and that currently is in a phase to find how EFSA and partners can contribute to create a real digital eco-system.

She presented an image of what an eco-system could deliver and asked participants to imagine a search that could return content classified according to the components of RA and Risk communication, such as mandates, literature searches, models, data sets. Eileen point out that this could enable faster, more efficient sharing of components, delivering of opinions and authorisations as well as shared solutions to increased complexity and reduce duplication and divergence. All participants would have access to the same content, but they would be able to prioritise and filter it. She concluded by stating that the technology is available and that EFSA has started last year to implement platforms that can make it a reality.

Guilhem thanked Eileen and opened the floor for questions.

France asked if this ecosystem approach is only for food safety and referred for example to domains where there are already NGOs initiatives (like OpenFoodFacts on food composition) and public sector initiatives. Collecting data on food composition is one thing, what is sensitive is the "interpretation" layer, to classify food as healthy or unhealthy is more sensitive, even more if we want the information to be shared by different actors (state actors, public agencies...). He wonders how, for example, Best-REMap goes in the "ecosystem" approach.

Cyprus intervened stating that in the frame of activities shared between EFSA and the MS, Cyprus could contribute with the ImproRisk model, which is a deterministic model that carries out RA of chemicals in food at individual level. It is an open tool for the risk assessors since 2017. To be used will only require a simple registration. Information of the contact points for further details was given.

Eileen acknowledged the challenges raised by France, explaining that the most effective way to solve those issues is through making connection between datasets. To this end, the use of AI for the interoperability among systems is crucial regardless of the type of actors being authorities, Article 36 organisations, NGO or private ones.

Netherlands intervened by asking for a dedicated working group to deal with models as the interactions between models and data which are crucial to know, have not been dealt with. Eileen clarified that EFSA identified additional needs for data and although not envisioning a working group on models, EFSA can consider what will be the best way to engage with the relevant players who are already working in some of these areas.

Akos Jóźwiak from Hungary on behalf of the Advisory Group (AG) on Data, stated that this issue of models could be brought to the attention of the group. Regarding the presentation, Hungary highlighted the importance of the knowledge management part of the eco-system, - how information data and general knowledge are managed to be easy to retrieve, use and to add further knowledge into it. Eileen stated that EFSA supports the idea of taking the knowledge management approach, one of EFSA key recommendations.

She thanked all the participants that intervened highlighting the topics brought up for discussion.



Action Point 4: EFSA to follow up, in consultation with the Advisory Group on DATA, on discussions on sharing of models and possible data-model interactions.

■ 6.5 – Conclusion

Guilhem thanked all participants, speakers and all that intervened and closed the session.

7. Risk Assessment activities

■ 7.1 - Update on the glyphosate renewal peer review process

The Chair gave the floor to Guilhem De Seze to provide an update on the glyphosate renewal peer-review process and its coordinated communication aspect.

Guilhem first provided some background information noting that the current approval of glyphosate expires in December 2022, hence industry – a group of applicants named 'Glyphosate Renewal Group' (GRG)- has submitted an application for renewal in accordance with the applicable regulatory provisions in place. Given the peculiarity of the file, there is a particular setting in terms of rapporteur MS, since in this case the draft renewal assessment report (RAR) was prepared by a group composed by 4 MS - France, Sweden, Netherlands and Hungary-, called 'Assessment Group on Glyphosate' (AGG), acting jointly as rapporteur MS. Guilhem noted that the legal basis of the peer review process is laid down in Commission Regulation (EU) No 844/2012 since the dossier was submitted by industry before the entry into application of the new TR hence TR provisions do not apply. He also mentioned that the EFSA peer review and ECHA classification (CLH) processes will be running in parallel as alignment with the ECHA decision on classification and labelling is critical to avoid discrepancy in the scientific assessment and reinforcing the integrity of the EU assessment of glyphosate. Close collaboration between EFSA-ECHA will be materialized in different ways e.g. ECHA involvement in the main steps of the peer review, following ECHA Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) discussions /peer review expert meetings by both agencies; teleconferences on alignment between EFSA-ECHA-AGG-SANTE. The start of the EFSA peer review was marked by the joint EFSA-ECHA public consultation on the initial scientific assessments performed by the AGG that has been launched on 23.09.2021.

Guilhem then focused on the EFSA peer review process, actors, main steps and timelines.

Among the steps constituting the EFSA peer review process, Guilhem highlighted the role of Rapporteur MS/AGG who, after submission of the dossier by industry (June 2020), had a period of one year to produce the initial RAR (June 2021). Following a completeness check, a commenting phase on the RAR with the initial assessments of the AGG has been subsequently opened to the public, industry, MS and EFSA. In parallel, the CLH report from the AGG has also been published on ECHA's website for consultation (deadline 22.11.2021).

The end of the Public consultation (PC) will mark the start of the comment evaluation phase in both the EFSA and ECHA processes. All comments provided will be shared with AGG who will be requested to respond to each comment, taking also into account the reaction from the applicants. The input from the AGG is expected to be provided by mid-January 2022 for further consideration in the peer review and classification processes. Based on the comments received, if needed, a clock stop will be applied to request additional information from the applicants, followed by an update of the RAR and subsequent scrutiny in the peer review experts' meeting. The final Conclusion is aimed to be delivered to the Commission in the second half of 2022 for further consideration by risk managers in the decision-making process.

Guilhem remarked that both the initial renewal dossier 2020 and the RAR 2021 constitute a significant amount of information and data to be processed as never seen before. The number of studies and peer-reviewed articles makes this risk assessment very peculiar and challenging.



Guilhem also informed the Plenary about ongoing activities, in particular the parallel public consultation at EFSA-ECHA websites, the targeted consultation on the RAR to collect comments from MS, GRG and EFSA, and the establishment of a dedicated “Working Group on Glyphosate Peer Review-Renewal Assessment” to support EFSA units involved in the peer-review process.

Guilhem also touched upon the coordinated communication aspect of the peer-review process as one of its most challenging dimension; the role of an EFSA team working to coordinate the communication approach with AGG, ECHA and SANTE informing partners, interested parties and the general public on the re-assessment process has been noted.

Among the communication activities, Guilhem pointed out the 2 joint EFSA/ECHA press release, joint twitter promotion on the PC, EFSA/ECHA alignment on enquiries, engagement with NGOs, monitoring newsletters and updated of the CEN and topic page on the website. Barbara stressed the relevance of gathering information at the national level regarding Glyphosate and ask the AF to support EFSA in gathering intelligence on this regard, also via the CEN network.

Denmark thanked EFSA for the update provided as useful to address the topic also at national level.

The Chair thanked Guilhem for the presentation and closed the item.

Action Point 5: EFSA to: provide an update to the Communication Experts Network (CEN) on state of play via online shared space.

■ 7.2 - EFSA Mandates, upcoming Public Consultations, MS RA Plans

The Chair introduced the agenda item remarking the effort of MSs and EFSA in exchanging information on ongoing RA activities and gave the floor to Guilhem de Seze and Juliane Kleiner to highlight key EFSA Mandates and MS RA Plans covering the last quarter (19.05.2021-06.10.2021).

On MS mandates, Guilhem noted particular EFSA interest on four mandates in the area of food ingredients and food contact materials: a mandate on exposure assessment of food colours, preservatives and sweeteners (from Austria), relevant as EFSA is in the process of starting the re-assessment on sweeteners; three mandates materials in contact with water (from France), in particular one on DHBP was highlighted as EFSA is working on a mandate requested by the EC on this regard.

Of several MS RA activities of mutual interest Juliane noted examples in the area of generic risk assessment: a mandate on Glycoalkaloids and heavy metals in potatoes (from Estonia), remarking that the CONTAM Panel issued recently a RA on Glycoalkaloids; two mandates from France: i) on plants most involved in nutrivigilance cases related to food supplements, and ii) a self-mandate to establishing specific welfare labelling standards for food-producing animals, stressing the ongoing exchange between ANSES and EFSA to look at possibilities for further collaboration on this topic; a mandate on risk ranking of microbiological hazard (from Ireland); two mandates of Lithuania: i) one on the innovative prototype of a meat analogue of plant origin, of interest of EFSA emerging risk team, and ii) one on modelling of dynamics of quality indicators and food safety indicators of ready-to-eat cold smoked salmon products; and a mandate from Spain on the consumption of food supplements containing *Cimicifuga racemosa* root, indicating that in the EFSA compendium of botanicals there is an extensive review on this regard. On the issue of Botanicals, Juliane noted that MA can have access to the EFSA botanicals compendium which may be beneficial in these and similar activities.

The Chair stressed the importance of gathering information through the R4EU database in order for EFSA and MS to build synergies, avoid duplication of work and foster collaboration opportunities; The Chair also made a plea to the AF to keep the database up-to-date throughout the year, using it regularly and not only close to the plenaries.

Norway expressed interest in the RA activities of Ireland related to risk ranking and proposed a dedicated follow up on this matter.



On the EFSA Mandates in the area of biological hazard and contaminants, Juliane noted the following ones:

- Transmission of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and zoonotic agents during animal transport: a mandate received from the EP that will address i) what are the most significant risk factors related to foodborne zoonoses and AMR bacteria during transport between farms/to slaughterhouses, both for what relates to short journeys and long-journeys (more than 8 hours); ii) what are the preventive measures and control options that could be used to reduce probability; and iii) what are the current data gaps and data needs.
- Microbial hazard associated with use of water in post-harvest handling and , processing of fresh and frozen fruits vegetables and herbs : this is a self-mandate aimed at: i) describing the most relevant microbiological hazard associated with the use of water in post-harvest, ii) describing the intervention strategies needed to ensure the appropriate microbiological quality requirements of water, iii) describing relevant parameters to assess the appropriate microbiological quality requirement of water used.
- Four new mandates received by EFSA on arsenic, namely on i) risk related to inorganic arsenic in food, ii) risks related to methylated arsenic species in food, iii) risks related to organic arsenic species other than methylated arsenic species in food, iv) combined exposure to inorganic and organic arsenic species. The last opinion on arsenic report back in 2009 and EFSA is asked to update it by June 2024.

On the EFSA Mandates in the area of plant health, Juliane informed the Plenary that EFSA is under negotiations with DG-SANTE on different mandates including i) completion of the EU apple (fruit) pests database , to complement the pilot phase which was considering 12 apple pests with data on additional pests, ii) various draft mandates on commodity risk assessment for derogations to EU plant health law, iii) new draft mandate on impact assessment for EU Priority Quarantine Plant Pest, iv) new draft mandate on pest surveillance.

On animal health and welfare, in the context of the F2F Strategy and EC comprehensive evaluation of animal welfare legislation, the EC submitted a new mandate related to “protection of dairy cows which have had a calf and are kept for milk production and to pregnant heifers in the last third of gestation”. Juliane highlighted amongst others, the following questions of the mandate : i) describe the most prevalent housing systems and practises of keeping them in the EU, including tie-stalls, cubicle housing and systems with free lying area, combined or not with certain outdoor access with grazing., ii) Describe welfare consequences for the housing systems and practices, iii) Define the most feasible animal-based measures to assess the welfare consequences, iv) Identify the most relevant hazards, leading to the welfare consequences above-mentioned

Juliane also informed the Plenary about the roadmap 2021-2028 submitted by EC to EFSA related to Animal Welfare Mandates, currently under discussion.

The Netherlands raised a comment stressing that a lot of work is ongoing in the area of animal welfare and proposed further collaboration and exchange of information with EFSA. Juliane welcomed positively the proposal and agreed on a follow up with animal welfare colleagues. Guilhem and France noted also the ongoing discussion between ANSES and EFSA, via panel and network members to foster collaboration in this area of work .

On other activities of mutual interest, Guilhem reminder the plenary that for the GMO Network, organizations should be still nominated through the EFSA AF contact point from the Member States. Information on upcoming webinars organized under the framework of the TR implementation were also noted; Guilhem referred in particular to webinars organised to inform the public on application procedures, for instance the webinar taking place on the 27 October on the application procedures for active substances in pesticides and maxim residue levels.

Netherland raised a comment on the mandate on the genotoxicity of acrylamide, asking if there is any reference to advanced glycation end products (AGEs). Tanja Schwerdtle from BfR as member of the EFSA CONTAM panel informed the plenary that the current mandate does not tackle AGEs but focuses



on the genotoxicity aspect only. Discussion were ongoing at CONTAM panel level in terms of a possible self-task on AGEs but due to the workload of the panel the proposal didn't materialize. The Netherlands informed the plenary that an opinion related to acrylamide and AGEs is currently in the pipeline and that once the work will be concluded, it will be reported to EFSA.

Action Point 6: EFSA to follow up with Netherlands on the work carried out on Animal Welfare

8. Engagement and Communication Update including #EUChooseSafeFood & #StopASF campaigns

The Chair, Barbara Gallani, took the floor to provide an overview of recent communications and engagement initiatives, covering the EU FORA 2.0 and recent campaigns.

Barbara provided an update of the state of play of the evolved EU-FORA Programme: EU-FORA 2.0. The new calls for selection of hosting sites and fellows, and for the selection of a contractor for the organisation and delivery of trainings will be launched soon. Barbara also outlined the main features of the call for proposals, in which the fellow sending organisation and the hosting site, from two different MS, Norway and Iceland, will have to apply as a consortium. EFSA intends to fund proposals for the placement of 15 fellows to follow a programme which will be performed mostly remotely. A dedicated info session on this call will be organised after the launch jointly with EFSA Finance Unit. FP will be requested support in dissemination and identification of potential consortium partners at national level.

On the campaigns, Barbara noted:

- **2021 #StopASF** – The campaign was concluded in mid-October and EFSA is now in the process of evaluating the results of the post campaign survey. The FP were involved in the stakeholder & media mapping and checking of all the translations, actively contributing to the great success of the initiative. For the #StopASF Campaign EFSA won the European Ombudsman Award for excellence in communication and this would have not been possible without the support of the FP.
- **2021 #EUChooseSafeFood** - During 2021, of 9 MS involved, 6 countries benefitted from paid advertisement on media and social media while in the other 3 the campaign focused on not-paid dissemination activities. For 2022, EFSA aims to build on this years' experience and learnings and to increase the number of participants. The campaign is also supported by a dedicated Campaign microsite which allowed MS to pick specific topics and includes links and local source of information showing how such topics are tackled by national food authorities. EFSA is currently analysing the results of the post-campaign survey which will inform the planning for 2022.
- Planning of the topics and onboarding of participating countries will start in November-December.

The Chair closed the item and opened the floor for MS comments and sharing of experiences.

Croatia, Italy, Spain and Portugal shared their experiences as participants in the #EUChooseSafeFood, commenting on the close collaboration between EFSA and MS and the success of the campaign at national level. The effectiveness of the campaign for the use of attractive and simple messages was remarked as one of the key elements for the positive outcome.

Italy informed the Plenary that an article on communication about *salmonellosis* with specific reference to the campaign has been recently published by Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie (IZSVe).

The Chair thanked MS for having shared their experience, informing the Plenary that a call to participate in the campaigns will be launched soon with information on what the participation entails.



Action Point 7: EFSA to open a call for Expression of Interests (EoIs) for MS to join Communication Campaign(s)

9. Any Other Business

■ 9.1 – Update from the Advisory Group on DATA

The Chair gave the floor to Ákos Józwiak, Chair of the Group to provide an update on the ongoing work of the discussion group.

Akos provided a recap of the objective of the group - to monitor the implementation of the AF task force on data collection recommendations and further elaborated that the group also acts as a steer committee for data-related projects. He also shared the aspiration for the group to act as a knowledge hub for sharing information around data and specified the group has no exact agenda, unlike the task force, but it is currently working on project proposals.

Ákos reported on the main points of the last meeting of the group, regarding a pilot project presented by the Swedish National Food Authority - proof of concept on data connection which aims to develop a modern technology and establish a secure connection between the Swedish national database for chemical contaminants, pesticide residues and veterinary medicinal product residues and the EFSA data system. He noted that the goal is to increase the automation and the possibility to have a near real time data connection between the two systems and elaborated that in case of success it will provide a strong basis towards the long-term objective of replacing data collection and reporting activities with data connection.

Ákos then touched upon the discussion of EFSA's three proposals for possible projects on DATA-related activities, which were partially mentioned during the last AF meeting.

- Business rule engine which would help the data providers to check the quality of their data with the flexibility that it is envisioned that the tool will offer the data providers to devise their own 'business rule' specific to their organisation so everything would be handled under their umbrella.
- Data mapping tool – which would have the data providers translate their data to national formats, to EFSA formats, depending on the data collection type and this would replace the current tools and will be more straightforward tool for the data provider.
- Mobile application to support the data collection at the point of sampling. A long term, a tool shall be developed with the help of mobile smart phone technology, GS1 barcode recorder or decoders or optical character recognisers or image-to-text AI solutions can be built in that in the point of sampling the sampling officers can easily capture the data relevant for the sampling and also store them in a structured way.

Ákos informed that the next meeting will take place on 17th of November when the comments on these project proposals will be discussed and how they can be improved and serve as a basis of a future call. Discuss the work Programme for 2022 and in what way the group can support MS.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair presented the main action items and gave the floor to Sergio Potier Rodeia who informed the participants about upcoming AF meetings, stressing that the next AF meeting in December would still be convened virtually following postponement of RARA21.



LIST OF ACTION ITEMS

Ref	Who	Agenda topic	What
Action 1	EFSA/AF members	3.6 – Update on SPIDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EFSA to provide information on the Workshop on Exposure Science (date 24/02/2022); MSs to express interest in workshop participation, including experts' name, contact details and short information on scientific competence in exposure assessment by 30.11.2021 (post-meeting note: deadline has been adjusted to the 20.12.2021)
Action 2	EFSA/MS	4 – Focal Point Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EFSA to request expressions of interest for MS volunteers (AF, FP) to scope activities for the proposed 5 WPs (1-week deadline) by end of 10.2021 (post-meeting note: deadline has been adjusted to the 05.11.2021); EFSA and MS to work on the 5 WPs during November 2021 for reporting at 82nd AF meeting
Action 3	EFSA and MS (AF & FP)	Item 6.2 – Engagement opportunities	to support wide dissemination of multi-annual G&P plan once published on EFSA's website
Action 4	EFSA	Item 6.4 – Digital ecosystems	to follow up, in consultation with the Advisory Group on DATA, on discussions on sharing of models and possible data-model interactions.
Action 5	EFSA	Item 7.1 – Glyphosate renewal	to provide an update to the Communication Experts Network (CEN) on state of play via online shared space.
Action 6	EFSA	Item 7.2 – EFSA mandates	to follow up with Netherlands on work carried out on Animal Welfare.
Action 7	EFSA	Item 8 – Engagement & Communication update	to open a call for EoI for MS to join Communication Campaign(s)