



Communication and Partnership Department

Stakeholder Engagement

10th Meeting of the EFSA Stakeholder Bureau

Virtual Meeting, 21 April 2022

Introduction

The tenth meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau, that took place on 21 April 2022 as a virtual meeting was an opportunity to share updates on the state of implementation of the Transparency Regulation, the renewal of the EFSA Management Board, the upcoming ONE Conference and on matters related EFSA's Stakeholder Engagement Approach.

In addition, the Bureau was an opportunity for a detailed exchange on questions brought forward by the Bureau Members on behalf of their constituencies.

In his opening statements, EFSA's Executive Director Bernhard Url stressed among other things the importance of the feedback conveyed by the Stakeholder Bureau members on issues affecting their constituencies, such as the new tools of linked to the Transparency Regulation.

Following this opening, Aivars Bērziņš, Chair of EFSA's Management Board, reflected on the state of play after one year of implementation of the Transparency Regulation and echoed Bernhard Url's words in welcoming the constructive feedback of stakeholders throughout the process.

He expanded on the increased role of stakeholders in EFSA's governance through the upcoming evolution of the Management Board's composition, which will soon include representatives of both the civil society and food chain interests in addition to the Members States.

He also touched upon the renewal of EFSA's Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee, which will also be driven by the new regulatory framework introduced by the Transparency Regulation. The renewal procedure will be triggered in 2023 to have the new Panels and Scientific Committee appointed in 2024 for a five-year mandate.

In closing his intervention, Aivars Bērziņš confirmed the Management Board's appreciation and support for EFSA's work especially considering the challenges brought by the new regulatory framework.

Discussion on topics proposed by the Stakeholder Bureau members

Sustainable EU Food Safety System

Several questions were posed by the representatives of Academia, Industry, and Farmers and Primary Producers on the role of EFSA in relation to the European Commission's legislative proposal on Sustainable EU Food Systems, which aims to make the EU food system sustainable and to integrate sustainability into all food-related policies. In particular, the Academia representative asked if EFSA is planning to support the implementation of more integrated risk assessment

approaches bringing together, for example, environmental and food safety aspects.

Athanasiou Raikos, taking part on behalf of the European Commission (EC), illustrated the milestones of the legislative proposal, which started with the publication of an inception impact assessment and will continue with the launch of a public consultation in the week of 25 April 2022 that will remain open for 12 weeks. The public consultation will be complemented by other targeted engagement initiatives, such as surveys and workshops with stakeholders, Member States, EU Agencies (notably EFSA, ECDC, EEA, ECHA, EMA and others relevant for food safety and sustainability) to collect extensive feedback. The final output of the legislative initiative will be a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council in Q4 2023.

Focusing on EFSA's specific contribution, EFSA's Tobin Robinson indicated that reflections are ongoing on the role of EFSA in supporting the EU's sustainability agenda. While EFSA's mandate does not currently include any responsibilities on sustainability as such, EFSA stands ready to support the EU Green Deal and its implementing strategies within the boundaries of its founding regulation.

In fact, sustainability angles are already being factored into some ongoing mandates, notably in the following areas: nutrition (e.g., sugars), animal welfare, plant pests and import risks having a link to food and feed security, feed additives (e.g., alternative protein sources in feed such as insects). EFSA is also providing support to the EC on new technologies (e.g., new genome techniques, or NGT) aimed at reducing the use of chemical pesticides, and there is long-standing work on bee and pollinator health which is also encompassing sustainability dimensions. EFSA is also renewing its methodology for risk-benefit assessments (e.g., the ongoing mandate on fish consumption, whose opinion is due for adoption in 2025) with the ambition to expand it to other issues and consider environmental impacts in the assessments.

Another example of ongoing work involving sustainability considerations is EFSA's horizon scanning activity (e.g., EFSA's Stakeholder Discussion Group on Emerging Risks - StaDG-ER). EFSA is also ready to provide support on issues resulting from the war in Ukraine, for which the EC is determined to tackle food/feed security issues without making compromises on safety.

Bernhard Url further highlighted that the Green Deal will boost innovation to achieve sustainability goals and that such innovation may come with food safety concerns (e.g., NGT, new feed additives, new pesticides) that EFSA must be ready to assess. The political answers will not come from EFSA, as the identification of trade-offs is a responsibility of risk managers, but EFSA can support decision-

makers with comprehensive evidence-base encompassing more aspects than just food safety, in line with the spirit of the One Health-One Environment approach.

In reacting to these lines, the representative of Industry – echoed by others – indicated that it seems there is movement towards stretching the boundaries of EFSA's mandate, for example in data collection. Bernhard Url replied that EFSA always operates within its legal basis, but at the same time it is willing to support the EC in the best possible way by providing the most comprehensive advice.

Transparency Regulation implementation and General Plan on Risk Communication

The representative of Industry requested an update on the state of play regarding the implementation of the Transparency Regulation and of the General Plan on Risk Communication

Athanasiou Raikos thanked EFSA for providing technical assistance on the General Plan on Risk Communication, and notably for the four technical reports published in 2020. He also welcomed EFSA's commitment to continuously support the EC in the next steps, however at present the EC is not in the position to provide any details on when the General Plan on Risk Communication will be completed due to high workload.

EFSA's Barbara Gallani reinforced EFSA's commitment to support the EC and indicated EFSA's work in ensuring coordinated communication with Member States as a concrete example of such commitment. In particular, she mentioned the ongoing cooperation with the Member States to better localise content beyond translating and disseminating it.

Regarding the Transparency Regulation and its implementation, the Industry representative requested an update on confidentiality claims and reported the need for EFSA to establish a direct line with the applicants to seek input on what could be improved in the tools and/or process.

Bernhard Url indicated that, so far, several confidentiality assessments have been carried out. Experience tells that the issues reported by EFSA's Legal Affairs Unit are mainly related to the processing of personal data included in the applications in compliance with the GDPR. EFSA is in contact with stakeholders to provide guidance in relations to the submission of personal data.

On a more general note, EFSA is committed to improving both process and tools: two batches of enhancements have already been released since the implementation of the so-called minimum viable products in conjunction with the entry into application of the Transparency Regulation. Four more releases are planned until the end of 2022.

In the future, EFSA would like to further strengthen its co-design approach by having stakeholders involved as early as possible in the design of processes and tools affecting them.

Interagency collaboration

The representative of Academia requested clarifications on the state of play of collaboration between EFSA and the other EU agencies, stressing the importance that a strengthened collaboration in some areas of common interest (e.g., non-animal testing) would have in supporting the EU sustainability agenda.

Bernhard Url replied that EFSA is very interested in collaborations with relevant EU agencies and activity pursues cooperation. There is a record of fruitful joint work with ECDC (on zoonoses), EMA (on AMR), ECHA (One Substance One Assessment - OSOA). Recognizing that even more could be done to strengthen collaboration, this aspect has been made an objective of the EFSA Strategy 2027.

The ONE conference

Bernhard Url and Andras Szoradi (EFSA) provided an update on the ONE Conference, which will take place in Brussels on the 21-24 June 2022.

The event is co-designed by EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), the European Environment Agency (EEA), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC).

The Bureau recognised that the scope of this conference is much broader than the one of the previous conferences. In this context participants felt that it would be welcome for the conference to move beyond food safety only and towards sustainability and benefitting from an equal amount of input from all involved Agencies.

The representative of Academia indicated that scientific societies could have been involved in the development of the conference programme. Bernhard Url noted this remark and invited the project team to consider the suggestion for the future.

Upcoming communication and engagement activities

Barbara Gallani updated the Bureau on the recent work on three high-profile scientific opinions (Bisphenol A, Safety of dietary sugars and Nutrient profiling) and indicated the most relevant upcoming public consultations and stakeholder events, including some highlights on EFSA's plans for its 20th anniversary.

Barbara Gallani also updated the stakeholders on the activities planned this year in the frame of two ongoing multiannual campaigns: the #EUCHooseSafeFood campaign, which is running simultaneously in several EU countries, and the #StopASF campaign, which is running in 18 countries, as the disease is spreading in Eastern Europe. Both campaigns are rolled out in close cooperation with the Member States where the campaigns are running. The role of stakeholders in disseminating content is variable depending on the specific context of each country and is therefore assessed on a case-by-case basis with the relevant Member State partner.

SEA highlights

Margherita Guidi and Max Blanck (EFSA) provided a highlight on matters related to EFSA's Stakeholder Engagement Approach (SEA). A revised Management Board decision reflecting the changes brought by the Transparency Regulation and the progressive shift towards a more topic-based engagement approach will be shared with the Bureau to collect views before its adoption by the Management Board in June's meeting.

Margherita Guidi also outlined the upcoming deadlines and procedure to renew the composition of the Stakeholder Bureau.

In the last part of the presentation, Max Blanck shared some reflections and lessons learned resulting from the first half of the pilot phase of the digital platform for the registered stakeholders. The Bureau was invited to provide feedback ahead of the end of the pilot phase, which will be concluded in conjunction with the next Annual Stakeholder Forum (November 2022), where the outcome of the pilot phase will be presented to the registered stakeholders to elicit a collective decision on the way forward.

The representative of Industry asked if the same person can be a member of both the Stakeholder Bureau and of the Management Board and asked some clarifications on the way registered stakeholders are assigned to a category. Both questions have been addressed in writing by EFSA after the meeting due to the lack of time for a proper elaboration.

Next steps and action points

The following action points were agreed at the meeting:

Transparency regulation

EFSA to determine with Legal Affairs Unit whether the submission of data in Confidentiality claims are covered by the Transparency Regulation rules when not related to food safety.

EFSA to strengthen its co-design approach of processes and tools by having stakeholders on board as early as possible.

ONE Conference

EFSA to explore how to best involve scientific societies (Academia) in the development of the next editions of the Conference to benefit from their expertise.

EFSA to consider an expanded cooperation and co-design with other ENVI agencies remits for next editions of the Conference.

SEA highlights

EFSA to clarify to which extent the role of Stakeholder Bureau and Management Board member may lead to incompatibilities or overlap in functions.

Based on the outcome of the above, EFSA to discuss with stakeholders whether their involvement in both the Stakeholder Bureau and Management Board is still required.

Annex 1. Agenda

Time	No.	Topic	Presenter
14.30-	1	Welcome by the Chair	Bernhard Url Executive Director, EFSA
14.35			
14.35-	2	Welcome by the Chair of EFSA's Management Board	Aivars Bērziņš, Chair of EFSA's Management Board
14.45			
14.45-	3	Topics proposed by the Bureau Members	Bureau Members
15.30			
15:30-		Break	
15:40			
15.40-	4	Update on ONE Conference	Bernhard Url, Executive Director, EFSA
15.55			Andras Szoradi, Scientific Officer, EFSA
15.55-	5	Update on communication & engagement activities	Barbara Gallani Head of ENGAGE Department, EFSA
16.10			
16.10-	6	Stakeholder Engagement Approach highlights	Margherita Guidi, Community Management Officer, EFSA
16.25			Max Blanck, Engagement Officer, EFSA
16.25-	7	Closing remarks	Bernhard Url, Executive Director, EFSA
16.30			
16.30		<i>End of the meeting</i>	

Annex 2. Participants list

Stakeholder Representatives

	Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Organisation	Name and Surname
1.	Consumers	SAFE Food Advocacy	Floriana Cimmarusti
2.	NGOs and Advocacy Groups	PAN Europe	Martin Dermine
3.	Farmers and Primary Producers	COPA-COGECA	Bruno Menne
4.	Business and Food Industry	Association of the European Self-Medication Industry	Maud Perrudin
5.	Distributors and HORECA	Euro Commerce	Els Bedert
6.	Practitioners	Association of Veterinary Consultants	Elinor McCartney

7.	Academia	Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry Europe	José Julio Ortega Calvo
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EFSA's Representatives

1.	Aivars Bērziņš	Chair of the Management Board
2.	Bernhard Url	Executive Director
3.	Barbara Gallani	Head of Department, Communication and Partnership (ENGAGE)
4.	Tobin Robinson	Head of Unit, Pesticides Residues & Plant Health (PLANTS)
5.	Andras Szoradi	Scientific Officer, Biological Hazards and Animal Health and Welfare (BIOHAW)
6.	Margherita Guidi	Community Management Officer, ENREL
7.	Max Blanck	External Engagement Officer, ENREL
8.	Matthew Ramon	Team Leader, Strategic Engagement, ENREL
9.	Cinzia Percivaldi	External Engagement Officer, ENREL

European Commission Representatives – Observers

1.	Athanasis Raikos	Policy Officer, D1, DG SANTE, European Commission
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