



SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND EMERGING RISKS UNIT

Emerging Risks Exchange Network (EREN)

Minutes of the 28th meeting

Held on 8-9th of November 2022, Parma Italy

and online (hybrid meeting)

(Agreed on 02/12/2022)

Participants

- Network Representatives of Member States (including EFTA Countries):**

Country	Name
Austria	Veronika Plichta (in person)
Austria	Johann Steinwider (apologies)
Belgium	Claude Saegerman (in person)
Belgium	Axel Mauroy (apologies)
Bulgaria	Dora Petlova (apologies)
Bulgaria	Nadezhda Lukanova (online)
Croatia	Andrea Gross-Bošković (in person)
Croatia	Martina Jurković (apologies)
Cyprus	Christos Kourtis (in person)
Cyprus	Christopher Papachrysostomou (apologies)
Czech Republic	Jitka Gotzova (in person)
Czech Republic	Miroslav Machala (apologies)
Denmark	Gitte Alsing Pedersen (online)
Denmark	Birgitte Borck Høg (apologies)
Estonia	Piret Priisalu (online)
Estonia	Jüri Ruut (in person)
Finland	Pirkko Tuominen (online)
France	Nathalie Arnich (online)



France	Juliette Bloch (online)
Germany	Petra Luber (apologies)
Germany	Philipp Hebel (online)
Germany	Torsten Herold (online)
Germany	Claudia Reckzeh (online)
Greece	Christos Arampatzis (apologies)
Greece	Zoi Mousia (apologies)
Greece	Danai Papanastasiou (online)
Greece	Foteini Tzoumanika (apologies)
Greece	Anna Xexaki (online)
Hungary	Ákos Jozwiak (in person)
Hungary	Zsuzsa Farkas (online)
Ireland	Wayne Anderson (apologies)
Ireland	Cormac McElhinney (in person)
Italy	Stefano Pongolini (in person)
Lithuania	Gintare Baranauskiene (online)
Lithuania	Sniegulė Scepaviciene (apologies)
Luxembourg	Isabelle Paulus (apologies)
Malta	Steve Farrugia (online)
Malta	Monika Haczek (apologies)
Netherlands	Koen Wienk (in person)
Netherlands	Dick Sijm (apologies)
Norway	Torild Agnalt Ostmo (online)
Poland	Paweł Strucinski (apologies)
Portugal	Maria Do Ceu Gonçalves da Costa (online)
Romania	Nina Patru (online)
Romania	Cristian Siposean (apologies)
Slovak Republic	Lucia Birosova (online)
Slovak Republic	Silvia Plackova (apologies)
Slovenia	Tina Vratanar (online)
Spain	Augustin Arino Moneva (apologies)
Spain	Juan Badiola (in person)
Sweden	Jenny Aasa (in person)
Sweden	Jakob Ottoson (online)
Switzerland	Thomas Lüthi (online)
Switzerland	Isabelle Seger-Sauli (apologies)



- **European Commission, European Agencies, and International Organisations:**

Luis Vivas-Alegre (DG SANTE, EC) online, Marian Scott (SCHEER, EC) online, Dario Piselli (EEA) online, Vittorio Fattori (FAO) in person, Rachelle El Khoury (WHO) online Zana Dukadzinac (CFIA/ACIA, Canada) online, Janice Abbey (FSANZ) online.

- **Observer:**

Desiree Toepfer (on behalf of d-fine GmbH, project contractor for Emerging Risks Analysis Platform (ERAP), online).

- **Speakers (EREN):**

Cormac McElhinney (FSAI, Ireland), Jüri Ruut (Vetlab, Estonia), Stefano Pongolini (IZSLER, Italy), Claude Saegerman (ULG, Belgium), Philipp Hebel (BFR, Germany) online, Janice Abbey (FSANZ) online, Estelle Chaix (ANSES/DER, France) online, Christophe Cordevant (ANSES, France) online, Fanny Huret (ANSES France) online. Matthew MacLeod (Stockholm University).

- **Invited speakers (thematic session)**

Ivana Dukic (EIONET), Dragana Vidojevic (EIONET), Daniela Battaglia (FAO), Gijs Kleter, Luciano Pinotti

- **EFSA:**

KNOW Unit:

Bernard Bottex (chair) in person, Milen Georgiev (EREN Network coordinator) in person, Georgia Grintzali in person, Angelo Maggiore (Circular Economy project coordinator) in person, Raquel Garcia Matas (in person), Martina Kurisova (in person), Melina Steinbach (in person), Roberta Giar necchia (in person), Alejandro Garcia Lopez (in person).



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1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants and briefly introduced the two parts of the agenda namely EREN discussion and thematic session – Emerging feed sources, technologies & related risks in a circular economy context (Joint event- EREN/EIONET/StaDG-ER).

1.1 Adoption of agenda

Two points were added: an info update from FSANZ at point 1.2 and an info on HOLiFOOD EU initiative at point 3.5. The agenda was adopted.

1.2 Info update: VIBE-FSANZ framework for identifying emerging risks

The presented system includes the concept of Vigilance & Intelligence Before food issues Emerge (VIBE). The principle and practice include a phase categorisation in the groups visionary, horizon/foresight, trending/emerging, emerged or established.

2. Presentation and discussion of MSs signals and up-dates

2.1 Can animals outside Africa be affected by the ongoing Monkey-pox outbreak, or even become key players?"

Although the possibility of increased exposure of (non-livestock) animals in proximity to infected humans cannot be excluded, the risk for further transmission and establishing reservoirs is very low. Squirrels are infection sensitive, with possible seroconversion indicated in past studies, and may become species of interest if infected with MPXV. Future research can determine infection doses in species receptive and/or sensitive to MPXV, including humans. ECDC is monitoring and advising in the monkeypox situation.

2.2 Emergence of *Vibrio* spp. in aquatic habitats, water-associated animals, aquacultures and seafood in Germany and their impact on human health

Evidence from analysis in Germany adds further support to previous discussions at EREN about the potential for non-cholera *Vibrio* spp. to increase their exposure in new areas, including Northern parts of Europe. The drivers of Climate change and a possible increase in seafood consumption are involved. A risk assessment would be needed to provide updates on public health issues and the expected role of the drivers.

Monitoring of *Vibrio* spp. occurrence in the water and in the environment and topic studies on climate change as a substantial driver and other potential drivers can be quite informative. Furthermore, a network within the European Union can be organized to combine available data.

2.3 The contents of minerals, vitamins, heavy metals, and oxalates in Chaga mushroom (*Inonotus obliquus*)

An increase in consumption of Chaga mushrooms, potentially linked to advertised and unsubstantiated health benefits is reported.



A small study in Estonia identified some marginal results on the presence of minerals, vitamins, heavy metals, and oxalates, which might exceed threshold levels for children. However, no evidence for adverse effects was reported nor expected if Chaga is consumed in recommended quantities. Nevertheless, since there is an increasing trend in the consumption of this food supplement, more data on consumption would be needed to allow further consideration within the EREN network.

2.4 Isolation of Bat-borne Issyk-Kul virus in Italy: European expansion of a zoonotic agent?

ISKV has a zoonotic potential and a wide range of hosts since it has been detected in bats, humans and ticks. In Italy the virus has been isolated in a bat. The results demonstrate high genomic correlation to the strain detected in Germany and in Central Asia, thus it could represent a risk for increased exposure, especially in people more in contact with wildlife. There is a need for monitoring the occurrence of the virus not only in humans but also in ticks and other possible vectors.

3. EFSA and EREN activities

3.1 Risk of Monkeypox virus (MPXV) transmission through the handling and consumption of food-ANSES opinion no 2022-SA-0110

The risk of transmission of the virus through food remains quite hypothetical (other viruses in the Pox family may survive conditions in some food matrixes). However, such occurrence (alimentary infection) was never reported before and remains only theoretical under a high degree of uncertainty. ECDC is currently monitoring the monkeypox situation.

3.2 Testing the JRC Tool for Innovation Monitoring (TIM) to identify emerging chemical risks.

EFSA presented a pilot project that has been running over the past 2 years in collaboration with JRC for the screening literature and news for the identification of emerging chemical risks within known and new chemicals.

3.3 Ranking criteria of tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) disease (re-)emergence or increasing incidence in humans, in Europe - preliminary results of an experts elicitation

The number of TBE cases increased and affected areas spread over the last decades, thus the identification of drivers with the highest probability to play a key role in the increase of human cases of TBE in Europe has been investigated, and some preliminary results of an expert elicitation knowledge methodology have been reported. As there is still limited scientific knowledge on the topic, expert elicitation of knowledge and multi-criteria decision analysis must be privileged, and this type of methodology can be applied to other emerging diseases.



3.4 FoodSafeR: A joined-up approach to the identification, assessment and management of emerging food safety hazards and associated risks

The FoodSafeR EU project was launched in October 2022 and focuses on the advancement of innovations to combat emerging microbial and chemical food safety hazards and associated contaminants based on cutting-edge science. The project is kicking off and brainstorming sessions are planned for the near future.

3.5 HOLiFOOD project- Holistic approach for tackling food systems risks in a changing global environment

The HOLiFOOD project and its main objectives were presented, focusing on the improvement of the integrated food safety risk analysis framework in Europe. The project started in 2022 and focuses on the application of Big Data technologies and AI for the development of methods to identify emerging food safety risks.

4. Emerging risk identification and characterisation within EFSA Environmental Scanning process

EFSA environmental scanning process activities were discussed. The main objective of these activities is to contribute to the definition of EFSA's agenda and identify knowledge gaps and anticipate issues and opportunities that could allow EFSA to fulfil its mission more efficiently. The EMRISK workflow was also presented, highlighting the procedural refinements in the process for emerging risk identification.

5. Emerging Risk Analysis Platform (ERAP)

In the context of the EMRISK workflow, the ERAP platform was presented and the methodological approach together with the outcome of the business analysis were reported. The essence of the project consists of the creation of a central platform for support of the emerging risks analysis process.

6. Methodological items

6.1 Hazard Ratio and Hazard Index as Preliminary Estimators Associated to the Presence of Furans and Alkylfurans in Belgian Foodstuffs

Hazard ratio and Hazard index were used as preliminary estimators for the presence of furans and alkylfurans in Belgian foodstuff. This methodology represents a preliminary quick hazard assessment. Further studies are needed to properly assess the risk of exposure to these compounds in food based on current consumption data.

7. Short issue survey results, overview and discussion on suggested new items for survey

Points 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 were discussed. Specifically, the 5th survey results were presented, and the identified strong signals were discussed. New signal notes suggested for the next pre-assessment from EFSA were also presented.



8. Presentation and discussion of MSs signals and up-dates (continued)

8.1 The Impact of gas price on CO2 availability and electricity used in the Irish food Industry

There is an increasing implication of overarching drivers playing key role in the emerging risks area. The impact of gas price on CO2 which is used throughout the food industry and energy cost have been investigated and discussed. There is a need for collection and collation of data and implicated drivers.

9. EFSA and EREN activities (continued)

9.1 The Assessment of risks associated with the consumption of food supplements containing turmeric

There are many products on the market containing turmeric; some food supplements containing turmeric can contain specific formulations and mixtures intended to increase the bioavailability of curcumin, which may expose consumers to adverse health effects (hepatotoxicity). Traditional turmeric formulations are not of concern. The bioavailability of curcumin should therefore be considered and accounted for in the assessment of curcumin-containing food supplements.

9.2 EFSA info

EFSA promoted a stronger collaboration and partnership with the EREN members for the areas of interest, especially through the process of emerging risk identification and analysis.

10. Any other business & Closure of the discussions

The time and place of the next EREN meeting have to be agreed upon based on the result of a survey that has been sent after the meeting to all the participants.



TS. Thematic session (TS)- Emerging feed sources, technologies & related risks in a circular economy context (Joint event- EREN/EIONET/StaDG-ER)

TS 1. Welcome

The chair welcomed the participants and introduced the thematic session - Emerging feed sources, technologies & related risks in a circular economy context (Joint event- EREN/EIONET/StaDG-ER)

TS 2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

TS 3. Introduction of the event

Short intro on expectations of the event and topics for discussion were offered by the chair and the coordinator of circular economy project.

TS 4. The EFSA environmental scanning and strategic options process

The chair described the EFSA environmental scanning and strategic options definition process within which the circular economy project falls.

TS 5. Circular feeds and the environment – EIONET perspective

The point TS 5.1 and TS 5.2 were discussed by the EIONET representatives providing the EIONET environmental perspective. The environmental challenges associated with emerging food safety risk and the forward-looking approaches that aim to help decision-makers, exploring plausible future developments in the context of emerging food safety risk were highlighted. The discussion stressed the connection of food value chains and climate change, advocating the need of using both risk assessment and life cycle assessment to limit environmental impact and food safety risks.

TS 6. Discussion on the outcome of the Foresight Workshop on Circular economy

Points 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 were discussed: a first status of the art of the circular economy project and the aim of the thematic session were presented by EFSA, consisting in a) defining priority emerging risks for food/feed safety and the environment resulting from the Circular Feeds obtained from food processing by products, former food stuffs and food waste, b) defining challenges and recommendations for EFSA and c) integrating environmental aspects. The three experts who analysed the outcome of the foresight Workshop conducted in June were introduced to the audience. The experts offered topic presentations and facilitated the discussion aiming identification of potentially relevant aspects in the three key areas (food processing by products, former food stuffs and food waste).

TS 7. Emerging issues related to circular feeds to be further considered by EFSA (Discussion on circular feeds, including environmental aspects)

A survey open to all participants will follow-up to finalise the discussion on emerging issues related to circular feeds to be further considered by EFSA.