European Food Safety Authority

ENGAGEMENT & EXTERNAL RELATIONS UNIT

Final Minutes

86th MEETING OF THE EFSA ADVISORY FORUM

Meeting details

Venue: NHOW Hotel, Berlin- Germany

Meeting dates and hours: 06.12.22 9:00 – 17:30

Members	Attendance	
	In person	Virtual
Austria (AT)	Klemens Fuchs	
Belgium (BE)		Axel Mauroy
Belgium (BE)		Fabien Bolle
Bulgaria (BG)	Donka Popova	
Croatia (HR)	Andrea Gross Bošković	
Cyprus (CY)	Charitini Frenaritou	
Czech Republic (CZ)	Jitka Götzová	
Denmark (DK)	Christine Nellemann	
Denmark (DK)	Lau Baggesen	
Estonia (EE)	Mari Reinik	
Finland (FI)		Pia Mäkelä
France (FR)	Matthieu Schuler	Salma Elreedy
Germany (DE)	Andreas Hensel	
Germany (DE)	Tanja Schwerdtle	
Greece (EL)	Stavros Zannopoulos	
Hungary (HU)	Akos Jóźwiak	
Iceland (IS)	apologies	
Ireland (IE)	Anderson Wayne	
Italy (IT)	Alessandra Perella	
Latvia (LV)	Vadimis Bartkevics	
Lithuania (LT)	apologies	
Luxembourg (LU)	Denny Zust	

Malta (MT)		Mark Cassar
Netherlands (NL)	Dick Sijm	
Norway (NO)	Harald Gjein	Danica Grahek-Ogden
Poland (PL)	Apologies	
Portugal (PT)	Pedro Portugal Gaspar	
Romania (RO)		Monica Neagu
Slovak Republic (SK)		Kristína Lépesová
Slovenia (SI)	Urška Blaznik	Urška Blaznik
Spain (ES)	Icíar Fierros Sánchez-Cuenca	
Sweden (SE)	Per Bergman	
Observers & Other Participants	**Attendance**	
	In person	**Virtual**
Albania (AL)	Amarilda Keli	
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA)	Dzemil Hajric	
Kosovo*		Uka Kujtim
Montenegro (ME)	Vladimir Djakovic	
Republic of North Macedonia (MK)	Svetlana Tomeska Mickova	
Serbia (RS)	Tamara Boskovic	
Switzerland (CH)	Apologies	
Turkey (TR)		Durali Kocak
Turkey (TR)	Serap Hanci	
European Commission – DG SANTE – E.1 (Observer)	Raikos Athanasios	

EFSA Representatives	
Bernhard Url (Chair)- In person	James Ramsey– Virtual
Barbara Gallani (Co-Chair) - In person	Stef Bronzwaer - In person
Nick Kriz (Co-Chair)- In person	Vrbos Domagoj - Virtual
Guilhem de Seze (Co-Chair) - In person	Virginia Spurio Salvi (Advisory Forum Secretariat) - In person
Carlos Das Neves - In person	Sofia Altesini (Advisory Forum Secretariat) - Virtual
Victoria Villamar- In person	Maria Azevedo Mendes (Advisory Forum Secretariat)- Virtual
Sérgio Potier Rodeia - In person	
Claudia Heppner- In person	

1. Opening and welcome address

Bernhard Url, Chair of the meeting, welcomed all the 40 physical and on-line participants to the 86th Advisory Forum (AF) meeting taking place in Berlin.

- **28** participants representing **25 Countries**, participating **physically** (26 participants that are here today will attend tomorrow the RARA Conference)
- **2** colleagues from the **EC** (1 physical and 1 virtual). **10** participants representing **9 Countries**, connected **virtually**

The Chair welcomed also external speakers from Italy, Sweden, participating virtually.

2. Welcome address from the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture

The Chair gave the floor to Ms. Silvia Bender, State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture who welcomed the AF with a message about being "united in diversity" as the way to provide Europe with transparent and trusted scientific advice. Ms. Bender emphasised the importance of this path to improved networking, pooling knowledge, and expertise within the EU, and praised the Advisory Forum for its central role in this process. She expanded on the importance of further developing collaboration between EFSA and Member States, risk assessments institutions and of using synergies to the greatest extent possible. Ms. Bender gave concrete examples of joint work showing how this could enhance risk assessment in Europe. She concluded by reinforcing the message that an open dialogue among the various institutions, but also with citizens, was essential to achieve our aim of protecting the nearly 450 million EU citizens from health risks in the best possible way.

3. Adoption of agenda and action points from last meeting

The Chair informed of the rules for a smooth running of the meeting, to avoid difficulties arising from the hybrid format, and that the meeting would be recorded for minute-taking purposes.

No objections were raised.

After providing an overview of the agenda, Bernhard Url welcomed the participants again and particularly:

- Denny Zust new AF member for Luxembourg
- Mark Cassar, new AF alternate for Malta
- Durali Kocak new AF observer for Turkey
- Amarilda Keli, new AF observer for Albania

The Chair also welcomed the EC representatives:

- Athanasios Raikos, representing (physically) the European Commission (EC) and Fatima Darago connected online;
- additional MS representatives attending this 86th AF as they are in Berlin to attend the RARA event.
    - Tanja Schwerdtle (DE, Alternate AF member)
    - Dorte Lau Baggesen (DK, Alternate AF member)

- Serap Hanci (TK, Alternate AF Observer)

- Apologies were noted from Lithuania, Switzerland, and Poland.

The Chair informed the Plenary that all action items from the last AF meeting had been implemented.

4. The new Chief Scientist: introduction and brief strategic overview.

The Chair gave the floor to Carlos Das Neves, who introduced himself as the new Chief Scientist of EFSA and gave a brief overview of the strategic direction of the CSO office.

Carlos shared a presentation where he explained what motivated him to apply for the position, how he sees the work of his office and how he may require advice from the Advisory Forum. From the World Economic Forum Global Risk Perception Survey, we learned that six out of the seven biggest threats ahead of us are linked to EFSA work (i.e. climate change, infectious diseases, biodiversity loss). The CSO office will work within five dimensions: operational excellence, scientific connectivity, international engagement, influential voice, and science fit for purpose. The CSO office will rely on the advice of the Advisory Forum, particularly for work related to scientific connectivity and engagement.

The Chair thanked Carlos Das Neves for the presentation and opened the floor for question or comments. Questions were raised: 1) Denmark: stressed that the figure of the Chief Scientist can bring innovation (from biotechnology to sustainability) to EFSA): 2) Germany: asked how the Chief Scientist will support the work of EFSA and other EU agencies more internationally and particularly in the area of risk assessment. Carlos replied that: 1) EFSA can't do this alone, but this needs strong support from all of us (the ecosystem) to embrace innovation and the new approaches which are essential to advance risk assessment; and 2) EFSA's international work and engagement is guided mostly by the European Commission. The CSO will strive, by using a "One Health" approach in collaboration with Member States and other international stakeholders, to advance science and innovation within food systems to ensure that Europe remains on the forefront of food safety, and that such knowledge is also shared widely outside the EU.

The Chair concluded that the new challenges are not only related to food security, but that it is a triangle of food safety, food security and food sustainability.

5. RARA 2022 – joint EFSA/AF statement

The Chair gave the floor to Stef Bronzwaer, as representative of the RARA programme Committee, to give the participants a brief overview of the journey up to the proposed joint statement for adoption.

The joint statement was developed by a number of AF members who sit in the RARA programme committee and follows the structure of the AF statement delivered on occasion of the first RARA in 2018. It makes reference and takes account of tasks under the new Focal Point operational framework and is inspired by strategic drivers (Green Deal, F2F).

Stef informed that once adopted by the AF, the joint statement could be referred to by Bernhard Url in his opening speech at the RARA meeting and used in communication activities to show the AF's strong support for research involvement.

The Chair welcomed the development of the EFSA/AF statement as a visible commitment of the AF towards the European Research Area and the interplay between science and policy making.

The AF endorsed the statement version prepared by RARA programme Committee, integrating the comments and feedback received since the previous AF meeting.

Stef then gave an overview of the next day's RARA meeting, for which 300 persons from 60 countries registered, including AF, the Focal Points, and the EU FORA Fellows. He pointed out that a significant

proportion of the registrants got to know RARA through social media. He informed that the plenary event would be web streamed since there were people who could not make it to Berlin. He then gave a brief overview of the programme and thanked the AF and the Focal Point network for their visible presence.

The Chair began by thanking the RARA Programme Committee and Stef Bronzwaer and outlined the high interest shown by the number of participants, a sign that the subject is appealing to the stakeholders, and that it could lead to greater coherence between national funding and food safety and sustainability. In this regard, he stressed the need for research to also support risk assessment, which would lead to the right direction for policy making.

The Chair also stressed that the adopted statement was a sign of a commitment from the Advisory Forum towards the integration between science and policy making which he believed could be enhanced if all could align their funding investments into research. Another key aspect outlined, was the need to make the outcome and the output of research better fitting to the needs of science for regulatory purposes. Carlos das Neves intervened by highlighting the role of EFSA and of RARA, to bring different actors together to allow for new synergies, possibly enabling Member States to have a better say in international and national research priorities.

The Chairman thanked all participants and gave some information about the venue of RARA 2022 the next day.

6. Engagement with MS in Risk Assessment

■ 6.1 – EFSA: Mandates, MS RA Plans, upcoming Public Consultations

The Chair introduced the item noting the ambition of EFSA, in particular of Scientific Units, to ensure a more interactive dialogue occurs between EFSA and MS in exchanging information on ongoing risk assessment plans and activities.

The Chair gave the floor to Nik Kriz who provided feedback on the main RA activities, in particular MS RA Plans and the upcoming public consultations that are of interest to EFSA.

He outlined key MS RA activities of EFSA interest from France and Slovenia, both on contaminants in chemical hazards: 1) from France, on the assessment of health risks and exposures to per- and polyfluorinated alkyl compounds (PFAS) and the prioritisation of substances for risk management measures; and 2) from Slovenia, on estimation of arsenic intake from food and environment through human biomonitoring data.

Matthieu Schuler (FR) explained that ANSES had received a mandate from the French Ministries of Health and Environment on a request for an opinion on the assessment of health risks and exposures to per- and polyfluorinated alkyl compounds (PFAS) and the prioritisation of substances for risk management measures. ANSES intends to rely also on what has been done already regarding PFAS in and outside Europe to avoid duplication.

This information caused a lot of interest from Tanja Schwerdtle (DE), Dick Sijm (NL), and Christine Nellemann (DK) who all have various ongoing monitoring and risk assessment activities for PFAS in their countries. Guilhem reminded everybody that the phasing out of PFAS was also in the chemical strategy for sustainability by the EC.

Bernhard tasked EFSA with setting up an informal discussion group with colleagues from the above 4 countries to exchange on current state of work and discuss the possibility of a medium-term plan on how to address PFAS together rather than produce separate opinions leading to future regulatory inconsistencies. This would ideally involve ECHA and maybe other MS at some stage. The AF members agreed.

Guilhem de Seze took the floor to note that 3 mandates had been received from the Commission following concerns raised by the MS authorities:1) France – safety of berberine in food, on which FR informed of their availability to share with EFSA what they have worked on ; 2) Germany – safety of bitter and sweet fennel; and 3) Spain - safety concerns about the addition of hydroxycitric acid in food. EFSA has started to work on these mandates and will liaise directly with colleagues from the MS. Moreover, two Calls for Data were open on citric acid esters of mono- and diglycerides of fatty acids (E 472c) and on carrageenan (E 407).

Guilhem de Seze then informed the Plenary about the online stakeholder event on 'The safety of plants derived from New Genomic Techniques: looking into future risk assessment challenges', which would take place on 12 December.

Guilhem de Seze also informed the Plenary that EFSA had published two scientific opinions concerning: 1) sulphur dioxide and sulphite additives. ECHA is reviewing the biocides regulatory process in a dossier on sulphur dioxide sulphites. They aim is to produce their assessment by February 2023. EFSA expects a divergence between the Panel on Food Additives and Flavourings opinion and the ECHA assessment dossier. EFSA is therefore working with ECHA on a divergent opinion document under Article 30; 2) Bisphenol A, assessed by the Panel on Food Contact Materials, Enzymes and Processing Aids. Based on public consultations and comments received namely from Germany and EMA, EFSA acknowledges that there are diverging opinions on this assessment. EFSA has started to draft a statement explaining the reasons for these divergences. The EFSA opinion on BPA is expected to be published at the same time as the Article 30 documentation. On the latter, the Chair pointed out that this was a difficult chapter as to viewpoints on toxicology, on endpoints, on intermediate endpoints, on approaches, on where adversity starts and where still adaptation is in place. He stressed that in spite of many attempts to align toxicological views on that, there was not much success at different schools of thinking, especially when it comes to non-endpoint effects like effects on immune cells and variation of immune cells, which led EFSA to the conclusion of the need for a joint guidance document on biomarkers of effect.

The Chair reminded the Plenary of the opportunity to join the working group tasked with co-developing a European guidance document on biomarkers to be shared by Member States, EMA, ECHA, and EFSA. The US FDA is also invited as it has invested heavily in the evaluation of BPA over the last ten years.

Germany voiced their willingness to join this working group and praised the initiative since it will bring the very essential question on adaption vs. adverse, which it seems to be the unsolved question of toxicology. It was also outlined the importance of inviting also ECHA and EMA, since accepting biomarkers will need sound science behind to make it valid.

Matthieu Schuler (FR) explained that ANSES also had a panel of experts working on Health reference values and it would be ideal for their input to be considered so that the common guidelines are really a reflection of the views of the broad scientific community, and not only of EFSA. The Chair mentioned that it would be very important to develop a scoping document indicating what the expected outcomes are and the steps to be taken. The different experts could then give their opinion on the scoping document.

6. Continuation Engagement with MS in Risk Assessment

6.2 – MS RA activities

6.2.1 – Assessment of substances with ED properties in food, and associated structural questions: case of vitamine D

The Co-Chair, Barbara Gallani, gave the floor to France (Matthieu Schuler) to report on ANSES recent assessment of substances with Endocrine Disrupter (ED) properties in food, and associated structural questions: case of vitamin D.

Cholecalciferol (vit. D) has been assessed as an ED substance under the Biocides Regulation (EU) 528/2012, by ECHA (for use as a rodenticide), and should therefore be – according to a recent French law - be labelled as ED, to ensure information to the consumers.

Vit. D is an essential substance for health, as inadequate intake can lead to a deficiency with severe risks to human health, particularly during growth. On the other hand, an excessive intake, above the established tolerable upper intake level (UL), induces situations of hypercalcaemia.

ANSES conducted an expert appraisal on the topic[1], which led to believe that identifying Vit. D as an ED on food product labelling would contribute to an incorrect perception of the risk and could deter some people from consuming foods containing vit. D. Hence this could become a serious problem especially because the status of the general population with regard to Vit. D is not adequate in France.

Moreover, ANSES stresses that the doses of vit. D used in biocidal products to eradicate rodents are far higher than the doses provided by a normal diet, including foods fortified with vit. D.

In this context, France raised for discussion within AF, two pending questions:

- How to deal with the OSOA (1 substance, one assessment) principle for substances that are essential nutrients for health
- When ED substances are found in food (whether naturally present or as contaminants), what type of methodology shall be applied for risk assessment.

France called for a reflection on the possible elaboration of an evaluation system or process for ED substances.

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Several issues were addressed by the participants: 1) the need for risk assessors to advocate and guide risk managers so that decisions are made based on science/risk assessment and not just taking into account the hazard assessment(Denmark); 2) in order to avoid these kind of issues, the need, before entering into the risk assessment, to possibly establish some kind of scheme beforehand, with the criteria to identify the types of substances that could be considered to enter into the risk assessment scheme (France). On this last remark, the Chair concurred that in fact there should be a risk assessment and not an immediate cut-off, which would be the case if these types of substances (not only vit. D but also many others, e.g. iodine) were labelled as ED. The question is whether it is an endocrine active substance that, upon exceeding a certain level on a U-curve, becomes adverse, or whether it is an endocrine disruptor right from the start. In this context, a decision tree before going into risk assessment would make sense; 3) Whether in the ANSES study the parallel use of potassium with vitamin D3 to prevent hypercalcemia was considered, since some scientific papers refer to this corelation (Serbia). On the latter, France replied that this was not within the scope of the mandate, but that the issue of using potassium as an alternative for iodine had also been addressed in other ANSES opinions; 4) the information that in 2023 Denmark will start a project with iodine where they will analyse the levels of iodine in the diet and in the urine of children. There will be a dose-dependent, but also age-dependent risk/benefit analysis (Denmark). The Co-Chair outlined that EFSA/MS could monitor the risk assessment "agenda" and see if other countries are planning work in this area.

Guilhem intervened by saying that the EFSA Scientific Committee has produced guidance in the assessment of regulated products that are also considered nutrients, so there is some basis for addressing these kinds of issues. However, in relation to the assessment of endocrine active substances, apart from the guidance on how to do the hazard assessment, there is no basis on how to do health-based guidance value derivation. So, the issue is setting or not health-based guidance

[1] https://www.anses.fr/en/system/files/NUT2022AST0099EN.pdf

values on endocrine disrupting substances. EFSA and ECHA have produced an internal note on the issues arising from the biocide and pesticide frameworks and on how to move further for the risk assessment of endocrine disrupting substances. Guilhem called for joining forces by maturing on setting risk assessment methodology for endocrine disruptors. He outlined that the establishment of a harmonized way of cases where it could be possible to set limit values could be a solution.

France supported the proposal, noting that ANSES has long worked on endocrine disrupting hazard assessment and that in order to tackle the problem presented, it would be important to join forces with others.

Guilhem concluded by proposing to move forward with the risk assessment methodology needed to evolve and address the challenges. However, he pointed out that in the short term the issue was risk management, as it arose from the different definitions in different regulatory frameworks. He wondered about a possible avenue to address this immediate issue through a discussion with the EC, to which France responded that it had already raised the issue in the frame of the consultation organised by EC for the new version of CLP regulation.

The Co-Chair thanked Matthieu and moved to the next item in the agenda.

Action point 1: EFSA to share with the AF/FP the link to the ANSES opinion

○ 6.2.2. - "Need for re-assessment of the tolerable weekly intake for cadmium?"

The Co-Chair gave the floor to Salomon Sand, toxicologist and risk assessor at the Swedish Food Agency, member of the EFSA CONTAM panel, and of the cross-cutting working groups on Benchmark Dose and Uncertainty Analysis under the EFSA Scientific Committee, who provided the plenary with background information and reasoning on the need for the re-assessment of the tolerable weekly intake of cadmium, as considered by Germany and Sweden.

In 2009, EFSA established a tolerable weekly intake (TWI) of 2.5 µg/kg body weight for cadmium. Since then, the identification and characterization of cadmium-related adverse effects in humans have been further clarified in a large number of scientific publications. The amount of PubMed records after 2008 shows more evidence: 1) that cadmium exposure is associated with an increased risk of osteoporosis and fractures; 2) of associated increased risk of cardiovascular disease, e.g., myocardial infarction and stroke; 3) of associated impaired child growth and cognition during pregnancy and early childhood.

Considering bone effects and cardiovascular disease, a cadmium concentration even lower than the critical concentration of 1 µg/g creatinine might be relevant for risk characterization, and these effects are clinically important and more severe than the biomarker used as critical effect by EFSA in 2009.

Based on these considerations and given that the current Tolerable Weekly Intake (TWI) is estimated to be exceeded by part of the European population, a re-assessment is warranted.

A couple of MS intervened: 1) France indicated that ANSES had carried out the same assessment by reviewing the literature on different outcomes such as neurodevelopment and bone effects. They issued an opinion, translated into English[2], with similar conclusions to those presented. A new safety reference value was established on the basis of bone effects, also based on physiologically based pharmacokinetic modelling (PBPK). The result was not significantly different from the formal value of EFSA, but the reasoning and scientific evidence supporting them was slightly different and comparable to the issue raised by Sweden and Germany;2) Ireland informed that they had also assessed it, as they had particular problems because of the level of naturally occurring cadmium, (e.g. soils). Their issue was more related to the exposure assessment, as after the measurements they were far from

[2] https://www.anses.fr/en/content/exposure-cadmium-anses-proposes-limit-values-better-protect-consumers-and-workers

the estimated exposure in the EFSA database. The main concern is therefore the exposure side of the risk assessment, as opposed to the hazard characterisation side, and whether it is realistic.

EFSA recommended Sweden and Germany to undergo the official route, by requesting the EC for a reassessment.

The EC will consider the next steps once a request is received.

The Co-Chair thanked Salomon Sand, representing Sweden and Germany, for bringing this issue to the AF attention.

6.2.3. Report on the "Workshop on Risk Ranking of Hazards in Foods" (11H35)

The Co-Chair gave the floor to Sweden (Per Bergman) to report on the outcomes of the "International Workshop on Risk Ranking of Hazards in Foods", organized by the Swedish Food Agency and the Finnish Food Authority with the support of EFSA.

The background to this workshop is a 2017 grant procedure (GP/EFSA/AFSCO/2017/01) on chemical and microbiological hazards risk ranking in food that the Swedish Food Agency and the Finnish Food Authority discussed with EFSA in order to get co-funding. The objective was to improve the capacity to perform current chemical and microbiological risk ranking in food, supporting risk management and risk communication. Sweden and Finland collaborated and wrote several papers over two years. The final task of this joint project funded by EFSA was to organise a workshop. The Swedish Food Agency and the Finnish Food Authority, supported by EFSA, organised the International Workshop in Uppsala, Sweden, on 19-20 October on the state-of-the-art in risk ranking, and its use to manage and communicate current food related risks.

There were participants from around 30 countries. 54 persons attended in person, and about 110 online.

During the first day, speakers from different organisations presented their work: SFA, FFA, DTU, EFSA, BfR, ANSES, NVWA, FSAI, US FSA, and Risk Sciences International. The second day focused on how risk ranking can bring value to risk managers, what comparative metrics to use, and the challenges and future developments.

Some draft outcomes indicated that risk ranking is important to prioritise resource allocation and to direct risk mitigation. It is partially used in the EU (different method and approaches). The possibility to rank hazards/foods according to health burden (e.g. DALY) was preferred by some, although there was no consensus. To rank risks on a broader scale, comparative parameters need to be further explored. Challenges include how to deal with differences in the nature of health effects and associated timeframes. A report that summarises project results, the workshop, and includes recommendations on future research needs was compiled and is planned to be published in the EFSA journal.

The Co-Chair thanked Sweden (Per Bergman) and open the floor for comments: 1) Estonia thanked the organisers of the workshop and noted that it would be interesting to come back to this topic in 5 or 10 years' time to see the progress made; 2) Finland, The Netherlands and France noted the lack of consensus and the many different aspects of the risk ranking approach, the need to consider new and emerging hazards, and the importance of the availability and accessibility of data for development of risk ranking; 3) Bernhard Url, Denmark, Hungary, and Salomon Sand noted the urgency of finding a common risk ranking. In this regard, Carlos Gonçalo das Neves pointed out that the solution might be to be less ambitious and that instead of the maximum denominator, the approach should be to find the minimums that we could use and live with at any given time.

The Co-Chair summed up by highlighting the strong interest shown by the participants to push forward the development of a lowest common denominator solution, which could be seen as a step-by-step approach to the best solution.

Action point 2:

- EFSA to share risk ranking report with the Advisory Forum once published in the EFSA Journal

-EFSA and MSs to agree on next steps to explore the feasibility of defining a common unit to measure Food Safety risks i.e. 'minimum common denominator' for risk ranking

6.2.4 Reports from The Netherlands

The Co-Chair gave the floor to Dick Sijm (The Netherlands), to update the plenary on 2 reports from The Netherlands: 1) on the use of sensor technology to promote animal welfare in slaughterhouses; and 2) on risk assessment of the fisheries supply chain.

D. Sijm presented an overview of the first project, outlining that a clever use of sensor technology can improve animal welfare. He informed that The Netherlands have drafted a report which provides an overview of the short- and medium-term applications of three types of technology in poultry, cow and pig slaughterhouses and that includes: 1) abnormal still image (pathology or bruises); 2) abnormal moving image (lameness, falling, or movement after sedation); and 3) sound as a sensor. He further explained that the data is then processed, analysed, and transformed into algorithms as basis for decisions. However, it has not yet been validated by the authorities.

The Netherlands will initiate different types of proof of concept and use of slaughterhouse data for comparative assessment of animal welfare and food safety risk in slaughterhouses, during transport and on farms. The Netherlands would like this activity to be a tailor-made activity within the EFSA Focal Points under Data: Conference on use of camera surveillance and sensor monitoring for national authorities. They propose to organise a meeting as soon as possible to get an overview of the market and the views of other Member States and authorities.

The Co-Chair opened the floor to questions. 1) Sweden mentioned that their organisation is discussing the use of camera surveillance and offered to involve their organisation in the discussion; 2) Hungary indicated that they were also trying to use this type of data collection for decision making.

On the second project, D. Sijm explained that the report was part of the series of risk assessment on supply chains. New methods were needed to assess and mitigate animal welfare risks for the billions of fish, crustaceans and shellfish that are being caught and farmed for consumption. He pointed out the need to investigate the origin of species (where fish, crustaceans and shellfish are caught or farmed) and to find out the relationship between the level of contamination, animal species and location.

The speaker called for increased monitoring at (inter)national level on several specific contaminants to derive insight in high-risk areas, such as PFAS, dioxins, cadmium, methylmercury, and arsenic compounds found in NL, European, and international waters.

Dietary advice, including an upper limit for consumption, in particular for pregnant women and for children may be needed. Specifically, the NL would like to have more oversight over raw products, as there are risks associated with these.

The report also showed the importance of monitoring new and emerging marine biotoxins due to global warming. EFSA is involved in the nano- and micro-plastic issues and the Dutch Nutrition Centre has been asked to better inform customers based on these results.

The microorganisms of interest in terms of contaminations in the environment are the usual ones, but also some emerging ones: clostridium, vibrio, anisakis.

The Co-Chair thanked Dick Sijm (The Netherlands) and moved to the next topic in the agenda.

Action point 3: The Netherlands to share the translated report with the AF Secretariat when available to be disseminated with AF

6.3 – Update on SPIDO

The Co-Chair gave the floor to Claudia Heppner to provide the plenary with an update on SPIDO.

At the 85th Advisory Forum (AF) meeting (Oct 2022) EFSA presented the plan for four upcoming roadmaps (RM) to be initiated in 2022.

At the 86th Advisory Forum (AF) meeting EFSA provided an update on the contract awards/winners.

Claudia provided an explanation on the notion of a roadmap for action - a concept paper in which the visions, the objectives, and the research gaps are outlined. She expanded on all the steps needed for the roadmap development, which is co-created in partnership with Member States, EU Agencies, and partners. When the roadmap for action is finalised and delivered, EFSA carefully considers the recommendations and launches calls for studies/projects, often addressed to Art. 36 organisations, in order to fill the identified knowledge gaps. The aim of this procedure is to integrate the results into the risk assessment processes in order to improve the speed, position and quality of the scientific assessments. This in turn should reduce uncertainties and help to avoid divergent opinions.

Claudia proceeded by expanding on the roadmaps for: 1) Evidence-based Risk Communication in the Food Safety System; 2) OMICS & bioinformatic approaches in risk assessment; and 3) New Risk Assessment Methodologies and Harmonised Animal Welfare Data.

Claudia continued with a mention of the upcoming Horizon Europe Partnership for Animal Health and Welfare, scheduled to be kicked off end of 2023/beginning of 2024, and provided two examples of how the work on the roadmap can be complementary with the activities of Horizon Europe:

1. One of the objectives of Horizon Europe is to develop animal welfare surveillance systems. One of the roadmaps aims to identify animal welfare indicators. The roadmap could therefore serve as a basis for the development of such surveillance systems.
2. The Horizon Bureau partnership also has the operational objectives of producing procedures and tools for animal welfare monitoring. The roadmap will map out the tools and identify gaps.

Finally, Claudia mentioned the call for submission of offers for the Roadmap on Advancing Aggregate Exposure to Chemicals in the EU, which closed in November 2022. The offers are currently being evaluated and the results will be presented shortly.

The Co-Chair thanked Claudia, as well as the AF members and FPs for their commitment and continued efforts in disseminating the calls for roadmap development as well as the high-value project calls, and the joint forces to invest in innovation to advance regulatory science. The Co-Chair opened the floor for any question or comment.

The European Commission reminded that good coordination is needed between the different research programmes of Horizon Europe and the wider European research programmes to demonstrate regulatory science and inform regulatory policy.

The Co-Chair closed the morning session.

Lunch break (12H30 - 1H30 min.)

7. State-of-play of the new FP operational Framework

The Co-Chair, Guilhem De Seze, gave the floor to Barbara Gallani and Victoria Villamar to provide an update on the FP framework 2023-2027 including the retro-planner for 2023. The session summarised the recent steps of the process as well as the engagement initiatives with the MS following the

endorsement of the Framework at the 84th AF meeting. Barbara noted the weekly meetings held with the FP to finalise the proposed activities and highlighted the timing for the signature of the Framework Partnership Agreements and of the principal and tailor-made activities. Victoria then presented the mechanism for the principal activities and provided an overview of the grant cycle and of the submission process for the new tailor-made proposals. MS can submit collaborative and/or country-specific proposals. Victoria explained the different windows for submission, assessment, planning, and signature set throughout 2023. Barbara and Victoria then outlined a set of actions that EFSA will implement to increase the visibility of the framework and its activities, to build trust among actors involved as well as to ensure the consolidation of such new system throughout 2023.

The Chair thanked Barbara and Victoria and opened the floor for questions and comments: 1) The Netherlands stressed the importance of the involvement and even better alignment among AF, FP and Art 36 organisations for the purpose of implementing the new Framework, 2) Hungary commented on the fact that tasks which are now country specific might have the potential to be multi-country collaboration and asked if there was a plan to reassess them after completion and which are the next steps to open up for other countries, 3) Denmark asked whether EFSA was still considering additional proposals for tailor-made activities.

In reply to Akos, Victoria clarified that activities implemented would be reconsidered and reassessed with the originators of the proposals and that this is the core of the multiannual nature of the framework. This exercise is foreseen during the presented windows and will also allow other MS to join. For what concern the comment raised by Denmark Victoria confirmed that additional tailor-made proposals can be submitted by the MS via the Focal Points as per the rolling plan presented as the new framework is meant to be an open model, which ensures visibility of all proposals so for MS to be able to express their interest. Barbara noted that ongoing and planned activities are not meant to be closed for other MS, which can join even at a later stage via dedicated windows. She also proposed to put the FP framework as a standing agenda item for the upcoming AF meetings in 2023 to ensure MS have the opportunity to report back to the AF on the activities they are leading and coordinating and to invite others to join.

Action point 4: EFSA to ensure visibility of all activities under the new FP Operational Framework 2023-2027

8. Update from the Advisory Group on Data (AGoD)

The Co-Chair gave the floor to Akos Jozwiak (HU) as Chair of the Advisory Group on Data (AGoD).

Akos updated the Plenary on the work done the day before during the 13th AGoD meeting, but he also did a summary of the work done during the year 2022. The AGoD was formed after the previous group, the Task Force on Data Collection and Modelling, had completed its activity and made a series of recommendations. The actual group revisited these recommendations and came up with five project ideas that will be financed and carried out as Focal Point tailor made data tasks from 2023 onwards. In 2022 AGoD initiated the creation of 6 thematic subgroups of which the first three will be launched at the end of 2022 and the next three in the second half of 2023. In early 2023, AGoD will finalise its first Annual Report, in which all activities carried out in 2022 including meetings, workshops, project ideas, initiated subgroups, liaison with other groups will be described. Akos showed the calendar of 2023 work. The subgroups will have their meetings between the AGoD meetings. In 2023 AGoD will have 3 physical meetings: at the 14th AGoD meeting in March in Parma, the results of the Priority Survey will be discussed, and next priorities will be set. At the June physical meeting in Sweden, a workshop on new project ideas will take place. At the meeting in Spain the group will work on the next year plan and again on the synthesis of recommendations. Finally, Akos reminded the need of

leadership for two of the AGoD subgroups to be launched next year and asked if anyone would be interested to join the subgroups or the AGoD, to have more countries involved in the discussion.

The Chair thanked Akos for the presentation and opened the floor for any question or comment: 1) Denmark asked to share an overview of the Sub-WGs; 2) Germany thanked the WG for the work done, but he would appreciate an overview of the work done and of the deliverable presented. Akos replied to Germany that outcomes will be available in the upcoming annual report of AGoD. 3) The European Commission recalled the need to maintain the connection between business needs and the work done by the working group.

Action point 5:

- EFSA to share the draft annual report of the group with the AF/FP
- AGoD to share the overview of participants in the AGoD sub-groups with AF/FP
- MS to volunteer as leaders of the tool development projects through the FP Framework process

9. Coordinated approach to communications in Europe: highlights from 2022 and plans for 2023.

■ 9.1 – Localised EU wide communication campaigns

The Co-chair gave the floor to Barbara Gallani for the introduction of the topic. She provided some background and the rationale for these campaigns, aimed at increasing EU citizens' awareness on several aspects of food safety. She explained what is understood by "coordinated communication" and the intention to have communication coordinators in all MS, ideally by 2027. She explained that EFSA will also have the opportunity to test this working together with MS via joint development of communication materials for which EFSA has already received proposals from some MS.

She continued explaining that the campaigns that EFSA started three years ago with the #StopASF campaign fulfil these principles: they're organised centrally, but they're delivered locally, and they allow institutions to provide consistent messages across Europe.

She then gave the floor to James Ramsey (EFSA) for an overview of the three campaigns delivered by EFSA and an introduction to the Member States activity in this field. He then presented the two campaigns delivered in 2022: the #StopASF and the #EUChooseSafeFood. He provided an overview of the MS that have cooperated in both campaigns and encouraged further MS to express interest for future cooperation. James explained that concretely for the #EUChooseSafeFood campaign, MS are given choices from a list of topics, so they can select those that they think best suit and serve the target audiences in their countries. To support the cooperation and increase outreach, a website and a microsite have been developed for the campaign, where all the materials can be found. He also explained that similarly, social media messages are created for the MS to adapt and use. 2022 also provided a good opportunity to link the campaign with the 20th anniversary of the EU Food Law and EFSA. Moreover, during the campaign, citizens were encouraged to participate in the campaign by uploading pictures of their fridges with an aim at reducing food waste. Finally, the campaign has also included the #ScienceCooks Cooking Challenge that brought together two well-known food influencers chefs from Finland and Italy, matched with two food scientists, one from the Croatian Food Safety Agency and one from EFSA, in a cooking competition.

He then gave the floor to contributors from Cyprus, Croatia and Italy to present some of the highlights of the campaign conducted in their countries. The representative from Cyprus explained that in Cyprus, additives, food hygiene and food borne diseases were the top campaign teams, selected from the findings of the Eurobarometer on food safety 2019. All was coordinated by the State General

Laboratory, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture. They also cooperated closely with the public, companies, and national authorities. The campaign was run in radio, web and TV, and counted on national influencers. Finally, they promoted the campaign at a big summer music festival, where the main target audience were young people and new and future parents. She ended up by stressing how important this campaign has been for strengthening the existing relations at national level with other authorities, and how all lessons learnt will be applied in future collaborations in other campaigns.

The representative from Croatia took the floor to explain their experience with this campaign, in which they focused on topics of interest for the country such as food waste, food handling, foodborne diseases, food contaminants and animal welfare. The campaign ran over summer which allowed for a very good consumers' response. She explained that communication channels such as TV, radio or newspapers were used, and they also took advantage of a summer festival and a food truck fair. All the campaign counted also on social media influencers, in order to reach the younger generations. In the campaign they also tried to focus on the culinary part of food safety.

The representatives of Italy took the floor to also explained their experience with the campaigns at national level. The campaign was a coordination effort between the Ministry of Health and the CEN member, the public relations agency that was responsible for the planning and the implementation of the campaign. She explained that they had focused on food packaging, animal welfare and food supplements, and ambassadors were selected either among experts belonging to EFSA networks or among experts working at Article 36 organizations. They planned activities on the online and offline editions of specialised magazines, as well as selecting and promoting the activities of influencers who helped spread awareness of the campaign. The campaign kicked off on the World Food Safety Day with an online press conference. She explained that in the campaign they tried to target a more technical audience, but also the general public, and civil society. They counted on the support of two large universities, the national reference body for food safety, the advisory section for consumers and producers' association.

The Co-chair thanked the representatives from the three MS and gave the floor back to James Ramsay to update the plenary on preliminary plans for the 2023 editions of the campaign. He explained that, apart from analysing the results of the first two years of campaigns, EFSA is now gathering expressions of interest from Member States to take part in the campaign #EUChooseSafeFood in 2023. He indicated that the overall objectives would remain the same, and many of the materials would be reused. The main focus will be to increase outreach and dissemination.

He explained that EFSA has had conversations with individual Member States, CEN members and the Focal Point Network and that some confirmation has been received. He then encouraged other MS to express interest until 15th of December. He proceeded by indicating that as of February 2023, EFSA would establish communication plans with each individual Member State, tailored specifically for them and their local markets. The campaign will run until autumn 2023.

The Co-Chair thanked James for his contribution and opened the floor for question. Germany asked if EFSA had considered measuring the success of the campaigns and if yes, when, and how. The Netherlands commented on the objectives to feed in each country for the selection of topics. Portugal commented that in their experience, food supplements were an interesting topic due to the thin separation between medicinal products and the food areas, and that the cooperation with consumers' organisations was essential. Finally, the Co-Chair asked the three intervening Member States about the involvement of influencers in their local campaigns and how they selected them out of all the social media influencers.

To the first question, James Ramsay replied that EFSA is investing time and resources in the evaluation of the campaigns, and that this is done by analysing to what extent the communication objectives set at the beginning are achieved. They try to find out the extent to which the campaign has increased awareness on a number of different factors in relation to food safety via a quantitative and a qualitative approach. A Social Research agency has been hired for this, and they carry out a survey and interviews with a representative sample of the target audience that was identified for the campaign. It also carries

out one-on-one interviews and group interviews with people who are known to have been exposed to messages from the campaign.

As far as the influencers are concerned, James explained that, in close cooperation with the MS, they had taken a conscious and strategic decision according to the selected target audience.

On the question from The Netherlands, Barbara Gallani explained that the flexibility in choosing the topics had been one of the strengths of the campaigns because from the results of the Eurobarometer, the priorities for Member States were found to be very different. Besides, the campaign has been very active in reusing and repositioning existing materials in the Member States. EFSA insisted that the design of the campaign should not be a huge burden for Member States. She also explained that the evaluation just described can be specific to the topics and to the country as well as the overall good practice in evaluation of campaigns of this type. Barbara stressed that this is not an EFSA campaign but an EU food safety system campaign, and that what is being measured is the ability of citizens to realise that there is science behind food safety.

Germany took the floor to ask who is EFSA's customer, as at national level there are consumer organisations that look after the needs of consumers, and if EFSA takes on this role, it would be necessary to redefine such role. EFSA does not address the EU consumer so much as the national multiplicators, which differ from country to country, as food is linked to culture and tradition.

Bernhard Url replied that this was already an important issue in the founding regulation of EFSA. EFSA is also tasked with addressing European citizens, which is extremely difficult and can only be done with and through the Member States, which is why this campaign is designed to be run by the Member States. Moreover, the main objective of the campaign is to show that there is science behind food safety, regardless of local traditions. Bernhard also explained that the success of the campaign should be analysed in a multi-annual perspective, and that the more MS collaborate, the stronger the network effects will be.

The Co-Chair thanked all contributions and closed the agenda item.

9. Continuation: Coordinated approach to communications in Europe: highlights from 2022 and plans for 2023.

The Co-Chair gave the floor to Nik Kriz as Co-Chair of the next session.

9.1.2 - #StopASF 2022 + 2023

Nik Kriz gave the floor to James Ramsay, who provided the highlights and next steps on the second of the EFSA campaigns that ran in 2022: #StopASF (Stop African Swine Fever) campaign. The overall objective for the #StopASF campaign is to raise awareness about this animal disease and to encourage prevention, detection and reporting among farmers, hunters, and veterinarians. In 2022, in addition to the work done about raising awareness, EFSA also trialled certain communication activities that were designed to prompt behaviour change among the target audiences. EFSA carried out research at the beginning of the campaign with the target audiences to establish where the campaign messages and materials would have the most impact and effect. EFSA made all communication materials available on the campaign website, translated into all the languages of the participating countries. James presented the highlights of the activities that have been implemented by the countries involved in the campaign. The Co-Chair thanked James Ramsay and opened the floor for questions: 1) North Macedonia thanked EFSA for its support during the campaign and suggested that for future editions it would be important to include backyard farmers as a target audience.

9.1.3 - Plant health awareness-raising campaign

The Co-Chair gave the floor to James Ramsay, who provided an update on the Plant Health awareness-raising campaign that will be rolled out in 2023. James introduced this new campaign explaining that it derives from a mandate sent to EFSA by the European Commission for technical assistance in risk communications in the area of plant health. This is the first mandate that EFSA has received for risk communications. EFSA has been requested to provide an audience segmentation of EU citizens in relation to plant health and to develop a strategy for an umbrella multiannual awareness raising campaign in the EU (deadline for the end of April). Once the mandate is finalised, EFSA will work to roll out the campaign across the EU and will call on Member States to support the campaign, as they did with the African Swine Fever campaign.

The Co-Chair thanked James Ramsay and opened for questions: 1) Barbara Gallani took the floor asking the Member States to support the campaign in the same way as they have done with the African Swine Fever campaign, especially when it comes to identifying the right partners at a national level; 2) France commented that this campaign is very important because there is little awareness of citizens on plant health or the risks to it that the import of pests poses; 3) Cyprus asked if it may be confusing and duplication of work having the #EUChooseSafeFood and Plant Health campaigns running in parallel since the first campaign already has Plant health as one of its topics. James Ramsay reassured participants that there would be no duplication.

9.2 – Eurobarometer 2022: overview of results and presentation of country reports and use in MS

The Co-Chair gave the floor to Vrbos Domagoj to update the Plenary on the results of the Eurobarometer survey and presentation of country reports.

The 2022 Eurobarometer, published in September 2022 as part of our strategy to increase understanding of our target audiences, provides the findings of interviews with 27,000 EU citizens on topics related to food safety, awareness and risk perception, engagement with the EU food safety system and consumer behaviour in the case of food-borne disease outbreaks. The questionnaire was designed in cooperation with EFSA's Communication Experts Network (CEN).

Some of the most frequent frequently mentioned food safety concerns among citizens were pesticide residues, food additives and antibiotic hormone or steroid residues in meat and dairy.

Domagoj explained that TV is still the main source of information for citizens on food risks; social media are as important as TV for younger population. In response to questions about why citizens don't engage with food safety topics, the most common answers were: 1) they take for granted that the food sold is safe; 2) they know enough to avoid or mitigate food risk; 3) the food safety information is often seen as complex or technical. Finally, awareness of most aspects of the EU food safety system across Europe was high. EFSA has developed tailored summaries and data tools for Member State partners to use the results in support of their own public information and outreach efforts about food safety. A quick summary of the media pick-up of the study was also provided: around 770 news pieces globally, including some high-profile media; a podcast episode was dedicated to the Eurobarometer as well. Vrbos finalised his intervention with reference to Eurobarometer data follow-up activities: further data analyses and potential to run the study in IPA countries in 2023.

Co-Chair thanked Vrbos Domagoj and opened the floor for questions: 1) The Netherlands underlined that the data show that public trust farmers, asking if this had implication on communication campaigns; 2) Cyprus mentioned that they used the findings to create their communication strategy and targeted specific issues; 3) Ireland noted the fact that Ireland and Romania were the only two countries with food poisoning being the highest concern as opposed to chemical risks and thanked EFSA for putting the country data together in an accessible format; 4) Denmark felt reassured from the Danish data as it seems that low concern on food safety issues were accompanied by high level of trust (both in the government, and scientists). Domagoj thanked everyone for the comments and addressed them in the context of ongoing coordinated communication work.

Action point 6: MS to express interest in joining the 2023 campaigns by 15th December.

Action point 7: EFSA to update MS on topics and target audiences selected for year one of the campaign (Q2 2023); on this basis, MS to support EFSA with the identification of relevant actors at a national level for the campaigns (Q2 2023).

10. Any Other Business

■ 10.1 – Plan for the AF 2023 meetings

The Co-Chair gave the floor to Barbara Gallani for the presentation of the plans regarding next year AF meetings.

Barbara explained that there were still dates open but that the plan was to have four meetings as per regular practice, and at least two of them in person. The dates in March were already fixed, for a meeting in person, in Parma. Discussions were ongoing with the Presidency and the MS Sweden and Spain, to organise the second and fourth meeting of the year in their respective countries. EFSA would like to work with AF representatives more closely to co-create the agendas, with the aim of having more interactive sessions. Barbara outlined that the idea was also to try different formats to maximize exchanges of views, maybe by having breakout sessions or other diverse opportunities for exchange of information and discussion.

She then reminded that EFSA's logo would change as of 1st of January 2023 and that a promotional video would be shown on the following day during the RARA event. The logo was already presented to the Management Board for the 20th anniversary, to the Focal Points and to the CEN Network. She indicated that a toolkit for MS was being developed for them to use in their national materials.

Closure of meeting

The Chair thanked the participants, the external speakers and the EFSA colleagues for all the contributions and discussions that had taken place and wished everyone a happy holiday season. He expressed his hope to see everyone again the next day at the RARA 2022, or at the next Advisory Forum meeting to be held in March 2023 in Parma.

LIST OF ACTION ITEMS

Ref	Who	Agenda topic	What
Action 1	EFSA	Assessment of substances with ED properties in food, and associated structural questions: case of vit D - France	EFSA to share with the AF/FP the link to the ANSES opinion

Action 2	EFSA/MS	Report on the 'International Workshop on Risk Ranking of Hazards in Foods' - Sweden	• Sweden to share risk ranking report with the Advisory Forum • EFSA and MSs to agree on next steps to explore the feasibility of defining a common unit to measure Food Safety risks i.e. 'minimum common denominator' for risk ranking
Action 3	MS	Reports from the Netherlands: risk assessment of the fisheries supply chain	The Netherlands to share the translated report with the AF Secretariat when available to be disseminated with AF
Action 4	EFSA	State-of-play of the Focal Point Operational Framework 2023-2027	EFSA to ensure visibility of all activities under the new FP Operational Framework 2023-2027
Action 5	EFSA/AGoD/MS	Update from the Advisory Group on Data	• EFSA to share the draft annual report of the group with the AF/FP • AGoD to share the overview of participants in the AGoD sub-groups with AF/FP • MS to volunteer as leaders of the tool development projects through the FP Framework process
Action 6	MS	#EUChooseSafeFood – 2023 Plans	MS to express interest in joining the 2023 campaigns by 15th December
Action 7	EFSA	Plant health awareness-raising campaign	EFSA to update MS on topics and target audiences selected for year one of the campaign (Q2 2023); on this basis, MS to support EFSA with the identification of relevant actors for the campaigns (Q2 2023)