

COMMUNICATION EXPERTS NETWORK
Minutes of the 13th meeting

23 May 2023

09:00-17:30

Minutes agreed on 15 June 2023



Location: EFSA - Parma and online

Attendees:

- Network Participants:

Country	Name Surname
Austria	Martha Marlies
Belgium	Jean Sébastien Walhin
Bulgaria	Mariela Pchelinska
Croatia	Sara Mikrut Vunjak
Cyprus	Charitini Frenaritou
Czech Republic	Vladimir Brychta
Denmark	Heidi Kornholt
Estonia	Julius Koppel, Piret Priisalu
Finland	Perttu Saralampi
France	Sophie Le Quellec
Germany	Suzan Fiack
Greece	Nikolaos Katerelos, Zoi Mousia
Hungary	Erika Országh
Iceland	-
Ireland	Jane Ryder
Italy	Barbara Tiozzo Pezzoli
Latvia	-
Lithuania	Aistė Prielgauskaitė
Luxembourg	Elisa Barilozzi
Malta	-
Netherlands	Carla Geijskes
Norway	Ingird Margarehta Hoie, Tanya Kristiansen
Poland	Monika Jarzebska
Portugal	Ana Oliveira, Filipa Melo De Vasconcelos
Romania	Rares Mihai Habeau, Simona Radulescu
Slovak Republic	Gabriela Dringušová
Slovenia	Katja Turk
Spain	Arantxa Lopez Franco, Laura Hernandez Dato, Victoria Ruiz
Sweden	Sara Johansson

- Observers:

Valbona Paluka, Tommy Kola, Amneris Drenofci (Albania); Dalibor Vidacak (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Jelena Vracar Filipovic (Montenegro); Lamir Thaci (Kosovo), Katerina Janocska, Sanja Ilieva (North Macedonia); Fatima Nevra Özcan (Turkiye)



- Hearing Experts:
Claudio Canales (ACHIPIA)
- EFSA:
ENGAGE Department: Barbara Gallani (Head of Department); Alessandra Triulzi (Executive Assistant).
Communication Unit: James Ramsay (Head of Unit); Rory Harrington (Communication Coordinator); Domagoj Vrbos (Team Leader, Strategic Communications); Georgios Alaveras (Social Scientist); Giorgia Zamariola (Social Scientist); Tony Smith (Social Scientist); Edward Bray (Communication Officer); Filippo Positano (Communication Officer); Irene Zanetti (Communication Officer); Sharon Monti (Communication Officer); Anatolie Luca (interim); Matteo Mercati (Web Content Manager); Arthur Healy (Scientific Publication Officer).

1. Opening and welcome address

Barbara Gallani welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that James Ramsay would be assuming responsibilities as Chair of the Communication Expert Network (CEN). She added she would still attend when possible and relevant. James formally welcomed the participants and opened the meeting and presented the agenda.

Apologies were received from Switzerland.

2. Adoption of agenda and action points from last meeting

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Advisory Forum and Focal Point update

Barbara Gallani highlighted the following issues from recent Advisory Forum and Focal Point Meetings: (i) the strengthened approach to Coordinated Communication had been discussed at both forums to ensure colleagues at all levels were aware of ongoing activities and could provide input (ii) discussions on key topics such as the One Health approach, glyphosate and new approach methodologies (NAMs) (iv) the need for EFSA and MS to align more on the scientific methodologies that underpin risk assessments.

Targeted Risk Communication

4. Social Science Update

4.1. Update on ongoing social research

- Eurobarometer (EB) follow-up analysis and update for IPA countries



EFSA presented the follow-up analysis to the EB following its publication in 2022 to further understand better (i) actors that contribute to citizen engagement with food safety information (ii) the relationship between EB results and the data linked to the foodborne disease outbreak in 2022 (outbreak coincided with data collection in some countries). The presentation showed key results and explained next steps in terms of data availability to CEN and publication plans.

EFSA informed IPA countries about the contract signed to undertake EB research in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkiye, with data collection planned to start in May. Country factsheets should be available by early Q4 2023. The possibility of undertaking the study also in Norway and Switzerland later in the year was also mentioned but the implementation is yet to be fully confirmed.

- Flash poll data (plant health and BPA)

EFSA presented results of the two finalised flash polls – plant health and BPA – showing how results were used. Data (PowerBI dashboard) on [plant health](#) and [BPA](#) are available on the CEN SharePoint.

4.2. Joint activities planning

- Hazard-risk coordinated dissemination activities

EFSA presented a recap of the project on hazard and risk, reminding CEN members about the animated visuals – 12 examples developed and translated to a total of 25 languages – that were shared after the CEN meeting in October 2022. MS reported that they have not taken any action in terms of adapting the visuals and/or disseminating them yet. However, they expressed interest in using them. EFSA will re-share the [news posted on CEN SharePoint](#) by email for MS to have easier access. The CEN were also informed about the plan to publish the visuals on EFSA's website, with related social media activity on the topic. CEN colleagues from Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany and Netherlands expressed interest in participating in the social media initiatives.

- Social research data hub – prototype presentation and call for volunteers to finalise the tool jointly

EFSA showcased the prototype of the social research database currently under development, including data from social media, surveys, and available literature. The prototype is on the topic of plant health. The database should be finalised in 2023, making all EFSA data available and allowing MS to upload their own data. EFSA sought volunteers via a poll to finalise the design of the database and its testing. Volunteers will be contacted in the second half of 2023.

Actions

(i) 4.1 – EFSA to share with CEN (a) flash poll data by 31/5/23; (b) IPA country factsheets, final EB data follow-up analysis and update on potential EB data collection in Norway & Switzerland by the next CEN meeting

(ii) 4.2 – (a) EFSA to share the full repository of hazard-risk materials via email by 16/06/23 for MS final feedback on translations by 30/6/23; (b)

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



EFSA to contact CEN members on coordinated efforts to disseminate Hazard vs Risk GIFs via a mini social media campaign by 21/7/23

(iii) 4.3 – EFSA to reach out to MS with more information in the second half of 2023, based on input provided by CEN members during the meeting re: interest to contribute to the social research database by 30/9/23.

Preparedness

5. Communication planning

James Ramsay presented the Calendar of upcoming key communication activities until 31/10/23. This included an in-depth update on the communication and engagement approach to the upcoming publication on glyphosate.

EFSA invited CEN members to make expressions of interest for future Hot Topic Calls on any of the outputs covered in the Communication Calendar. Several MS indicated interest on a call on glyphosate, while Vitamin D was also highlighted. A number of MS indicated they would hold discussions with colleagues and notify EFSA of any topics of interest.

A discussion on how to share and explore insights on key topics with the aim of co-developing and/or sharing Lines To Take for coordinated use, led to the idea of a standing item at future meetings for a workshop/collective reflection on agreed subjects. Working title - the COMS Lab – it would be an opportunity for the CEN to discuss strategic and longer-term communication approaches and develop Lines To Take on specific topics in a workshop/brainstorming mode. Reflections could be captured in short summary documents and shared. EFSA will develop a proposal and suggest a topic for a COMS Lab at the next meeting in October 2023.

Actions:

- (i) Member States to indicate interest to EFSA for additional proposed Hot Topic Calls by 30/06/23.**
- (ii) EFSA to develop a concept proposal for the COMS Lab, aimed at co-developing/sharing lines to take and comms plans on identified topics of common interest, and suggest a topic for the next CEN meeting on 24/10/23.**

6. Media round-up

- Media Highlights - Edward Bray and Filippo Positano (both EFSA) highlighted that the topics of novel foods, animal health & welfare, pesticides and contaminants had triggered most media coverage in the past six months. Information was also shared on the countries with most media coverage of EFSA's work (Italy, USA, Germany, Spain and France being the top five)
- General exchange of views on topics
 - Avian influenza (AI) – Italy (EU reference laboratory for AI) & France proposed that AI be treated as a One Health issue, rather than just an



animal health one; given additional factors such as vaccinations and wider societal concerns means it should be viewed through a wider lens. EFSA said it had plans to conduct a flash poll (social research) on AI.

- Novel foods – Romania highlighted that misinformation on insects (novel foods) had driven significant coverage in recent months. Other MS indicated a similar trend.
- Exchange of views on online press events - EFSA will soon hold its first online press event and asked MSs that had already staged one to share their experiences. Several CEN members had held such events and found them to be straightforward to manage and comparable to in-person press conferences in terms of interest and interaction with the media.

Action:

EFSA to adopt a 'one health' approach to communicating on avian influenza (AI) as a possible inaugural item for the COMS Lab at the next CEN Meeting in October 2023.

In the meantime EFSA to share with Italy, France and other interested MSs comms materials and plans on avian influenza (AI) communications by 14/07/23.

Best Practice

7. Key country issues

- **Raw Foods:** Suzan Fiack (BfR) shared findings of research on consumer risk perceptions on raw foods versus actual risks. It found the risk from raw foods were often underestimated – including which foods were most risky. The research also gauged public awareness of common pathogens, finding that ones that had featured in important recent (dating back to 2011) outbreaks were not always the most known. Separately, communication on key topics for Germans - PFAS and BPA - were also explored.
- **Music as a tool for Risk Communication:** Hearing expert Claudio Canales from the Chile Foods Safety Agency (ACHIPA) explained how the ability of music to evoke emotions and remember messages, can be harnessed as a risk communication tool. Published scientific research on how music elicits a range of positive responses in the human brain that lead to beneficial emotional, social and cognitive functions can facilitate this. Music can be used as an effective educational tool, several studies had shown. To illustrate the point, Claudio, played a song he had written for World Food Safety Day (7/6/23) and recorded CEN members and EFSA colleagues who sang the chorus.

8. Accessibility on efsa.europa.eu

EFSA presented recent initiatives on accessibility that improved EFSA's corporate website and provided users with a public accessibility statement.



EFSA informed the participants of future plans for accessibility and asked Member States to share offline any best practice they follow at national level in order to learn from each other.

Action:

CEN members to share any best practice to support peer learning and improvement on website accessibility by next CEN Meeting in October 2023.

Coordinated Communication

9. Food.eu

Rory Harrington (EFSA) gave a short recap on (a) the rationale for the project: to meet requirements of the Transparency Regulation to establish a single portal for EU citizens on food safety topics to promote coordinated communication (b) objective – to develop a prototype with 4 Member States as a proof of concept for relevant MS and EU bodies. They would consider joining the initiative as partners to develop the concept further, with the overall aim of launching a comprehensive, fully functioning website at a later date (provisionally in 2025). The CEN were updated on progress to develop the prototype (governance model, visual identity and page designs) & informed it will be completed by 31/7/23. The proposed next stages of the project were described. For this, the current partners (Croatia, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands & EFSA) are proactively seeking expressions of interest from other CEN members to onboard as partners in the next stages of the development of this prototype.

Action:

CEN members to consider becoming partners in the next stages of the Food.eu project to develop a one-stop shop, shared web platform on food safety aimed at citizens.

10. Campaigns

- #EUChooseSafeFood – Sharon Monti (EFSA) recapped on the campaign approach for 2023: highlighting that the target audience has been expanded to include men and younger citizens (18-25); 16 MS and observer country are taking part that can select from 11 focus topics. The campaign launched in mid-May and will run until 30/9/23. It will leverage World Food Safety Day (7/6/23) to raise awareness by developing bespoke materials for joint communication (a social media kit and video). Charitini Frenaritou (Cyprus) gave a short update on launch activities to date in her country. Planning for the 2024 campaign is due to begin shortly and the CEN will soon receive a survey to provide input on possible topics.
- Plant Health – Irene Zanetti (EFSA) presented the upcoming multi-annual Plant Health campaign: summarising the rationale for the initiative, objectives, target audiences & personas. Campaign timetable for 2023 - execution from



mid-July to End September; 12 countries are confirmed as participants and it will be coordinated primarily through the Focal Points although CEN support will also be important.

- #StopASF – Francesca Mateucci (EFSA) provided an update on the campaign aimed at hunters and farmers in 18 countries. Tools include posters, stickers and ready-to use social media materials.

Actions:

- **EFSA to send a survey to the CEN seeking input on the topics to cover in the 2024 EUChooseSafeFood campaign by 14/06/23. CEN to provide feedback by 26/6/23.**
- **CEN members invited to participate in a joint video to mark World Food Safety Day (details on how to do this to follow) by 02/06/23.**

11. Crisis Communication

- Roadmap implementation - Irene Zanetti thanked CEN members who contributed to the guidelines and who were interviewed for the benchmarking exercise.
- EFSA is developing a database of contacts needed in case of food/feed/reputational crises and will soon reach out to the CEN asking for contacts in their institution.

Action:

EFSA to contact CEN members for information to compile a crisis contacts database by 9/06/23, feedback by CEN members by 30/06/2023

12. EJ – MS publications

Update on MS Publication Channel - Food Safety Risk Assess Europe (FRAE) – Arthur Healy (EFSA) set out the objective of the FRAE: developing an additional channel on EFSA platform where it publishes its scientific outputs. This complementary platform for MS will allow them to publish their own national risk assessments. The new platform – assessed and approved by the Advisory Forum – has already published MS scientific outputs. The CEN was asked to promote awareness of the platform among their colleagues.

Action:

CEN members to promote awareness of the Food Safety Risk Assess Europe (FRAE) platform (i) among colleagues (ii) via social media channels by supporting EFSA's posts.

13. Any Other Business

None

Date for next meeting - 24-25 October 2023.



14. Closure of the meeting

James Ramsay called the meeting to a close at 17.40 pm.