

# 12th MEETING OF EFSA STAKEHOLDER BUREAU

**VIRTUAL MEETING, 13 JUNE 2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau, which took place on the 13 of June 2023 as a virtual meeting was the opportunity to first welcome the renewed composition of the Stakeholder Bureau Members. This gathering provided a valuable platform for the newly composed Bureau to engage in meaningful discussions and share insights regarding the key areas of stakeholder attention identified in the 2022 Annual Strategy Survey results. Furthermore, EFSA utilized this opportunity to address stakeholder inquiries and provide updates on significant topics, including the progress of the Transparency Regulation implementation, upcoming EFSA risk assessments and communication activities, as well as EFSA's role within the One Substance One Assessment initiative. Additionally, the concept and preliminary agenda for the 6th Stakeholder Forum was introduced to the stakeholders.

In his opening remarks, Bernhard Url, EFSA's Executive Director and Chair of the Bureau, highlighted the significant value and importance of stakeholder engagement in shaping EFSA's work and strategic direction. He emphasized the pivotal role of the Stakeholder Bureau as EFSA's esteemed advisory body, responsible for providing valuable input on societal concerns within EFSA's purview. He commended the Bureau members for their strong dedication to promoting food safety in the European Union and stressed the importance of their proactive involvement in this forum.

Following the welcome address, Aivars Bērziņš, Chair of EFSA's Management Board, introduced himself and highlighted the newly constituted Management Board, with a particular emphasis on the inclusion of stakeholders within its governance structure. He reiterated his dedication to being accessible and available to stakeholders, expressing appreciation for their proactive engagement and extending congratulations on their new role. The Chair of the Board attended all meeting and report back on the exchanges at the Management Board meeting on 22 June 2023.

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## ANNUAL STRATEGY SURVEY RESULTS: AREAS OF ATTENTION FOR STAKEHOLDERS' REVIEW

The results of the EFSA Annual Strategy Survey 2022 show that Stakeholders' assessment of the objectives varies between neutral and positive, with the lowest satisfaction score observed in Strategic Objectives 1 and 2. Stakeholders are particularly positive about EFSA's mission and its ability to foster scientific excellence. Stakeholders also judge positively EFSA's ability to foster accountability, independence and the alignment of tasks and activities with EU priorities. The main areas of attention are engaging stakeholders during the process of risk assessment, the ability to provide information tailored to the intended audience, communicating risks in a clear, comprehensible and meaningful way, and EFSA's efficiency in using human/financial resources to carry out its task.

Based on these results which were anticipated to the representatives, the stakeholders were requested to consult their members and collect actionable and operational feedback on the reasons for this lower satisfaction in these areas and provide input on the changes they would like to see.

During relevant agenda item of the Bureau, Giorgia Zamariola, Social Scientist from the Strategic Communications Team at EFSA, provided a short overview of the results to initiate the discussion. A first engagement with Stakeholders adopting a "wordcloud" exercise resulted in understanding that the reasons for lower satisfaction are related to perceived transparency and inclusiveness. A second wordcloud revealed that the changes that could improve the satisfaction are timely responses and a more explicit description of how Stakeholders' input is included in the process of risk assessment.

The Business and Food Industry representative provided a presentation highlighting the following key messages:

- Requesting EFSA to utilize applicants' technical hearings as an engagement method.
- Simplifying the communication of scientific opinions to the general public and revisiting the communication channels available for stakeholders.
- Exploring direct interactions with EFSA, citing examples from European Chemical Agencies' RAC Committee and European Medicine Agencies' interactions in the context of PRIME.
- Providing particular input on EFSA IT systems and requirements for applicants.

The farmers and primary producers' representative shared collective input in writing, highlighting the following key messages:

- A request for clarifying EFSA's working procedure on scientific opinions so to support stakeholders to provide input during the scientific process.
- Involve external experts during the risk assessment process without compromising the core concept of independence. (e.g. through workshops, direct consultation, etc.).

Furthermore, and to reply to a question raised by the Business and Food Industry representative, EFSA provided an update on the progress of the Roadmap on Evidence-based risk communication in the EU Food Safety System, for which various stakeholders had been interviewed or are going to be interviewed in the next phases of the project. The input provided by the stakeholders throughout the agenda item are going to be followed up and incorporate within the mentioned roadmap, specifically in Area 2 "Effectiveness of Transparency initiatives". The findings of the roadmap will be presented at the Stakeholder Forum in November.

To conclude the session, Giorgia reminded that the upcoming Annual Strategy Survey is planned to be launched this July 2023, with a simplified format.

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## AGENDA ITEMS RAISED BY STAKEHOLDERS

### Upcoming risk assessment and communication activities

This agenda item was requested by the representative of NGOs and Advocacy Groups.

Barbara Gallani, EFSA's Head of Communication and Partnership Department, presented a comprehensive overview of EFSA's ongoing risk assessment outputs, which are slated for completion within the current year, 2023. A total of 369 outputs are expected to be delivered between the date of the meeting and the year-end. These outputs can be categorized as follows: 65% pertain to application-related queries, 21% are classified as Scientific and Technical Assistance, and the remaining 14% constitute Scientific Opinions.

Furthermore, stakeholders were reminded of the availability of the Open EFSA platform, which serves as a singular public interface for all information pertaining to EFSA's scientific endeavors. Through this platform, stakeholders have the flexibility to extract a list of forthcoming EFSA opinions at any time, using relevant filters of interest. These filters include options to narrow down searches based on food domains, substances, question statuses, and whether they fall under pre or post Transparency Regulation. The platform also enables the application of various date-related filters, such as "risk assessment deadline", facilitating an overview of upcoming assessments.

Lastly, Barbara provided a preview of selected forthcoming publications that are of particular relevance and for which EFSA has planned communication activities.

## EFSA's activities and role in the context of the One Substance One Assessment initiative

The representative of Business and Food Industry requested an update on EFSA activities and role in the context of the One Substance One Assessment initiative.

Gloria López-Gálvez, the EFSA's coordinator of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and the One substance One assessment Approach (CSS-1S1A), delivered a comprehensive presentation that provided background information on the topic, updated the attendees on EFSA's activities, outlined the Commission plans to implement One substance One assessment Approach and concluded with the key take-home messages.

During the presentation, it was highlighted that EFSA is already piloting the One substance One assessment Approach approach in various areas (e.g. Pesticides/Biocides, Food Contact Materials/Drinking Water Directive). Additionally, an EU Common Data Platform on Chemicals is under development. It was also mentioned that relevant Legislative proposals will be adopted likely during the next months. Furthermore, it was stressed that One substance One assessment Approach aims to boost cooperation with Member States and sister agencies to avoid duplication of efforts and prevent divergencies, thus maximising the effectiveness of risk assessment and risk management processes.

Subsequently, the Industry representative inquired about the potential impact that the new Common Data platform on chemicals would have on applicants. It was indicated that this platform aims to be a centralised repository (one-stop-shop) for data related to chemicals, which will be usable by all actors involved in chemical risk assessment-risk management and which would facilitate the use and the inter-operability of data. In a wider context, it was clarified that the legal proposals are yet *on the making* and more concrete impacts to the industry will be known later on in the year.

## Update on the Transparency Regulation implementation and opportunities for stakeholder engagement

The representative of NGOs and Advocacy Groups and the representative of Business and Food Industry requested an update on the Transparency Regulation implementation and opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

For this purpose, Bernhard Url, EFSA's Executive Director, provided a presentation with figures and statistics on the new tasks resulting from the Transparency Regulation, such as the pre-submission advice activities, Notification of Studies, Public Consultations, Public Access to Documents and the Confidentiality requests received. Additionally, Bernhard indicated that the migration of the non-pesticide questions to Open EFSA will be completed by the end of the year. Furthermore, Bernhard reminded the engagement opportunities available for the stakeholders such as the public consultations and the webinar series on the Transparency Regulation, highlighting the possibility to join the «Technical Group on the Tools related to the application of the Transparency Regulation» where stakeholders have the opportunity to share valuable user feedback regarding the usability of the tools, suggest improvements and receive information on the upcoming improvements prior to their implementation.

Representatives from the Industry and Practitioners sectors expressed concerns about the burden imposed on applicants by certain aspects of the Transparency Regulation. They felt that the five-year timeframe provided by the European Commission to revise the implementation of the Regulation was too long and does not allow for adequate adaptation to innovation. Consequently, they called for reviewing the Practical Arrangements (PAs) towards more leaner processes, enabling SMEs in particular to streamline the administrative burden associated with the requirements currently imposed by these arrangements.

Anastasia Alvizou from the European Commission (DG-SANTE) reminded participants that it was premature to revise the implementation of the Transparency Regulation at this stage. The evaluation of EFSA's implementation of the new provisions under the Transparency Regulation is scheduled to take place five years after its implementation. It is essential to allow sufficient

time for implementation before conducting a comprehensive and adequate impact assessment.

The NGO representative stated, from their side, to fully support the evaluation after the 5 years in order to adequately assess the implementation

EFSA took note the applicants' request suggesting streamlining the Practical Arrangements, as an opportunity to consider stakeholders' experience with the implementation of EFSA's new processes and will discuss this further with the European Commission/DG SANTE. The Industry representative urged the Commission to task EFSA with revisiting the Practical Arrangements as soon as possible.

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## STAKEHOLDER FORUM : DRAFT AGENDA AND PROPOSALS

Victoria Villamar, Head of Engagement and External Relations Unit, introduced the concept and preliminary agenda for the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder Forum, scheduled to take place in Brussels on November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. This year's edition presents a valuable opportunity for face-to-face interaction, where EFSA's Senior Management will deliver important updates and information. The Forum will feature focused breakout sessions centered around the theme of "user-centric approach moving forward engagement and value for society." Additionally, there will be a second edition of the "EFSA 4 Stakeholders Fair," comprising informative stands, visual materials, and EFSA staff members available to provide stakeholders with comprehensive insights into EFSA's services, as well as ongoing and upcoming activities. The fair will be thoughtfully divided to encompass the key areas of risk assessment, risk communication, and stakeholder engagement.

Bureau Members were invited to provide further comments on the draft concept for the Forum meeting by written procedure. The Bureau will be kept informed on progress and will be associated to the planning and execution of the programme, with an expected active role in promoting and leveraging the outcome of these annual gatherings with all registered stakeholder organisations.

## AOB

During the meeting, the Industry representative brought forward the outcomes of a survey conducted among representatives from the Business and Food Industry category with regards to the need to evolve the annual industry roundtable towards a more thematic engagement initiative. Respondents favour the need to maintain such an initiative as useful for their sector. EFSA will consider this input as part of further evolving engagement and the new opportunities offered by the new legal framework, such as pre-submission advice meetings, services to applicants' modalities.

In concluding the meeting, Bernhard Url expressed his appreciation to all the members of the Stakeholder Bureau for their valuable and well-prepared contributions. He acknowledged the positive and collaborative atmosphere that characterized the discussions.

Bernhard extended his wishes for a restful summer break to the stakeholders and expressed anticipation for the next Stakeholder Bureau in Autumn. He also highlighted the Stakeholder Forum in Brussels in November, emphasizing the importance of personal interactions in building stronger connections and fostering anticipation for the future.

## ANNEX 1 : AGENDA

Time	N	Item	Speakers	
14:00 30'	1	<b>Welcome to the meeting and the new composition of the Stakeholder Bureau</b>	Bernhard Url, Executive Director	
		<b>Tour the table</b>		
14:30 30'	2	<b>Annual Strategy Survey results: Areas of attention for Stakeholders' review</b>	Giorgia Zamarola, Social scientist, Strategic Communications	
<b>Agenda items raised by stakeholders:</b>				
15:00 10'	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upcoming risk assessment and communication activities</li> </ul>	Barbara Gallani, Head of Communication and Partnership Department	
15:10 15'	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EFSA activities and role in the context of the One Substance One Assessment initiative.</li> </ul>	Gloria Lopez Galvez, EFSA coordinator of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability – 1S1A	
15:25 20'	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on the Transparency Regulation implementation and opportunities for stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>	Bernhard Url, Executive Director	
15:45 30'	7	<b>Stakeholder Forum: draft agenda &amp; proposals</b>	Victoria Villamar, Head of Engagement and External Relations Unit	
16:15	8	<b>AOB and Closing remarks</b>	Bernhard Url, Executive Director	

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## PARTICIPANTS LIST

### STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATIVES

Name	Stakeholder Category representing
Camille Perrin	Consumers
Angeliki Lyssimachou	NGOs and Advocacy Groups
Oana Neagu	Farmers and Primary Producers
Giuseppe Luca Capodieci	Business and Food Industry
Nelli Hajdu	Distributors and HORECA
Klaus Hellmann	Practitioners
Lorraine Maltby	Academia

### EFSA REPRESENTATIVES

Bernhard Url	Executive Director
Aivars Berzins	Chair of the EFSA Management Board
Barbara Gallani	Head of Communication and Partnership Department
Victoria Villamar	Head of Engagement and Relations Unit
Sergio Potier Rodeia	Team Leader for Community Management, Engagement and External Relations Unit
Giorgia Zamariola	Social Scientist, Strategic Communications Team
Gloria Lopez Galvez	EFSA Coordinator of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability
Christophe Wolff	Policy Officer, Engagement and External Relations Unit
Luisa Abrahamyan	Junior Officer, Engagement and External Relations Unit
Max Blanck	Policy Officer, Engagement and External Relations Unit
Sara de Berardis	Team Leader Advice, Front-Desk and Workforce Planning
Goran Kumric	Communications Officer, Front-Desk and Workforce Planning

### EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES – OBSERVERS

Anastasia Alvizou	Deputy Head of Farm to Fork, E.1, DG SANTE, European Commission
Athanasiros Raikos	Policy Officer, E.1, DG SANTE, European Commission
Sandrine Amsler	Policy Officer, E.1, DG SANTE, European Commission
Eleni Gkana	Policy Assistant, E.1, DG SANTE, European Commission