

# 88<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EFSA ADVISORY FORUM



27 June 2023: 9:00-17:30  
28 June 2023: 9:00-12:00  
MINUTES

**Location:** Stockholm, Sweden / Webconference

Members	Attendance	
	In person	Virtual
Austria (AT)		Johann Steinwider
Belgium (BE)		Axel Mauroy
Belgium (BE)		Fabien Bolle
Bulgaria (BG)		Iliyan Kostov
Croatia (HR)	Andrea Gross - Bošković	
Cyprus (CY)	Charitini Frenaritou	
Czech Republic (CZ)	Jitka Gotzova	
Denmark (DK)		Christine Nellemann
Denmark (DK)	Dorte Lau Baggesen	
Estonia (EE)	Mari Reinik	
Finland (FI)	Pia Mäkelä	
France (FR)		Matthieu Schuler
France (FR)		Salma Elreedy
Germany (DE)	Andreas Hensel	
Germany (DE)		Tanja Schwerdtle
Greece (EL)	Stavros Zannopoulos	
Hungary (HU)	Ákos Bernard Józwiak	
Iceland (IS)	apologies	
Ireland (IE)		Lisa O'connor
Italy (IT)		Alessandra Perella
Latvia (LV)		Vadims Bartkevics
Lithuania (LT)	Deimante Bikneryte	
Luxembourg (LU)	Danny Zust	
Malta (MT)	apologies	
Netherlands (NL)	Dick Sijm	
Norway (NO)		Danica Grahek-Ogden
Norway (NO)	Harald Gjein	
Poland (PL)		Joanna Gajda-Wyrebek
Portugal (PT)	Pedro Portugal Gaspar	
Romania (RO)		Monica Mariana Neagu
Slovak Republic (SK)		Kristína Lépesová
Slovenia (SI)	Urška Blaznik	
Spain (ES)	Icíar Fierros	
Sweden (SE)	Helena Brunnkvist	

MEETING MINUTES  
88<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Forum



Observers & Other Participants	Attendance	
	In person	Virtual
Albania (AL)		Amarilda Keli
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA)	apologies	
Kosovo*	apologies	
Montenegro (ME)		Vladimir Djakovic
Republic of North Macedonia (MK)		Nikolche Babovski
Serbia (RS)		Tamara Boskovic
Switzerland (CH)	Katharina Stärk	
Türkiye (TR)	apologies	
European Commission – DG SANTE – E.1 (Observer)	Raikos Athanasios	
European Commission (Observer)		Sigrid Weiland
European Commission (Observer)		Marta Valenciano
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)	Andrea Ammon	
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)	Mike Catchpole	
Belgian Institute for Health (Sciensano)	Hein Imberechts	
French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES) – for agenda item 8	Arnaud Callegari	
Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety (VKM)		Hilde Mellegård
Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety (VKM)		Martin Malmstrøm
<b>EFSA Representatives</b>		
Bernhard Url (Chair)- On site	Lisa Marie (Advisory Forum Secretariat) - Online	
Barbara Gallani (Co-Chair) – On site	James Ramsay - Online	
Nick Kriz (Co-Chair)- On site	Alberto Spagnoli - Online	
Guilhem de Seze (Co-Chair) – On site	Domenica Auteri – Online	
Carlos Das Neves – On site	Yves van der Stede – Online	
Victoria Villamar – Online	Lisa Kohnle – Online	
Sérgio Potier Rodeia - On site	Julia Fabrega – Online	
Maria Azevedo Mendes (Advisory Forum Secretariat) - Online	Stef Bronzwaer – Online	
Virginia Spurio Salvi (Advisory Forum Secretariat) - On site	Bernard Bottex – Online	
Cristina Alonso Andicoberry (Advisory Forum Secretariat) - Online		
Andrea Laroni (Advisory Forum Secretariat) - Online		



## Table of Contents

Item 1: Opening and welcome address.....	4
Item 2: Welcome address from the Swedish Deputy Director General .....	4
Item 3: Adoption of agenda and action points from last meeting .....	4
Item 4: Update on the Advisory Group on Data (AGoD) .....	4
Item 5: New Focal Point Operational Framework 2023-2027.....	4
Item 6: Partnership opportunities .....	6
Item 7: Risk Assessment activities.....	8
Item 8: Session on One Health.....	10
Item 9: Engaging with MS in Risk Assessment.....	12
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS .....	14



## **Item 1: Opening and welcome address**

Bernhard Url, Chair, opened the 88<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Forum (AF) by welcoming the members of the AF in Stockholm. The meeting included participants from 32 countries and the European Commission (EC). The AF also welcomed external speakers from Norway, the Belgian Institute for Health (Sciensano), and ANSES (France). The Executive Director of our sister Agency the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) joined the AF in person for the session on One Health, which was also attended by the ECDC Chief Scientist.

## **Item 2: Welcome address from the Swedish Deputy Director General**

Ms Helena Storbjörk Windahl, Deputy Director General of the Division for the Food Chain, Animal Health and Welfare at the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure from 2021, gave the plenary a welcome speech on behalf of the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

## **Item 3: Adoption of agenda and action points from last meeting**

The Plenary adopted the agenda of the meeting as it was proposed by the Chair. The AOB from Greece will be anticipated at the end of the Focal Point block. No additional AOBs were noted. The Chair informed the Plenary that the [final minutes](#) of the 87<sup>th</sup> Advisory Forum are publicly available.

## **Item 4: Update on the Advisory Group on Data (AGoD)**

Akos Jozwiak presented the progress of the Advisory Group on Data. The group held its 15th (online) and 16th (physical) meetings on 4 May and 26 June, respectively. The discussion covered several DG SANTE data-related projects, the EU Chemical Strategy, and the characteristics of Digital Transformation. The 3 SubGroups already launched presented their activities, and two more subgroups start their work in the summer of 2023. The Annual report on the AGoD was published [2022 Annual Report of the Advisory Group on Data \(wiley.com\)](#). Finally, the group discussed project ideas in a workshop and identified the next projects to be proposed as FP data tailor-made activities in 2024.

Outcomes included: the identification of the need of improving the information flow among Member States (MS) experts, Commission, and EFSA significantly compared to the present situation; the identification of the need for a detailed description of projects and to come up with a long-term plan for AGoD.

The plenary reiterated its support to the work of the AGoD while identifying the need for a more strategic vision. The issue of co-financing was discussed and EFSA emphasised its availability to keep financing AGoD, although the need for MS to step in in terms of national funds and initiatives is crucial. Acknowledging that the group can be at times slow-moving in a field where developments happen swiftly, the discussion concluded with a call for all MS to engage with the group - even just as an observer at first - and the collective understanding of the need to further and speed up the work of AGoD.

## **Item 5: New Focal Point Operational Framework 2023-2027**

### **5.1 Outcome of the FP meeting**

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Sérgio Potier Rodeia (EFSA) provided an overview of the outcome of the 51<sup>st</sup> Focal Point meeting held in Parma on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of May. Activities under the Focal Point Operational Framework 2023-2027 have been deemed challenging by FPs which highlighted other drawbacks such as the complexity of the model and the large workload. However, emphasis was also placed on positive aspects including flexibility and new opportunities for collaboration. Overall, EFSA and FPs agreed that the full onboarding into the new model will require time and the first year of framework is a pilot and learning year. Continuous improvements in the implementation of the model are envisaged taking into account MS specificities and addressing emerging challenges. EFSA acknowledged the request from FPs for more easily available material and guidance (e.g.; on subcontracting for tailor-made activities) and committed to keep raising information on activities and the framework.

Germany reflected on the suggestion of having an exchange platform to improve information sharing about ongoing tailor-made activities in individual MS. Additional physical meetings were proposed also as a means to improve information sharing or identify proper mechanisms for the purpose. Cyprus referred to the large amount of work shouldered by the national FoP members due to the FP tailor-made activities who also deals with other responsibilities, without any increase in the existing staff in their Organizations.

Overall support was expressed by the plenary to the next steps identified during the FP meeting.

## **5.2 Strengthen the visibility of the FP framework**

Barbara Gallani (EFSA) presented a recap of the tools aiming to increase the visibility of activities performed under the FP Framework already in place and the new 4 tools since the last AF meeting as follows: the decision-making process for tailor-made proposals (finalised); the monitoring tool to submit new tailor-made proposals (launched); the microsite on FP tailor-made activities (published); the explanatory document on FP framework (shared with FP).

Germany raised one point about the enlargement of art. 36 organisations lamenting a lack of clear strategic vision in this regard and the need for more concrete objectives to pursue. Overall, the process was deemed too administrative, although being on a learning curve there is room for improvement as this pilot process is unfolding.

## **5.3 FP framework: a focus on Risk Communication activities**

James Ramsay (EFSA) presented an update on the progress to develop tailor-made activities in the area of Coordinated Communication - under the priority topic of risk communication. Specifically, EFSA, FP, and the Communication Expert Network (CEN) are currently working on the following activities: the Good Practice Guide for FP and CEN, with the aim of establishing links at the MS level between FP and CEN; the definition of a model for EU coordinated communications to identify the role and tasks of each member of the community; the MS communication coordinators, a community within which EFSA's provides financial support for MS to build capacity for communication; and the proposal from the Netherlands for a learning and development programme for coordinated comms to build common European levels of expertise and standards.

France commented that coordinated communication may be a challenge, especially on topics (e.g., plant protection products) with many different points of view. Furthermore, communication is often a shared competence with other institutions at the MS level, hence the complexity of fully coordinating with them and effectively addressing issues exceeding the remit of one specific institution. EFSA acknowledged these limits, noting that in order to develop coordinated communication we need to have a discussion and a relevant space where to explore these options. This justifies the attempt to map different actors and establish links among them. Germany noted how coordinated communication should also



consider the needs of countries neighbouring the EU considering that these countries provide the EU with a large part of its food needs. EFSA agreed with the global dimension of the issue and brought as an example the fact that IPA countries are very active within the CEN and part of the overall thinking around coordinated communication. Although these initiatives were designed with a clear EU focus, this doesn't mean they cannot support other actions towards international partners.

#### **5.4 Report on Greek Focal Point activities under the new FPA**

Dr Stavros Zannopoulos (AF member - Greece) debriefed the plenary on the EFSA's chief scientist visit to EFET which represented an occasion to discuss the following issues: opportunities for knowledge transfer to MS national authorities/research institutes from EFSA's projects and panels' work and for national authorities to benefit from the EFSA scientific outputs; challenges in the domain of nutrition and food safety such as data gaps in existing data consumption EU surveys, the adequacy of data quality of food consumption data, and the Need for harmonization of EU risk-based official controls systems. The AF Greek member also presented the upcoming "Food Safety a key pillar of One Health approach" Scientific Conference (7 and 8 November 2023, Athens), which aims to provide a platform for interaction among the different organizations in Greece involved in food safety, Farm to Fork strategy in order to achieve a multidisciplinary approach for addressing current and future challenges in the frame of "One Health" concept.

### **Item 6: Partnership opportunities**

#### **6.1. Partnership implementation - Follow up from the MB discussion**

Alberto Spagnoli (EFSA) debriefed the plenary on the discussion on partnerships that occurred during EFSA's MB meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June. The MB discussion was informed by a presentation highlighting the challenges that call for enhanced and enlarged cooperation between EFSA and organisations in MS, the framework, investment, and learnings from EFSA's cooperation to date, its objective to boost cooperation in preparatory tasks for risk assessments, the concept of partnerships developed by the AF and envisaged as the necessary evolution of EFSA's cooperation model for the speed and sustainability of EU's risk assessment system, operational and governance considerations to make them happen, and a selection of areas showcasing existing efforts and potential opportunities for partnerships. On that basis, the MB discussed the need for partnerships, the main strategic levers and blockers for MS, and the follow-up at the political level. The MB eventually endorsed the concept that partnerships be the way forward for the EU RA system. MB members highlighted long-term strategic planning and expanding and/or further engaging with art. 36 organisations as key levers to promote more partnerships with/between national organisations. They also agreed that they should take on a connecting role, interacting with AF, FP, and art. 36 list orgs. and advocating with risk managers and policymakers.

Some AF members raised the question of whether the MB will envisage working groups on partnership and - if so - what will be the scope of their remit, noting how the MB should focus on the strategic level. Questions were raised also on the domains where these types of partnerships would need to be built. EFSA noted that the MB can build subcommittees to address specific questions, but that this question was not examined in depth by the MB. The idea at this stage would be for MB members to evaluate the interest of their respective MS and then - if worthwhile - to consider taking further action at the MB level (possibly by a smaller number of volunteering members) to support EFSA in its efforts. That might lead to setting up a platform for thinking strategically about these issues while using MB members' advocacy role to facilitate things at the national level. Another important point for discussion has been the complexity of balancing national needs and priorities with impactful partnerships at the European level, which call for resources and political will from MS.

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## **6.2. PERA-FPA: Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) for advancing the ERA of Plant Protection Products Background:**

Domenica Auteri (EFSA) presented on the state of the art of PERA project with a focus on [the FPA to advance the ERA of Plant Protection Products](#) (PPP). With the FPA, EFSA wishes to set a partnership helping to address and shape identified needs in preparation for the revision of the guidance documents, in particular the terrestrial ecotoxicology guidance. By addressing these contingent needs, the most up-to-date knowledge and tools as well as the EU's ambitious goals to better protect the environment are considered. The call evaluation will be in the Autumn to establish the FPA by the end of the year (or early 2024) while activities will start with the signature of a specific grant agreement in 2024. AF members were asked to spread the call and encourage applications. The deadline for applications is 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The Netherlands raised the question of whether this type of project can also be functional to address future needs and issues that will arise in the field (e.g.; relating to upcoming legislation). EFSA pointed out that some of these frameworks have the possibility to improve preparedness for future challenges and that the aim in this case is to move forward towards a more systemic view on environmental risk assessment.

**Action:** AF members to share the call with their national networks, as may be appropriate.

## **6.3. Call for proposals on animal welfare**

Yves van der Stede (EFSA) presented two calls for collaboration on animal welfare: the first call ([call for proposals on animal care and welfare](#)) is an open grant call and consists of 2 lots. This call is very consistent with EFSA strategic objective 2 of the 2027 strategy and aims to fill in important data gaps in the area of animal welfare in relation to living animal transport and related heat stress and necessary data collection to assess the welfare of dairy cows. A second call ([Developing a Methodology to Assess Positive Animal Welfare Using Behaviour-analytic and Ethological Approaches](#)) is an open Call and aims to develop methods to integrate positive welfare in welfare assessment. This item was informative in its nature.

**Action:** AF members to share the calls with their national networks, as may be appropriate.

## **6.4. Upcoming call for the establishment of an active surveillance network for highly pathogenic avian influenza across Europe**

Lisa Kohnle (EFSA) discussed an upcoming call for the establishment of an active surveillance network for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza across Europe. EFSA and its contractors conducted several pilot studies in Ukraine and Georgia, which are considered gateways for wild birds to Europe. The outcomes are summarized in an [External Scientific Report](#) that suggests several sampling sites and can be used as a manual for sample collection and laboratory analysis. EFSA is now aiming at creating a network of these sampling sites and envisages specific related tasks such as the establishment and enhancement of relevant local infrastructure (e.g.; for sample collection and laboratory analysis as well as capacity building for the activities to be performed). Therefore, the call aims at improving preparedness and early warning of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Europe.

Questions were raised about financial aspects, whether the research will focus also on antibodies (not in this case), and whether national reference labs' involvement is mandatory or recommended (recommended). It was also indicated that for each lot a different consortium may apply, but the same consortium may apply also to multiple lots. However, the aim is to have the right partners for the right country involved in the long term.

**Action:** AF members to share the call with their national networks, as may be appropriate.



#### **6.5. Strategic roadmap and studies - Advancing Aggregate Exposure to Chemicals in EU**

Julia Fabrega (EFSA) presented the consortium that has been awarded the development of this new project. The roadmap aims at providing a strategic direction on how to develop further aggregate exposure assessments for chemicals in the EU. Within the next 12 months, the contractor will start with a comprehensive mapping of projects and activities in the field, taking into account national, European, and international projects. The aim is to identify existing data gaps and priorities areas of action as well as key players with whom to partner with. The open call for tenders was launched in the autumn last year and the offers were evaluated and awarded in January 2023. The awarded consortium is comprised of 10 organisations and is led by the Ireland-based consultancy Creme Global. The implementation of the roadmap is foreseen to start in 2025.

### **Item 7: Risk Assessment activities**

#### **7.1.a Renewal assessment of Glyphosate**

Guilhem de Seze (EFSA) presented an update on the current status of the peer review of the renewal assessment of glyphosate, which was formally started in Sept 2021 with the joint EFSA-ECHA public consultation on the initial scientific assessments and is now approaching the final stages. Currently, EFSA is in the stage of finalization of the EFSA Conclusion following the rapporteur member states (RMS)'s work in the Assessment Group on Glyphosate (AGG) and MS consultation steps. An EFSA WG on the renewal of glyphosate was also established in support of the peer review. Furthermore, peer review expert meetings were held between 14 November and 2 December 2022, as reported in [high-level reports](#) published in December 2022. The delivery of the Conclusion to the Commission, Member States and Applicant (Glyphosate Renewal Group) is envisaged by the first half of July 2023. In the subsequent step, the Commission and MS risk managers will consider the outcomes and proceed with the decision-making on the (non)renewal of glyphosate to be concluded by Dec 2023.

The Czech Republic raised the question of whether there is any communication strategy on how to communicate a topic of such sensitivity for the general public. EFSA noted that communication will emphasise the robustness of the assessment being one of the most comprehensive and transparent ever being conducted.

#### **7.1.b Update on “New Genomic Techniques”**

Guilhem de Seze (EFSA) presented an update on new genomic techniques (NGT) ongoing work in advance of the upcoming EU Commission legislative proposal on NGT. The term refers to those techniques developed after the 2001 GMO legislation. The main question is whether these techniques bring new risks not found in conventional breeding and established genomic techniques and whether existing RA guidelines are still adequate tools for risk assessment.

Germany noted that in March 2023 they organized the [International Conference on GMO Analysis and New Genomic Techniques](#) and more information can be found on the BfR website. Cyprus queried about the framework of the upcoming Commission proposal and which working groups of the Council will discuss it. The Commission replied that once the proposal will be public MS will be further informed on these details.

#### **7.1.c Collaborative approach on “Perfluoroalkyl substances” (PFAS)**

Dick Sijm (Netherlands) updated the plenary on the outcome of the PFAS EFSA / MS meeting held on 31 May 2023. As a follow-up to the 87th AF meeting a small group of representatives from Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, The Netherlands, and EFSA discussed the activities on PFAS in the various Member States and European Agencies and



possible follow-up. As next steps, the group agreed with the creation of 1) a governance “steering group” comprised of all AF representatives that would like to join, as well as representatives from EC DG SANTE, DG ENV, and EFSA, who would meet twice a year; and 2) a Risk Assessors working group comprised of experts on PFAS, nominated by the AF that could meet e.g., every two months; and 3) an online platform for information, documents and data sharing.

MS were encouraged to actively join the activities of the group. France indicated its willingness to contribute to the operation of the project in partnership with other MS involved. ANSES risk assessment team working on PFAS is very busy with its tasks at national level. The Netherlands promised to consider the role of co-chair but has already indicated its willingness to contribute to the handling of the group. Similarly, Germany stated its availability to co-chair the PFAS group in partnership with other MS.

Norway pointed out an [upcoming whole-day webinar](#) jointly organized by the Danish National Food Institute at DTU, the Finnish Food Authority, the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment, and the Swedish National Food Agency, covering PFAS on 18 September.

**Action:** AF members to express their interest to join the Steering Group and to volunteer to nominate representatives to join the Expert Group on PFAS by informing the AF members from France and The Netherlands, with copy to the AF secretariat (afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu).

#### **7.1.d Mandates; Public consultations; RA plans; updates**

Guilhem de Seze (EFSA) discussed MS Risk Assessment Activities from Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden where there is potential collaboration/information and drew the attention of Member states to the following mandates: Styrene, E 174, Aspartame, NAMs. Attention was also drawn to EFSA Connect website where almost 40 public consultations are currently going on. For information of MS, it was also indicated that 5 EFSA calls for data are out.

#### **7.2.a Environmental risk assessment of genetically modified sterile VIRGEN® salmon for use in research trials in aquaculture sea-cages**

Martin Malmstrøm (VKM - Norway) presented on Norway’s experience regarding the environmental risk assessment of genetically modified sterile virgin salmon for the use in research trials in aquaculture sea cages. This represents the first application of GMO animals in Norway and aims at evaluating all aspects of possible interactions between the GMO fish and the environment, but not yet potential risks to human health. The aim is to complete the project approximately within September 2023.

#### **7.2.b Mapping the nutrients, food additives and contaminants found in plant-based and gluten-free food products**

##### **Background:**

Hilde Mellegård (VKM – Norway) presented the VKM assignment on mapping nutrients, food additives and contaminants in plant-based and gluten-free food products. The aim of the project is to select relevant food products (plant-based and gluten-free) and relevant nutrients, additives, process-induced substances, and other substances, and map and compare the content of food products and substances with corresponding meat and dairy products and products with gluten. The report on the project is expected to be published in November 2023 and a seminar on the topic will be also arranged. Norway submitted a request for data in this project through the Norwegian EFSA Focal Point with a deadline of the end of July.

#### **7.2.c Genotoxicity Workshop**

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Tanja Schwerdtle (BfR – Germany) announced the International Symposium “Risk Assessment Of Genotoxic Compounds - Challenges And Future Perspectives” planned for 26-28 February 2024 in Berlin. Day 1 will feature 2 keynote lectures on current and future approaches in genotoxicity risk assessments, a discussion on specific requirements and challenges in various legislations, and the setup of the workshops on future perspectives in genotoxicity assessment. On day 2, the 4 workshops will take place, followed by the presentation of results and a panel discussion. AF members will be informed about the deadline for registration after the summer.

## **Item 8: Session on One Health**

### **8.1 Where we come from**

The Chair welcomed Andrea Ammon, Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention Control, Mike Catchpole, Chief Scientist of ECDC, and Arnaud Callegari (ANSES, France) and Hein Imborechts (Sciensano, Belgium) from One Health European Joint Programme (EJP) (Coordinator and Scientific Coordinator, respectively). Carlos Das Neves introduced the One Health EJP, how the five EU agencies (EFSA, ECDC, EMA, EEA, ECHA) are working together, and the aim and objectives of the thematic session.

### **8.2 OH operationalisation in EFSA**

Stef Bronzwaer (EFSA) presented EFSA's progress in operationalising One Health, including a survey conducted to identify needs and barriers within the organisation. A task force was formed based on the survey findings to develop a concept paper for EFSA, and a microsite was created to disseminate information on One Health. Barriers to implementation were recognized, such as regulatory complexities, challenges in capacity building, and limited resources. EFSA will discuss its One Health approach with the management board at the end of this year, and EFSA plans to address the challenges through collaboration with sister agencies and stakeholders.

### **8.3 OH in action between EU agencies**

#### **Background:**

Andrea Ammon (ECDC) and Bernhard Url presented jointly collaborative efforts between ECDC and EFSA for implementing the One Health approach. ECDC's new founding regulations prominently emphasizes One Health. The collaboration between the two agencies includes for instance joint risk assessments for foodborne outbreaks, monitoring vector-borne diseases, and reporting on antimicrobial resistance. Challenges in implementation include data sharing, capacity building, and integrating One Health principles into education. Collaboration among EU agencies, Member States, and international organizations in addressing One Health issues was acknowledged. At the EU level, ECDC, ECHA, EMA, and EEA are involved, along with EU partnerships and funded research. Globally, WHO, WFO, WOA, and FAO are actively promoting One Health, with EFSA's Emerging Risks Network as an example of forward-looking preparedness.

Participants acknowledged progress in promoting One Health but stressed the need for clear goals and objectives to ensure the effectiveness and impact of the initiatives. The importance of considering planetary health, which involves the sustainability and health of the entire ecosystem, was highlighted. Improving data sharing, standardizing terminology, and enhancing capacity in veterinary and medical curricula were also emphasized.

### **8.4 Transdisciplinary Interagency cooperation**

Stef Bronzwaer (EFSA) discussed how the five EU agencies have committed to establishing a cross-agency task force on One Health, and they have published a joint [paper](#) outlining their commitment and recommendations for the future. Four major work priorities have



been identified: strategic coordination, research coordination, stakeholder engagement, and joint activities. The task force will oversee activities and establish dedicated groups when needed. The task force's leadership will rotate among the agencies, and each agency has appointed a focal point for coordination.

### **8.5 OH in Sweden**

Helena Brunnkvist (SLV) presented Sweden's ongoing work to promote One Health and collaboration among various authorities, including food, veterinary, agricultural, environmental, and public health agencies. The country has 3 collaboration groups: the Zoonosis Council (strategic), Crisis Management Function (outbreaks), and SUBU (information exchange). An example of collaboration is the National Surveillance Plan for animal disease surveillance involving public health agencies, the Board of Agriculture, and animal health organizations. While there has been progress, further development is needed to fully embrace the One Health perspective, including integrating environmental aspects.

Regarding the overall impact, the effectiveness of yearly planning and collaboration can be seen in certain areas, such as a reduction in antimicrobial resistance. However, more data is required to assess the impact on animal welfare and disease prevention. Participants acknowledged Sweden's leading role in One Health efforts due to its proactive and systematic approach.

### **8.6 One Health European Joint Programme (EJP): Where we go – EFSA and MS**

Arnaud Callegari (ANSES - EJP Coordinator) and Hein Imberechts (Sciensano – EJP Scientific Coordinator) presented the One Health European Joint Programme (EJP) outcomes and future plans. The project, which began in 2018 and will run until September 2023, involved 44 European partners addressing foodborne zoonoses, emerging threats, and antimicrobial resistance, with EU and MS co-funding. The EJP produced a range of tools related to surveillance systems, laboratory techniques, data analysis and sharing, exposure incidences, risk management, cross-sector communication, and more. These results are available on their [website](#) and accessible for practical use. The [MedVetNet Association](#) will continue disseminating outcomes, guided by the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). Efforts will be made to secure resources for the future. Arnaud Callegari and Hein Imberechts called for Member States to support the implementation of One Health and emphasized the need for collaboration and resource allocation to continue One Health initiatives. Carlos das Neves (EFSA) also highlighted the importance of capacity building and education for integrating One Health principles.

### **8.7 Discussion**

The discussion focused on the achievements made in One Health so far stressing the importance of continued efforts on communication and dissemination to promote its implementation. The importance of setting objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) to guide One Health initiatives was mentioned. Challenges discussed included integrating environmental aspects and different disciplines like social sciences, as well as the importance of communication and education. The participants highlighted the need for transitioning from project work to process work, to ensure tools and resources developed are utilized effectively. The European Commission highlighted key initiatives which are relevant for One Health, such as the AMR One Health Network, the European Climate and Health Observatory, and initiatives under the Farm to Fork Strategy, and reminded of the EC's [high-level conference on One Health](#) on November 13th in Luxembourg. Additionally, the importance of the Swedish Presidency in highlighting One Health was acknowledged and hopes for continued momentum during the upcoming Spanish Presidency were expressed.

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## Item 9: Engaging with MS in Risk Assessment

### 9.1 Report on the Call for Expressions of Interest for Membership of EFSA's Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee

Nikolaus Kriz (EFSA) reported on the Call For Expressions of Interest for Membership of EFSA's Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee. The timeline for the call can be summarized as follows: call online 1 February-17 April 2023; evaluation of applications April-July 2023; DoI July-November 2023; appointments March 2024; start of new mandates 1 July 2024. EFSA received a total of 1529 applications, with the most represented nationalities being Italian 24%, Spanish 11%, Greek 9%, German 7%, and French 6%.

The discussion focused on the amount of time needed to be invested (approx. 30-60 working days per year), the number of scientists interested in joining the panels and working groups, and the possibility of creating a new panel to reduce the workload on certain panels. EFSA clarified that the panel structure is "hard-coded" in the founding regulation and cannot be changed without approval from the Parliament and Council. It suggested that the best way to reduce the workload is to better streamline the process. EFSA also received a question from France about the distribution of candidates in EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels, by country and for each country, by type of employer (e.g., national risk assessment bodies, universities, research institutions, retired, etc.). There was overall support for this, so it was made an action of the meeting.

**Action:** EFSA to share information with AF members on the distribution of candidates in EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels, by country and type of employer.

### 9.2 Feedback on the Scientific Committee (SC) workshop "Speed of Risk Assessment"

A workshop was organised in April 2023 to gather feedback and ideas from the SC members on how to increase the speed of EFSA's risk assessments by ensuring actionable and fit-for-purpose advice. The SC members were divided into two break-out groups with the first one asked to suggest procedures and standard practices that EFSA panels could adopt to optimise the existing risk assessment framework mainly in terms of speed and efficiency of the process, whereas the second one was requested to suggest innovation initiatives (tools, databases, projects) that EFSA could carry out to reduce the time needed to deliver opinions.

This was the first opportunity for the SC to brainstorm on this very important topic. A follow-up discussion will be held in EFSA and probably some measures will be soon piloted in order to ensure that the demand for a fit-for-purpose risk assessment in a reasonable timeframe is addressed. To that extent, France also suggested to consider what kind of intermediate deliverables (e.g., results from literature review – either AI based or not) could be normalised with the perspective of sharing important data that could shorten the time of expertise.

**Action:** EFSA to organise, together with interested MS, a dedicated AF session covering the use of AI (artificial intelligence) tools in support of risk assessment activities.

### 9.3 2024 EFSA's external crisis preparedness exercise

In 2024, EFSA will organise with the European Commission a crisis preparedness exercise and is also investigating the potential for a MS to host and co-organise this event. The objective of the exercise is to strengthen the network of MS, EC, and EU Agencies in the framework of the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health. This crisis exercise will be an opportunity for MS and EU Agencies to be fully aligned with EC's objectives regarding the production of rapid risk assessments in the framework of the above-mentioned regulatory framework. The target groups of the crisis



exercise are: risk assessors, risk/crisis managers, and risk communicators from the MS; the European Agencies, and the Commission. Interested MS were encouraged to express their interest in hosting and co-organising the exercise by the end of July 2023.

**Action:** AF members to express their interest to EFSA in the co-organisation with EFSA and the EC, of the 2024 crisis exercise. – Deadline: 31 July 2023 - extended to 20 August, to Georgia.GKRINTZALI@efsa.europa.eu or [afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu)



## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action reference	Who	Agenda topic	What
Action 1	MS	Item 6 – Partnership opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AF members to share with their national networks, as may be appropriate, the following recently launched or soon-to-be-launched calls of EFSA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framework Partnership Agreement (<a href="#">FPA</a>) for advancing the Environmental Risk Assessment of Plant Protection Products (Item 6.2)</li> <li><a href="#">Call for proposals</a> on Animal care &amp; welfare: welfare-related research on heat stress during transport, and dairy herd welfare indicators (Item 6.3)</li> <li>Tender on Developing a Methodology to Assess Positive Animal Welfare Using Behaviour-analytic and Ethological Approaches (<a href="#">Prior information notice</a>) (Item 6.3)</li> <li>Call for the establishment of an active surveillance network for highly pathogenic avian influenza across Europe (Item 6.4)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Action 2	MS	Item 7.1.c Collaborative approach on “Perfluoroalkyl substances” (PFAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AF members to express their interest to join the Steering Group and to volunteer to nominate representatives to join the Expert Group on PFAS by informing the AF members from France and The Netherlands, with copy to the AF secretariat (<a href="mailto:afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu">afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu</a>).</li> </ul>
Action 3	EFSA	Item 9.1 Report on the Call for Expressions of Interest for Membership of EFSA’s Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EFSA to share information with AF members on the distribution of candidates in EFSA’s Scientific Committee and Panels, by country and by type of employer (e.g., national risk assessment bodies, universities, research institutions, retired, etc.).</li> </ul>
Action 4	EFSA/MS	Item 9.2 Feedback on the Scientific Committee workshop “Speed of Risk Assessment”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EFSA to organise, together with interested MS, a dedicated AF session covering the use of AI tools in support of risk assessment activities.</li> </ul>
Action 5	MS	Item 9.3 2024 EFSA’s external crisis preparedness exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AF members to express their interest to EFSA in the co-organisation with EFSA and the EC, of the 2024 crisis exercise – Deadline: 31 July 2023 - extended to 20 August, to <a href="mailto:Georgia.GKRINTZALI@efsa.europa.eu">Georgia.GKRINTZALI@efsa.europa.eu</a> or <a href="mailto:afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu">afsecretariat@efsa.europa.eu</a></li> </ul>