

COMMUNICATIONS EXPERTS NETWORK

Minutes of the 16th meeting

7-8 October 2024
14:00-15:30 / 09:00-17:20
Minutes agreed on 24 October 2024



Location: Web-conference

Attendees:

- Network Participants:

Country	Organisation
Austria	Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES)
Belgium	Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (AFSCA)
Bulgaria	Ministry of Agriculture
Croatia	Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food
Cyprus	Ministry of Health
Czech Republic	Ministry of Agriculture
Denmark	National Food Institute
Estonia	Ministry of Rural Affairs
Finland	Finnish Food Authority
France	French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES)
Germany	German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)
Greece	Hellenic Food Authority
Hungary	University of Veterinary Medicine
Hungary	National Food Chain Safety Office (NEBIH)
Ireland	Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)
Italy	Istituto zooprofilattico sperimentale delle Venezie (IZS)
Latvia	Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment "BIOR"
Lithuania	State Food and Veterinary Service
Luxembourg	Luxembourg veterinary and food administration (ALVA)
Netherlands	The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA)
Norway	Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety (VKM)
Poland	Chief Sanitary Inspectorate
Portugal	Economic and Food Safety Authority (ASAE)
Romania	National Sanitary, Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (ANSVSA)
Slovak Republic	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic
Slovenia	National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ)



Spain	Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN)
Sweden	Swedish Food Agency

- Observers:
Sarah CAMENISCH (Switzerland); Mariklen MENKSHI (Albania); Jelena VRACAR FILIPOVIC (Montenegro); Nikola SAVOVSKI (North Macedonia); F. Nevra OZCAN (Türkiye); Z. Esin KAYA (Türkiye).
- EFSA:
COM Unit: ALAVERAS Georgios; AVANZINI Francesca; BENVENUTO Camilla; BRAY Edward; CARVALHO RODRIGUES Ricardo Miguel; CIEKURE Elina; CORSINI Elisa; COVOLAN Yan; ELKHOLY Susan; ELZER Bernd; FANTINI Alessandra; GAIANI Alessia; GALLANI Barbara; GARCIA GOMEZ Matilde; GELMAR Nadine; GHIZZONI Barbara; HEALY Arthur; HOGAN Anthony; KHAGULI Ayuma; LUCA Anatolie; MANCARELLA Giovanni; MATTEUCCI Francesca; MERCATI Matteo; MONTI Sharon; ORTEGA Paul; POSITANO Filippo; RAMSAY James; SANCHEZ CAMINAL Carolina; SANCHEZ Laura; SMITH Anthony Ian Mark; SOUSA LOURENCO Joana Isabel; TRIULZI Alessandra; XANDRI ZARAGOZA Maria; ZAMARIOLA Giorgia; ZWANE ZINHLE Siphokazi.

1. Welcome

James Ramsay (Chair) welcomed all participants to the meeting, and highlighted that from this meeting on the Member State Communication Coordinators (MSCC) will always be invited to participate. The Chair also invited participants to submit a picture of themselves/their CEN+MSCC team attending the meeting to be featured in a #CoordinatedCommunication post on EFSA's social media platform.

2. Adoption of agenda

A presentation by Montenegro was added to the key country issues. The agenda was adopted and no items proposed under Any Other Business.

3. Agreement of the minutes of the 15th Network meeting held on 23 April 2024, in Parma/Web-conference

Minutes had previously been agreed by written procedure.

4. AF/FP Update

Barbara Gallani (EFSA) emphasized the importance of coordinated communication in Europe for science and communication and announced the budget increase for these initiatives for 2025. She also outlined a number of topics identified by Advisory Forum (AF) members as requiring coordinated communication, i.e. ultra-processed foods; food supplements; nitrates; emerging risks. Discussions at the recent AF meeting also highlighted emerging issues such as antifungal resistance, microdosing of truffles and epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD).

5. Communication Lab: Smoke Flavourings



The Comm Lab aims to explore a food safety issue in depth in order to share knowledge, insights and best communication practices. To introduce the session, Francesca Matteucci (EFSA) presented recent communication activities and a perspective on the media coverage triggered by the publication of EFSA's opinion on smoke flavourings. Ana Campuzano (MSCC, Spain) presented the Spanish perspective. Participants then had the opportunity to discuss in groups key aspects such as media interest, specific concerns and key communication challenges. As in previous meetings, the information gathered will be made available to all CEN and MSCC members in a shared space on the CEN portal.

ACTION: Rapporteurs from the Comms Lab to save in [this folder](#) on the CEN Sharepoint the information provided during their break-out groups on their worksheets.

6. Day 1 - Wrap- up

The Chair invited volunteer CEN & MSCCs to contact the different link to participate in the Data Outreach Workshop organised after the first day of the CEN meeting.

7. Day 2 - Welcome back

The Chair welcomed all participants to the second day of the meeting and invited them to submit the picture if not shared yet.

8. Coordinated Communication activities | MSCC Community: state of play and updates from MSs

The Chair introduced a brief state of play of the MSCC community for the current year, emphasizing that there are ongoing discussions to streamline working practices, and gave the floor to Barbara Gallani (EFSA), who reiterated the importance of the approach and the value of sharing experiences and discussing challenges at the community level.

The Chair then introduced the session to present progress on the MSCC work plan for volunteer Member States.

1. Coordinated Communication activities | Updates from Croatia

Leticija Hrenković (Croatia) clarified that the MSCC will focus on filling gaps in risk communication towards tailor-made food safety-related communication to identified target audiences (TAs) for coordinated communication activities. She then presented how they defined the TAs and outlined a series of initiatives held in the context of EFSA's campaigns Safe2Eat (S2E) and PlantHealth4Life (PH4L).

ACTION: EFSA to share with CEN & MSCC members the report from the latest interagency crisis exercise held in Dublin in September 2024.

2. How we approach the task: Strengthen coordinated communication from EFSA

Sidsel Addington Bang (Denmark) clarified that risk communication is carried out by two different organisations, the DTU National Food Institute and the Danish Veterinary & Food Administration. She then outlined the tasks that have been completed so far and mentioned that the ongoing work aims to establish the TAs to then decide which communication partners to connect with in order to increase the reach of DTU's communications. Finally, she presented a decision tree template to help identify the communication partners to contact depending on the topic.

3. "Coordinated Communication" – Implementation of the workplan in Germany



Lucia Vogt (Germany) presented the state of play and the next steps of the national objectives of the MSCC on-going workplan, i.e. building national networks, defining target audiences, reviewing of shared tools. She also presented the website 'Oursafefood.de', available in DE and EN, which provides food safety-related news from EFSA and MSs authorities in Europe.

4. Organisational risk communication then and now: Evolution & evaluation

Gyula Kasza (Hungary) reviewed the five main stages in the evolution of modern era food safety risk communication carried out by public organisations. He then presented the Institutional Risk Communication Self-evaluation tool (SET), which provides an online scoring system for assessing and developing risk communication practices that could be helpful to the MSCC community. He then called on participants to express interest in participating in the creation of the Food Safety Risk Communication Toolbox, i.e. a collection of risk communication tools such as videos, illustrations, and educational materials that will be made available for free re-use (but with attribution).

ACTION: CEN & MSCC members to contact [Gyula Kasza](#) to express interest in participating in the development of the Food Safety Risk Communication Toolbox.

9. Coordinated Communication activities | MSCC Community: state of play and future plans

Francesca Matteucci (EFSA) summarized the 2024 activities and presented the three new objectives for the MSCC community in 2025, providing examples of activities that could be taken forward for further consideration. She also listed open issues that EFSA is looking at internally to simplify working processes, as well as important upcoming deadlines.

Susan Elkholy and Ricardo Carvalho (both EFSA), who showed the re-design of the Shared Space of the CEN portal, which has been modified to include MSCC documents. A new communication calendar function was presented and many members informed EFSA that they could not access it.

Yan Covolan (EFSA) presented the Learning catalogue, which consists of a series of online trainings addressed to MSCCs and CEN members. He explained that the catalogue is a living tool that aims to provide a common understanding of communication through knowledge sharing. The course description is available on the CEN Shared Space; participants were invited to have a look and, if interested, to register for the first training opportunity on social science and target audiences, which will take place at the end of November 2024.

ACTION: CEN & MSCC members to inform EFSA if they can't access the shared space on the CEN portal or the new communication calendar. EFSA to share relevant guidance documents on how to access the Share Point upon request.

ACTION: CEN & MSCC members to enrol to the training course on Social Science via the dedicated form by 15 November 2024.

ACTION: CEN & MSCC members to inform EFSA if they want to offer, host or share a training course.

10. Communication planning

Details of EFSA's communication planning from October 2024 to May 2025 were presented to the group.



11. Media & Social Media Round up

Highlights of media coverage related to EFSA communication over the past six months were presented with vibrio bacteria in food, avian influenza, pesticides residues and plant health and among the issues that generated most coverage. Highlights for social media included a photo story posted on World Food Safety Day and an update on the YouTube Shorts pilot. Relevance of corporate presence of public institutions on X (formerly Twitter) was discussed, as well as possible alternative platforms.

12. Social Science update

Giorgia Zamariola (EFSA) presented an update on the COMET project, which aims to improve the quality of information exchanged between stakeholders, the general public and the EU food safety system by using technology to fact-check food safety information in the public domain, combined with innovative models of public participation.

Georgios Alaveras (EFSA) gave an overview of EFSA's social science database.

Georgios Alaveras and Joana Sousa (EFSA) presented the results of a pilot study on hazards and risks on Facebook. The study allows EFSA to reach specific/more niche audiences through targeted online advertising and to conduct social science research.

ACTION: EFSA to keep CEN members informed about the progress of the COMET project and any further study using a methodology similar to the Facebook pilot study.

13. Key country issues

1. Survey on the Risk Communicators' perception about their role

Zoi Mousia (Greece) presented the results of a survey conducted in Greece and Slovenia to identify the communication practices, challenges and impact of risk communicators in both countries. Unclear roles were identified as the main challenge for risk communicators. Corrective actions (questions) are suggested for improvement to further enhance the clarity and quality of the extracted information.

ACTION: Greece to share the survey questionnaire with EFSA once cleared by PARC project; EFSA to create a shared space on the CEN portal to make the survey accessible to CEN and MSCCs for possible re-use.

2. Childhood education program

Eszter Börcsök-Csenki (Hungary) presented an educational school program aimed at children and adolescents. The aim of the program was to develop a complex approach in children focusing on food-related risks and knowledge. Close cooperation with teachers was key to the success of the initiative. Specific activities were identified for each age group to maximize engagement. Food safety and food waste were the chosen topics. An online food safety game was launched on the day of the CEN meeting.

3. Updates on ongoing risk communication activities

Barbara Tiozzo (Italy) shared the EN version of the university textbook on risk assessment and risk communication entitled 'Risk assessment and communication in food safety'. She also presented the Italian distribution of the social media campaign 'Hazard vs Risk' aimed at the conscious consumption of mushrooms.

ACTION: CEN & MSCCs are invited to [download](#) the booklet and make use of it in their communication activities.

4. Raising Awareness Campaigns in Montenegro

Mirjana Lekic (Montenegro) gave an overview of the activities carried out in Montenegro in the context of EFSA's campaigns. PH4L featured in a family festival organised to raise awareness at



national level. Media and social media activities marked the first year of the S2E campaign in the country.

14. Campaigns

S2E | Sharon Monti (EFSA) provided a recap of the activities carried out in 2024 including key visuals, website refresh. Real examples of Out Of Home advertising as well as influencer activities were presented. Participants from Latvia, Czech Republic and Hungary shared best practices from their national activities.

PH4L | Giovanni Mancarella (EFSA) introduced the new roles in the team managing the campaign. He gave the floor to Laura Sánchez (EFSA) who gave an overview of the campaign touching on the learnings from year 1 and building on the momentum for year 2. The presentation also included inspiring practices from the Member States.

This was followed by interactive session with break-out groups to brainstorm on the 2025 edition of both campaigns.

ACTION: EFSA to send survey to express interest in participating in the S2E campaign in 2025.

15. EFSA Journal update

Paul Ortega (EFSA) presented EFSA's approach to and progress on Plain Language Summaries (PLS) so far, and the challenges related to meeting the needs of target audiences.

Arthur Healy (EFSA) mentioned a social media campaign has been launched to promote the outlook and strategy of Food Assess Risk Europe (FRAE). The platform was presented at the last CEN meeting in April 2024.

Bernd Elzer (EFSA) informed participants about ongoing discussions on the analysis of the length of scientific outputs. A reflection paper on possible adjustments to the structure and production of scientific opinions is being prepared, led by the EFSA Chief Scientist.

ACTION: CEN members to submit relevant works for publication in the FRAE.

16. Wrap-up and closure

The Chair proposed to postpone the item on crisis communication to the next meeting in order to close the meeting on time.

Dates for 2025 were announced, i.e. 20-21 May (Parma) and 22-23 October (tbc).

The Chair invited members to provide suggestions and feedback on the format/content of the meeting and thanked the presenters and all who had participated in the important discussions.

ACTION: CEN & MSCC to submit feedback to the survey that EFSA will share on the meeting organisation.

17. Closure of the meeting

The meeting closed at 17.20 pm.