

# 93<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE EFSA ADVISORY FORUM



02 October 2024: 9:00-13:00  
03 October 2024: 9:00-13:00  
MINUTES

**Location:** Web-conference

Members	Attendance
Austria (AT)	Johann Steinwider
Belgium (BE)	Fabien Bolle
Belgium (BE)	Axel Mauroy
Bulgaria (BG)	Donka Popova
Croatia (HR)	Andrea Gross - Bošković
Cyprus (CY)	Rebecca Kokkinofa
Cyprus (CY)	Charitini Frenaritou
Czech Republic (CZ)	Jitka Gotzova
Denmark (DK)	Dorte Lau Baggesen
Estonia (EE)	Mari Reinik
Finland (FI)	Leena Räsänen
France (FR)	Matthieu Schuler
France (FR)	Salma Elreedy (only on 03/10/2024)
Germany (DE)	Andreas Hensel
Germany (DE)	Matthias Greiner
Greece (EL)	Zoi Mousia
Hungary (HU)	Ákos Bernard Józwiak
Iceland (IS)	Katrin Gudjonsdottir
Ireland (IE)	Wayne Anderson
Ireland (IE)	Lisa O'Connor
Italy (IT)	Alessandra Perella
Latvia (LV)	Vadims Bartkevics
Lithuania (LT)	Jurgita Bakaseniene
Luxembourg (LU)	Caroline Merten
Malta (MT)	Mark Cassar
Netherlands (NL)	Dick Sijm
Norway (NO)	Tore Skeidsvoll Tollersrud
Norway (NO)	Danika Grahek-Ogden
Poland (PL)	Jacek Postupolski
Portugal (PT)	Luis Lourenço
Portugal (PT)	Filipa Vasconcelos
Romania (RO)	Monica Mariana Neagu
Slovak Republic (SK)	Petra Vanková
Slovenia (SI)	Urška Blaznik
Spain (ES)	apologies
Sweden (SE)	Helena Brunnkvist

MEETING MINUTES  
93<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Forum



Observers	Attendance
Albania (AL)	Amarilda Keli
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA)	Dzemil Hajric
Germany (DE)	Nicole Gollnick
Germany (DE)	Iris Nadolny
Kosovo*	apologies
Montenegro (ME)	Vladimir Djakovic
Republic of North Macedonia (MK)	Oliver Milanov
Republic of North Macedonia (MK)	Jasmin Hadji Vasilev
Serbia (SR)	Tamara Boskovic
Switzerland (CH)	Katharina Stärk
Türkiye (TR)	Mehmet Ali Ünverdi
Türkiye (TR)	Ersin Dilber
European Commission (Observer)	Anastasia Alvizou
European Commission (Observer)	Athanasios Raikos
EFSA Representatives	
Bernhard Url (Chair)	Giorgia Zamariola (Speaker)
Barbara Gallani (Co-Chair)	Anastasia Livaniou (Speaker)
Nik Kriz (Co-Chair)	Manuela Tiramani (Speaker)
Guilhem de Seze (Co-Chair)	Winy Messens (Speaker)
Carlos Das Neves (Co-Chair)	Matthew Ramon (Speaker)
Victoria Villamar (HoU ENREL)	Chantra Eskes (Speaker)
Sérgio Potier Rodeia (Team Leader, Community Management)	Bernard Bottex (Speaker)
Maria Azevedo Mendes (Advisory Forum Secretariat)	Sanja Ilieva (Speaker)
Andrea Laroni (Advisory Forum Secretariat)	Claudia Heppner (Speaker)
Rita Melo Aguiar (Advisory Forum Secretariat)	
Virginia Spurio Salvi (CORSER)	
External speakers	
Timme van der Lugt (NVWA – The Netherlands)	Linda Verhoef (NVWA – The Netherlands)
Ursula Gonzales-Barron (IP de Bragança – Portugal)	Jorge Numata (BfR – Germany)
Pauline Kooh (ANSES – France)	



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## Item 1: Opening and welcome address

EFSA's ED Bernhard Url opened the 93<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Forum (AF) as the Chair of the session by welcoming the members of the AF connecting online. The meeting included participants from 35 countries and the European Commission (EC). The AF welcomed external speakers from The Netherlands, Portugal, France and Germany. Bernhard Url also delivered a brief speech outlining the recent change in the operational environment of EFSA, including the new EFSA Panels and Scientific Committee, the new European Parliament and the related development at the EU Commission level.

## Item 2: Adoption of agenda

The plenary adopted the agenda of the meeting as it was proposed by the chair. The chair informed the plenary that the [final minutes](#) of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Advisory Forum Meeting had been published on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August.

## Item 3: Update on the Advisory Group on Data

Akos Józwiak (Hungary) provided an update on the Advisory Group on Data (AGoD), focusing on recent developments, such as the EFSA AI taskforce, EC and MS data initiatives, the 2024-27 roadmap under development, the revamped subgroups, and next steps. The group is working to enhance the collection, management, and utilization of data within its remit. Key objectives include improvements in data quality and accessibility, the integration of new data sources, and the use of advanced tools to process and analyse data more effectively. AGoD will focus on expanding its data-sharing frameworks, increasing collaboration with MS, and refining data governance policies.

The Netherlands raised a question on the scope of the EC data platform, whereas EFSA mentioned the European Health Data Space initiative for a more EU-wide sharing of health. France outlined how attention is being paid to the potential related to crossing environmental data with health data. France also pointed to the initiative "Green Data Hub for Health", as an opportunity to investigate the potential of crossing of these data. Hungary replied that the EC data platform brings value to both risk assessment, risk management and research. When it comes to connecting different data sets from different organisations, in most cases what is needed is a fit for purpose solution and not a standing large data lake. Efforts should then be placed in connecting these multiple data lakes, possibly through the use of AI. Discussion continued on the possible need for political governance of such data lakes as well as the benefits and challenges of drawing data also from the private sector.

## Item 4: Focal Point Operational Framework 2023-2027

### 4.1 Outcome of the Tailor-made activities proposals' prioritisation assessment

Sergio Potier Rodeia (EFSA) presented on the outcome of tailor-made (TM) activities proposals' prioritisation assessment. The presentation provided an overview of the 2024 EFSA assessment and the Member States (MS) advice process for TM activities proposals, including prioritisation results. The process included the advice from the AF Trio (Spain, Germany, Hungary, with Poland as an observer) and the Advisory Forum Discussion Group on Data (AGoD). Prioritisation done by EFSA management was based on EFSA's scientific units' scoring and MS advice, giving priority to new proposals over follow-up ones when scores were tied. Next steps include a final check on proposals' content and budget before signing agreements by early 2025, with a new proposals' submission window opening in March 2025.

The Netherlands voiced some concerns on the transparency of the process, especially when it comes to the visibility of ratings or scores which contribute to the final assessment of proposals submitted. France appreciated MS and EFSA efforts in advancing the process of submission and



assessment of TM proposals and raised a question on whether there would be alternatives for the involvement of art. 36 organisations (e.g., thematic grants), their involvement being quite complex (for them and for the Focal Points) in the current system. Hungary stressed the need for ecosystem thinking, outlining that there are also other, and in some cases more adequate, sources of funding (e.g., grants and procurements) in order to find best case-by-case solutions for both EFSA and MS. Furthermore, Hungary raised also some doubts on the current approach to funding for multiannual projects. EFSA remarked that on issues such as subcontracting or the multiannual funding there is a continuous process of improvement in order to smooth out the limitations posed by EFSA financial regulation and rules. As regards the ratings and criteria EFSA would gladly discuss possible improvement provided that no further administrative burdens are created, also considering the size of the framework's financial envelop. In addition, and regarding the limitation faced by art. 36 organisations, EFSA echoed the comment of Hungary. There are other existing tools to further activities outside the FP framework and, in some cases, beyond EFSA. The principle of FP TM activities is providing initial stimulus to MS projects, which could then be self-sustained if considered a valuable enough endeavour.

#### **4.2 European Excellence Label – state-of-play**

Andrea Gross-Bošković (Croatia) and Timme Van Der Lugt (The Netherlands, Focal Point) presented the results of FP TM activity EEL 1.0 and the web platform pilot for the EEL as a result of FP TM activity "Programming, deployment and maintenance of the European Excellence Label website", outlining to the plenary the benefits to all user groups of the platform - including via the display of a [short video](#). The overall objective of EEL is creating a pool of highly qualified risk assessment professionals with state-of-art knowledge on food safety risk assessment and build a framework with defined quality standards that ensures comprehensive and state-of-art training opportunities.

EFSA congratulated the EEL team on the work done, including the very cost-effective development of the web platform. Switzerland asked for clarification on what the label actually certifies. The EEL team replied that, in principle, it should ensure quality through two levels of criteria: a more technical part on whether the course fits the scope of risk assessment and any of the indicated specific domains; and a part about minimum quality criteria. Nevertheless, the process is ongoing, and criteria might be revised or further developed. EFSA suggested to keep an open door for the EEL team to bring back the topic in the Advisory Forum, although outlining that a different approach to funding the project has to be identified.

#### **4.3 FP framework 2023-2027: reflections on tailor-made activities**

Barbara Gallani (EFSA) provided a brief status update on the Focal Point tailor-made activities with the intention to reflect on the added value of FP framework tailor-made part. The presentation included several examples of certain tailor-mades activities that are exclusively implemented thanks to the FP framework, highlighting the deliverables and benefit they bring. Moreover, the presentation set the scene for further discussions on the expectations for 2025 and even beyond.

The Netherlands inquired on whether, for projects prioritised, information on people participating in each project will be publicly available. EFSA replied that all AF members will receive necessary information on prioritised and non-prioritised proposals. Moreover, those prioritised will be open to other MS willing to participate.

### **Item 5: Partnerships**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

Carlos das Neves (EFSA) opened the block on partnership with an introduction outlining the updates on new calls and ongoing partnership initiatives in EFSA for which involvement of MS is

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envisaged. The call for "Support for the revision of the Guidance Document on terrestrial ecotoxicology (SANCO/10329/2002) including the development of an approach for indirect effects" was briefly outlined. Afterwards, the co-chair gave the floor to Giorgia Zamariola (EFSA) which briefly presented another call for "Quantitative and qualitative social research in support of an audience-first approach, new evidence and tools (3 Lots)".

The Netherlands raised a question on this last call about the apparent lack of focus on the aspect of risk assessment and management coordination and on the aspect of who provides this information, who is recipient of it, and their knowledge or attitude. EFSA replied that one of the pillars of the roadmap focuses on insight into consumers trade-offs related to risks and benefits. Regarding the aspect of coordination of communications among risk assessors and risk managers, it will be addressed more within the governance and future plan for risk communication in Europe rather than by this research. Lastly on the point of audience, EFSA outlined that it will be in part covered, although it will not be the main focus as other instruments are already available for this purpose (e.g., Eurobarometer).

**Action Point 1:** AF members to apply and/or promote through their national networks four calls: 1) "Preparing for EU Menu 2: Advancing Food Consumption Data and Methodologies" (launch by end 2024); 2) "Entrusting tasks on pesticides falling within the mission of the PREV, PLANTS and FDP Units" (launch early December or 2025); 3) "Support for the revision of the Guidance Document on terrestrial ecotoxicology (SANCO/10329/2002) including the development of an approach for indirect effects" (launch in October); and 4) "Quantitative and qualitative social research in support of an audience-first approach, new evidence and tools (3 Lots)" (launch in October).

## 5.2. Call for EU Menu 2 preparatory activities

Anastasia Livaniou (EFSA) presented the preparatory activities in the context of the next round of national dietary surveys (EU Menu 2). All EU Menu projects were finalised by the end of 2023. However, consumer behaviours evolve overtime, and it is fundamental to keep EFSA's food consumption database up to date. Therefore, the collection of EU-wide, harmonised food consumption and related data by EFSA shall continue. In partnership with MSs, EFSA is conducting several activities such as mapping the methods and tools available/used for national dietary surveys outside the EU Menu project, evaluating those used under the EU Menu surveys and finally defining recommendations for the future. A call for tender will be launched by the end of 2024 to address these needs, focusing on FoodEx2 improvements, Food Propensity Questionnaires and protocols for self-administered dietary assessments. Results will inform the update of the EU Menu Guidance, expected for late 2026 along with the launching of EU Menu 2 calls.

France inquired on two aspects. First, any possible links with the total diet study approach, which has been designed in the past together with EFSA. Second, on the expectation for the EU Menu 2 project and whether there could be a potential evolution from periodic studies towards a continuous monitoring approach. The Netherlands commented on the project's long-term vision for what concerns an Europe-wide view on food consumption, on the financial resources allocated for the project, and the importance of having organisations from different regions participating in the call. EFSA outlined that the plan is to update the guidance approximately every five years, hence there will be opportunities for a more agile update of the EU Menu methodology and data collections strategies. Total diet studies, even though they refer to chemical occurrence and not to consumption data, they are under EFSA's radar and efforts will be made so that such data are also submitted and used for exposure assessments. Representation among different geographical regions can be ensured by the selection and award criteria for the project.

Considering that consumption data is very heterogeneous, Germany inquired on whether EFSA wants to gather a set type of data to ensure homogeneity in the resulting dataset. Luxembourg remarked that having an initial idea of the budget envisaged for the data collection activities at the national level, at least one year in advance, would be rather helpful. EFSA took note of the comments, outlining that data harmonisation is a priority and that MS will be informed about the foreseen budget in advance.



### 5.3. New EFSA call for pesticides tasking grant

Manuela Tiramani (EFSA) presented EFSA's upcoming call for pesticide tasking grants, focusing on ongoing scientific cooperation under Article 36 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002. This framework supports joint projects and expertise exchange among organizations within EFSA's mission. The current framework (2021-2025) saw 14 specific agreements signed, with 33 tasks covered out of 48 listed. Key activities include evaluations of active substances, drafting EFSA conclusions, and public consultations. For the next call, planned for late 2024 or early 2025, feedback from member states on how to improve participation was requested to help shape the upcoming call.

The Netherlands mentioned that a survey was implemented at the national level which outlined the existence of stringent administrative burdens, only partial financial support to accommodate EFSA needs and doubts as regards alignment with national priorities. The Netherlands welcomed EFSA proposal to continue discussions on the topic in a different forum. On the broader topic of partnerships, Denmark referred to discussions in the context of the Management Board about finding new ways or different ways of creating partnerships and also of creating a joint programming of future initiatives in risk assessment. EFSA confirmed this is being followed up and a proposal will be discussed at the December meeting of the Management Board.

### 5.4. Pathogens in food project

Winy Messens (EFSA), Ursula Gonzales-Barron (Instituto Politécnico de Bragança), and Pauline Kooh (ANSES) presented the "Pathogens in Foods (PIF) Database Project". The PIF database contains occurrence data on biological hazards, including bacteria, viruses, and parasites, in various food categories. With over 7,500 entries sourced from peer-reviewed studies since 2000, it serves as a crucial tool for microbial risk assessments, supporting EFSA, member states, and the research community. The current grant agreements (2022-2026) are supporting database updates and an extension for data on *Vibrio* species in seafood and parasites in fishery products. Examples of recent uses of the database include risk assessments on *Vibrios* and parasites in seafood and on risk ranking of microbial hazards in raw milk cheeses. Looking ahead, the project will focus on expanding the user base and exploring future enhancements, such as adding more pathogens or matrices, inclusion of AMR or improving usability. A feasibility study is planned for 2025 to explore potential improvements and secure the database's long-term sustainability. The AF was encouraged to promote the database and provide input to support its sustainability and further development.

France remarked the importance of keeping the PIF database up to date and promoting its use by the different organisations represented in the Advisory Forum. The Netherlands also expressed appreciation for the project and suggested that the use of consumption data in conjunction with this project could bring an important added value for the future.

**Action Point 2:** AF members to: promote the use of the database; advise on new potential user groups; contribute to the forthcoming feasibility study; and indicate possible resources for its long-term sustainability

## Item 6: Engaging in Risk Assessment

### 6.1 Evaluation of EFSA networks

Nik Kriz (EFSA) presented the results of the evaluation of EFSA networks. EFSA, which coordinates 14 networks and 8 sub-groups, began evaluating each network every three years following a 2021 Management Board decision. The outcome of the evaluation is reported to the Advisory Forum, which expresses its non-binding recommendation on the continuation or discontinuation of each network. Afterwards, the final decision on the continuation or discontinuation of each network rests with the Management Board. Most Member States recommended continuing all networks, though there was some debate regarding the TSE-BSE network. EFSA's ongoing improvement initiatives include establishing the process for creating sub-groups, reviewing nomination procedures,





enhancing member state engagement, and ensuring tools for better document sharing. Final decisions on the future of the networks will be made by the Management Board in December 2024.

Luxembourg pointed out some differences in how different networks are coordinated by EFSA, suggesting seeking alignment in-house for the coordination of network meetings to the extent possible. France commented on the TSE-BSE network, seeking clarification on what is the recommendation to be given to the Management Board on this network. EFSA outlined that efforts are being implemented to ensure further alignment in the coordination of meetings (e.g., panel coordinators and meetings among networks coordinators). There was also confirmation that the recommendation for the BSE-TSE network is for its continuation. What is under consideration is whether to keep it as a network or rather a subgroup of the AHAW network.

## **Item 6: Engaging in Risk Assessment – cont.**

### **6.2 Joining forces on engagement**

#### **1. Introduction**

Matthew Ramon (EFSA) introduced the item whose overall object is to start finding a common ground with the Member States to exchange on the respective priorities and to discuss potential synergies on topics/initiatives of common interest, using the respective events with stakeholders as a proxy to identify commonalities.

#### **2. Member States**

##### **a) Germany**

Matthias Greiner (Germany) presented the upcoming [International Conference on Alternative Proteins for Food and Feed](#) – jointly organised by BfR with EFSA and other international players – and the International Liaison Group on Methods for Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food (ILMERAC) meetings, which are currently coordinated by BfR.

##### **b) The Netherlands**

Dick Sijm (The Netherlands) orally presented the priorities of the country when it comes to its engagement activities. Emphasis was posed on: the need to continue production chain risk assessment; food supplements - and particularly the botanical ones - where cooperation is ongoing both at the level of EFSA and of Heads of Agencies and require ongoing attention; data and innovation, in the direction of making better use of available data; risk communication; and finally animal welfare, also in light of the renewed interest at the European political level.

#### **3. EFSA**

Matthew Ramon (EFSA) concluded the round of presentations outlining some of the key topics under EFSA's radar when it comes to engagement activities. Most prominent examples include environmental risk assessment, cross-cutting guidance, alternative protein sources - but also animal health and welfare, exposome and aggregated exposure, and microbiome. Following the discussion, a brief update on EFSA calls for data, ongoing consultation and upcoming public events and consultations was provided.

Denmark remarked that some of these priority topics are also under the country's radar. The AF representative outlined there have been talks between Danish authorities and Korean and Indian partners on the ban of very spicy noodles in Denmark and certain food supplements, respectively. Moreover, it was outlined that a [conference](#) on food supplements will take place in Denmark on 21 October, with foreseen broad physical participation considering the importance of the topic at the

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national level. France re-emphasised the importance of collaboration on cross-cutting topics such as guidance documents; on NGTs, for the specific sub-group of the GMO network to continue its work as soon as the regulatory scheme is clarified; and echoed the comments on the importance of working together on food supplements. The AF representative also suggested that, when a key topic emerges in discussion at the European level (e.g., food supplements and the related European working group), it could be worth bringing it to the AF to seek ways on how to join forces on that. EFSA remarked the importance of bringing back the topic to future AF meetings to open possibilities for alignment on broader issues as well (e.g., FP10). The Netherlands suggested that the exercise could be also done in reverse by considering which issues from a risk assessment point of view could be downsized to prioritise new topics. France expressed positive views on the opportunity to have joint work between EFSA and the Advisory Forum for a contribution towards the preparation of the FP10 and suggested keeping the topic in the agenda for 2025. EFSA suggested to share, for the sake of information, the first [report](#) of the Heads of Agencies WG "Food Supplements". The discussion concluded with EFSA suggesting keeping this item on joint engagement in future meetings and try to have focused discussions, as in advance as possible, on topics of common interest and related joint engagement activities, especially when international conferences are foreseen.

**Action Point 3:** EFSA to circulate the report on food supplements by the Head of European Food Safety Agencies' Working Group on Food Supplements.

### 6.3 Risk assessment plans update

Guilhem de Seze (EFSA) provided the regular update on risk assessment activities. Two new EFSA mandates were highlighted, namely a "request for a scientific opinion on the safety of glutamic acid (E 620), sodium glutamate (E 621), potassium glutamate (E 622), calcium glutamate (E 623), ammonium glutamate (E 624) and magnesium glutamate ((E 625) as food additives" and a "request to EFSA to review the Guidance Document on Terrestrial Ecotoxicology". On the side of Member States, EFSA expressed particular interest for two Norwegian risk assessment activities, the "overview of research on gastrointestinal effects of selected emulsifiers, stabilisers, and thickeners – an updated scoping review" and the "mapping and risk assessment of nitrate and nitrite in food".

France reacted on the notion of ultra-processed foods and whether there is a clear scientific definition for it. The French AF representative informed the Advisory Forum that ANSES is almost at the end of its work on a mandate on ultra-processed foods and asked whether other countries are working on the same subject. France also mentioned that, following a ministerial order, ANSES has also started work on a self-mandate concerning the exposure by inhalation of plant protection products. EFSA encouraged exchange of information among AF members on the topic of ultra-processed foods and suggested tabling this issue for discussion at future AF meetings.

**Action Point 4:** AF members to share information on their countries/authorities' work on the topic of ultra-processed food.

**Action Point 5:** EFSA to table the topic of ultra-processed food for discussion at future AF meetings.

### 6.4 Results of the advice on the risks in the red meat and game supply chain

Linda Verhoef (NVWA, The Netherlands) present the results of the Dutch study on the risks in the red meat and game supply chain. The study is part of a program on risk assessments of several supply chains and follows an earlier risk assessment of the red meat supply chain of 2015. Animal welfare risks are huge, most for pigs and meat calves among the studied animals: cattle, pig, goat, sheep, horse, deer and swine, and along the entire chain from farm, transport to slaughterhouse. Results outlined the continuing presence of microbial risks and few chemical risks as well as the

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possibility to reconsider the relatively large focus on inspections at the slaughterhouse to the primary phase (farm).

EFSA inquired on whether The Netherlands is considering assigning impact factors to the different hazards in the content of the difficult exercise of weighing animal welfare against public health. The Netherlands replied discussions are ongoing on this and it might be something to work on in the coming years. Hungary agreed this is a grey area between risk assessment and risk management. Attention was also directed to the existing multiple research projects at the European level (including Horizon Europe), which are trying to embrace this multi-dimensional or holistic approach to risk covering multiple aspects such as benefits, risks, and environmental sustainability, as example of best practices in the approach. Ireland inquired whether, when it comes to chemical risk assessment, the risk linked to the presence of environmental contaminants (e.g., PFAS) was higher in the organic sector rather than in the traditional farming sector. The Netherlands replied that since organic meat accounts for only 3% of the market in the country, this area was not included in the sample of the study. However, few data was gathered on animals in the wilderness, and those showed higher concentrations of dioxins, PFAS, and certain metals. Germany expressed appreciation for the study, mentioning it would be great to promote it as case study within the EU-FORA course in the area of microbiological risk modelling.

**Action Point 6:** The Netherlands to share the report once translated into English.

## **6.5 Update on PFAS**

### **a) Member States**

Matthieu Schuler (France) and Jorge Numata (BfR, Germany) reported on the latest development concerning the Member States-led Initiative Group on PFAS. The oral intervention focused on the dedicated exchange on PFAS organised with WHO for Steering Board (SB) and Risk Assessors Team (RAT) members on 24 June, which featured a presentation by WHO of its initiatives and work plan, discussions on how to connect with WHO with possible attendance of WHO representative to SB meeting as observer, and discussions on data needs and the format of exchange. Moreover, the plenary was debriefed on the outcome of the second RAT meeting organised on 8 July (Chair BfR, co-Chair RIVM) and covered the following topics: a status update on ANSES mandate, exchange on several topics such as PFAS in non-commercial eggs and trifluoroacetic competencies. Furthermore, a dedicated session was organised for the RAT to voice its need to the SB and to strengthen connection between the two groups.

Germany informed the plenary that an international conference on PFAS is being organised for 2025. Once dates will be confirmed the Advisory Forum will be informed accordingly.

### **b) EFSA**

Chantra Eskes (EFSA) provided a brief update on the latest activities on PFAS which involved EFSA. On 5 September 2024, an ECHA-EFSA-EMA-EEA interagency meeting took place in which each agency presented its current activities related to PFAS. Some issues of interest to EFSA were identified, namely trifluoroacetic acid (TFA), the drinking water directive and food contact material. The agencies agreed to meet regularly twice a year to keep each other updated and to liaise more punctually on topics of common interest. Regarding TFA, a persistent metabolite formed from the breakdown of some active substances used in plant protection and biocidal products as well as from the breakdown of other PFAS chemicals, EFSA received a mandate in July 2024, requesting for a review of the toxicological reference values for trifluoroacetic acid (TFA). Regarding other PFASs. EFSA is currently collecting monitoring data following an EC recommendation for Member States to collect, in collaboration with food business operators, monitoring data on PFASs from 2022 to 2025 (EC Recommendation 2022/1431).

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**Action Point 7:** AF members to inform the Initiative Group on PFAS about any ongoing PFAS-related initiative and consider joining the Group.

**Action Point 8:** AF members to contact BfR for additional information on the International Conference on PFAS planned for the next year.

## **Item 7: Cooperation with Member States and Global Partners**

### **7.1 Environmental scanning highlights**

Bernard Bottex (EFSA) presented on the EFSA collaborative environmental scanning system aimed at identifying emerging risks and broader issues that could impact EFSA's and its Partners' work programmes. The purpose of this presentation, after a brief reminder of the environmental scanning system in place, was to report on emerging risks considered as worth to be highlighted by the KNOW Unit and the Emerging Risks Exchange Network, and to illustrate the type of broader issues captured by the horizon scanning workflow. These included antifungal resistance, microdosing, epizootic haemorrhagic disease (EHD) as well as the broader topic of combatting climate change. EFSA proposed to provide regular updates on the topic twice a year during AF meetings.

Ireland, Hungary and Luxembourg supported the idea of regular updates on emerging risks at the advisory forum. They emphasized the importance of raising awareness and ensuring follow-up actions at the Member State level.

**Action Point 9:** EFSA to update the AF on the results of its collaborative environmental scanning system twice a year.

### **7.2 Progress report of IPA III**

Sanja Ilieva (EFSA) presented the progress of the IPA action, focusing on the integration of pre-accession countries into EFSA's work. The implementation of the EFSA IPA III Action started in August 2023 with a duration of 3 years. The presentation highlighted key performance indicators related to: building the capacities of the competent authorities of IPA countries to integrate into the EU food safety system; raising the awareness of the IPA countries citizens in the science-based food safety decisions; enhancing engagement with EC bodies and other international players in the food safety eco-system to ensure coordinated actions in the Western Balkans and Türkiye.

Montenegro expressed gratitude for the support provided by EFSA and highlighted the progress made in integrating pre-accession countries into EFSA's work. Sanja replied by acknowledging the collective effort of the EFSA team as key in implementing the IPA action.

### **7.3 External preparedness crisis exercise**

Wayne Anderson (Ireland) and Bernard Bottex (EFSA) discussed the recent crisis preparedness exercise hosted in Dublin, focusing on a chemical threat scenario. The exercise tested the collaboration between EU agencies and Member States. Key learnings included the importance of communication flow and the challenges of hybrid collaboration. The next exercise is proposed to focus on vector-borne diseases, with a call for expressions of interest from Member States to co-organise.

Denmark and Luxembourg discussed the importance of addressing communication flow and hybrid collaboration challenges in crisis exercises. Ireland confirmed that these aspects would be included in the final report. Portugal raised a question about replicating the training at the national level, and Ireland mentioned that the materials would be made available for this purpose. Lastly, EFSA suggested that CEN should review the report from the External Crisis Preparedness Exercise of (10



to 12 September 2024) with a focus on information flow and respective communications responsibilities during an incident.

**Action Point 10:** AF members to express interest in co-organising the 2025 edition of the External Crisis Preparedness Exercise by 29 November 2024

## **Item 8: AOB**

### **8.1 Update on EFSA's external evaluation**

Atanasios Raikos (EC DG SANTE) outlined the upcoming external evaluation of EFSA by the EC, which will assess EFSA's performance in relation to its objectives, mandate, tasks and procedures, covering the period 2017-2024. The evaluation will involve consultation activities (e.g. targeted surveys), and AF members are encouraged to participate actively.

**Action Point 11:** AF members to contribute to the consultations the contractor will undertake on behalf of the EC on the external evaluation of EFSA.

### **8.2 MS input on PARC knowledge uptake**

Claudia Hepner (EFSA) invited Member States to share their insights on the uptake of PARC outcomes, particularly in the area of exposure assessment. The aim is to integrate new tools, methods, and data from PARC into regulatory risk assessment practices.

**Action Point 12:** AF members to propose to the AF topics on knowledge uptake, focusing on tools and methods developed within the European Partnership PARC, by submitting suggestions to the AF secretariat.

### **8.3 "Staff Exchange" AF December session**

Katharina Stärk (Switzerland) provided an update on the ongoing negotiations between the EU and Switzerland to create a common food safety area. The negotiations aim to grant Switzerland access to EU committees, working groups, and alert systems, with an agreed treaty text expected by the end of 2024, followed by the respective political processes.

**Action Point 13:** AF members to fill in the survey EFSA will circulate in October to prepare discussions on SNEs and Staff Exchange at the December meeting.

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## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action reference	Who	Agenda topic	What
Action 1	MS	5 - Partnerships	AF members to apply and/or promote through their national networks four calls: 1) "Preparing for EU Menu 2: Advancing Food Consumption Data and Methodologies" (launch by end 2024); 2) "Entrusting tasks on pesticides falling within the mission of the PREV, PLANTS and FDP Units" (launch early December or 2025); 3) "Support for the revision of the Guidance Document on terrestrial ecotoxicology (SANCO/10329/2002) including the development of an approach for indirect effects" (launch in October); and 4) "Quantitative and qualitative social research in support of an audience-first approach, new evidence and tools (3 Lots)" (launch in October).
Action 2	MS	5.4 - Pathogens in food project	AF members to: promote the use of the database; advise on new potential user groups; contribute to the forthcoming feasibility study; and indicate possible resources for its long-term sustainability
Action 3	EFSA	6.2 - EFSA and Member States: joining forces on Engagement	EFSA to circulate the report on food supplements by the Head of European Food Safety Agencies' Working Group on Food Supplements.
Action 4	MS	6.3 - Risk Assessment plans update	AF members to share information on their countries/authorities' work on the topic of ultra-processed food.
Action 5	EFSA	6.3 - Risk Assessment plans update	EFSA to table the topic of ultra processed food for discussion at future AF meetings.
Action 6	MS	6.4 - Results of the advice on the risks in the red meat and game supply chain	The Netherlands to share the report once translated into English.
Action 7	MS	6.5 - Update on PFAS	AF members to inform the Initiative Group on PFAS about any ongoing PFAS-related initiative and consider joining the Group.
Action 8	MS	6.5 - Update on PFAS	AF members to contact BfR for additional information on the International Conference on PFAS planned for the next year.
Action 9	EFSA	7.1 - Environmental scanning highlights	EFSA to update the AF on the results of its collaborative environmental scanning system twice a year
Action 10	MS	7.3 - External crisis preparedness exercise	AF members to express interest in co-organising the 2025 edition of the External Crisis Preparedness Exercise by 29 November 2024
Action 11	MS	8 - AOB	AF members to contribute to the consultations the contractor will undertake on behalf of the EC on the external evaluation of EFSA.

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## MEETING MINUTES

### 93<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Forum



Action 12	MS	8 - AOB	AF members to propose to the AF topics for knowledge uptake, focusing on tools and methods developed within the European Partnership PARC, by submitting suggestions to the AF secretariat.
Action 13	MS	8 - AOB	AF members to fill in the survey EFSA will circulate in October to prepare discussions on SNEs and Staff Exchange at the December meeting.