

COMMUNICATIONS EXPERTS NETWORK

Minutes of the 15th meeting



23 April 2024

09:00-17:30

Minutes agreed on 10 May 2024

Location: EFSA - Parma (Board Room)/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	The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)
Greece	Hellenic Food Authority
Hungary	University of Veterinary Medicine
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	National Food Agency

- Observers:
 - Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO), Switzerland
 - National Food Authority (AKU), Albania
 - Food Safety Agency, Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - Administration for Food safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Affairs, Montenegro
 - Food and Veterinary Agency, North Macedonia
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management- Veterinary Directorate, Serbia
 - GDRC - Department of Risk Assessment, Turkey
- Hearing Experts:
Jan Novak (for item 8)
- EFSA: B.Gallani, J.Ramsay, T.Smith, G.Alaveras, J.Sousa, F.Avanzini, E.Bray, F.Positano, A.Healy, S.Monti, I.Zanetti, F.Matteucci, R.Harrington, G.Zamariola (All from the ENGAGE Department)

1. Welcome

James Ramsay (Chair) welcomed all participants to the meeting, in particular the new CEN members and Member State Communication Coordinators (MSCC) in attendance both in person and online. No apologies had been received.

2. AF/FP update

Barbara Gallani (EFSA) said Coordinated Communication initiatives such as the report *Defining an EU Framework for Coordinated Communication* and the joint campaigns with Member States had been positively noted by Advisory Forum (AF) members, who are in favour of strengthened coordinated communication initiatives. The AF had requested that the CEN coordinate their approach to communicating on PFAS as it considers this a key issue. Discussions at recent AF meetings also highlighted the importance of Africa as an emerging food safety region, with the members pledging to keep a watching brief on opportunities for cooperation on risk assessment and communications.

3. Communication Lab: PFAS

The Communication Lab is a dedicated item to allow the CEN to explore a food safety issue together to share intelligence, insights and best communication practice. In response to the Advisory Forum, the topic explored in this session was Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The session commenced with a brief presentation by the Karin Gustafsson (Sweden), where the issue is a high-profile one. This was followed by group discussions focusing on key questions such as the media profile of the issue in



the Member States, specific concerns and key communication challenges. The insights collected will be gathered in a shared space on the CEN Portal (Teams channel) and CEN members were strongly encouraged to add further insights that together can allow the network to create an intelligence and message sharing repository to facilitate a coordinated communication approach going forward.

ACTION: Rapporteurs from the Comms Lab to record the information provided during their break-out groups on their worksheets and share with EFSA.

ACTION: Once EFSA has established the shared space, CEN members to provide input on the key topics in their country relating to PFAS.

4. Data Outreach Project

Tony Smith (EFSA) explained that EFSA has launched a project to optimise the way it presents the data it collects in an easy and accessible way. Collecting feedback from users, including stakeholders and partners, will be key for the project to succeed. One outcome will be the establishment of communication guidelines to harmonise data visualisation and storytelling. Member States were requested to contribute to this by taking part in an online interactive focus group in October 2024.

ACTION: CEN members to express interest to participate in the Data Outreach focus group in October 2024. EFSA to provide further details about the focus groups in Q3 2024.

5. Social Science

I. Fish survey Update

The project encompasses a two-wave survey on fish consumption and awareness of related national advice in EU countries, Norway & Iceland. Wave 1 was completed (2023), and an overview of the national factsheets with results was provided last year. Factsheets were deemed useful, based on results from a small survey among MSs.

ACTION: CEN members in participating Member States encouraged to download and use the factsheets as appropriate.

II. Cell culture-derived meat flash poll results

Preliminary results of EFSA's flash poll on consumer awareness and perceptions of cell culture-derived meat were shared and noted by participants.

ACTION: EFSA to publish data from the flash poll on its Zenodo platform.

6. Media Roundup

Highlights of media coverage related to EFSA communication over the past six months were presented with antimicrobial resistance, avian influenza & PFAS being



among the issues that attracted most coverage. Upcoming issues for communication include NGTs and avian influenza. New trends and formats in social media (YouTube Shorts and WhatsApp Channels) were discussed.

7. Food Risk Assess Europe (FRAE)

A status update was provided on Food Assess Risk Europe (FRAE) - an open access repository of selected scientific articles from the Member State food safety agencies that is coordinated by EFSA and overseen by EFSA's Editorial Advisory Board and includes 11 Member State representatives. A total of 23 articles have so far been published on the platform. EFSA and its publisher Wiley have planned promotional campaigns in 2024 to raise awareness. EFSA called on CEN members to support future activities and to remind their colleagues to publish relevant articles in the FRAE rather than the EFSA Knowledge Junction.

ACTION: CEN members to support promotional activities to strengthen use of FRAE by Member State authorities.

8. Disruptive Communication

Jan Novak, a communication specialist from the Czech Republic, delivered a lively and thought-provoking presentation on how EU and Member State institutions could consider modifying the more conventional style, tone and content of their communication to reach those audiences such as 16-24-year-olds that do not habitually engage with material on food safety. A follow-up discussion explored if/how institutional communications could adapt to be relevant and engaging to young audiences with irreverent materials of the type that Jan Novak presented as part of a successful EU-funded project, these videos were viewed 1.8 million times by a target audience of 800,000 16-24-year-olds in the Czech Republic.

9. Communication Planning

James Ramsay (EFSA) presented the planned key communication activities by EFSA over the six months to October 2024.

ACTION: EFSA to propose a calendar of potential Hot Topic Calls and CEN members to express an interest in attending such teleconference calls via Teams

10. Key Country Issues

- 10.1 Germany – Hazard vs Risk - Lucia Vogt (BfR) presented a recent initiative to help audiences understand the difference between a risk and a hazard, a highlighted aim of the Transparency Regulation. The BfR has produced a FAQ and animation to simply and effectively explain the difference https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/why_a_tiger_is_a_hazard_but_not_necessarily_a_risk_the_difference_between_risk_and_hazard-314625.html



- 10.2 Italy - rischialimentari.it: a food risk communication initiative - Barbara Tiozzo (IZSV) presented a new web platform called *Rischi Alimentari* (www.rischialimentari.it) developed by her organisation to enhance efforts to communicate food risks to the wider public (non-specialist audiences). The web platform is designed to enhance the national efforts in communicating food risks to the wider public.
- 10.3 Germany – BfR Summer Academy on Risk Communication - Suzan Fiack (BfR) previewed the upcoming 12th BfR-Summer Academy – an expert-to-expert online event that runs from 24-28 June 2024. The event includes five modules: four related to risk assessment science and one on risk communication. The deadline for registration is 9 June (<https://akademie.bfr.berlin/392892>).

11. Campaigns

EFSA's three campaign coordinators outlined the objectives, tactics and impact of the 2023 activities and, where appropriate, highlighted initiatives in 2024:

- Plant Health for Life focuses on raising awareness and critical thinking among audiences to stop introduction of new plant pests into Europe. In 2023, the campaign reached almost 90 million people. The 2024 campaign launches on 15 May with 23 participating countries.
- Safe to Eat (formerly #EUChooseSafeFood) completed its third year in 2023, reaching 114 million people. The 2024 campaign presents the 11 topics under three themes: What's in your food; Food and your health and Handling food safely. Tactics such as out of home (OOH) and point of sale (POS) advertising will complement the usual paid for, organic and earned digital approach.
- Stop African Swine Fever – highlights of the 2023 campaign included a partnership with an EU project called ENETWILD to reach audiences, events and OOH advertising in Romania for the first time. A mini-social media campaign ran in April as part of the 2024 follow-up activities targeting five countries (Serbia, Italy, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia). The current campaign website will be closed later in 2024 but the Communication Toolkit (comprising translated version of the StopASF stickers, posters & social media materials) will be added to the ASF Topic page on the EFSA website

The session closed with a brainstorming session when five breakout groups proposed ideas for innovative tactics for campaigns. Ideas included more focus on shorter campaign videos, online gaming, food escape rooms, thematic events and school educational programmes.

12. Any other business

A new date for the second CEN Meeting of 8/9 October was proposed by the Chair and accepted by the members to avoid clashing with the Risk Communication Summer School taking place later in the month.



13. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 18.00 CET.