

15th MEETING OF EFSA STAKEHOLDER BUREAU

VIRTUAL MEETING, 15 OCTOBER 2024



INTRODUCTION

The 15th meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau took place on 15th of October 2024.

The Bureau meetings are an opportunity for EFSA and stakeholders to exchange on the most relevant topics and exchange feedback.

Bernhard Url, Executive Director of EFSA, opened the meeting by thanking stakeholders for their time and commitment to EFSA. He emphasized the crucial role of the Stakeholder Bureau and the Stakeholder Forum in ensuring EFSA's independence and transparency. Mr. Url highlighted the importance of understanding stakeholders' needs and incorporating their input to enhance EFSA's work and its relevance in society, as well as to provide the right services to applicants.

Aivars Bērziņš, Chair of EFSA's Management Board, also emphasized the importance of this interaction with the Stakeholder Bureau and Forum, noting that the messages from these meetings are brought to the Board.

Mr. Url invited participants to suggest additional points for the agenda, which were to be addressed under the A.O.B. section (see below).

FOLLOW UP ON THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED REGARDING ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES WITH REGISTERED STAKEHOLDERS

This section of the agenda was divided into two main parts:

1. The first part focused on a preview of the 7th Stakeholder Forum, scheduled for November 27 in Brussels, aiming to gather stakeholder input and engagement for its success.
2. The second part provided an overview of EFSA's upcoming engagement and communication activities.

7th Stakeholder Forum Overview

Engagement officer Elisa Simeoni presented the draft program for the 7th Stakeholder Forum, which will focus on "*Innovation in Food Safety: Navigating the Future Together*" and will take place in Brussels on November 2024. The Forum will include plenary sessions and afternoon workshops. The workshops will cover digitalisation and emerging technologies, the future of risk assessment, and future food and sustainability. The aim is to foster collaboration and discussion on the impact and challenges of innovation on the future of risk assessment. For the first time, each member organisation will be allowed to register up to two representatives.

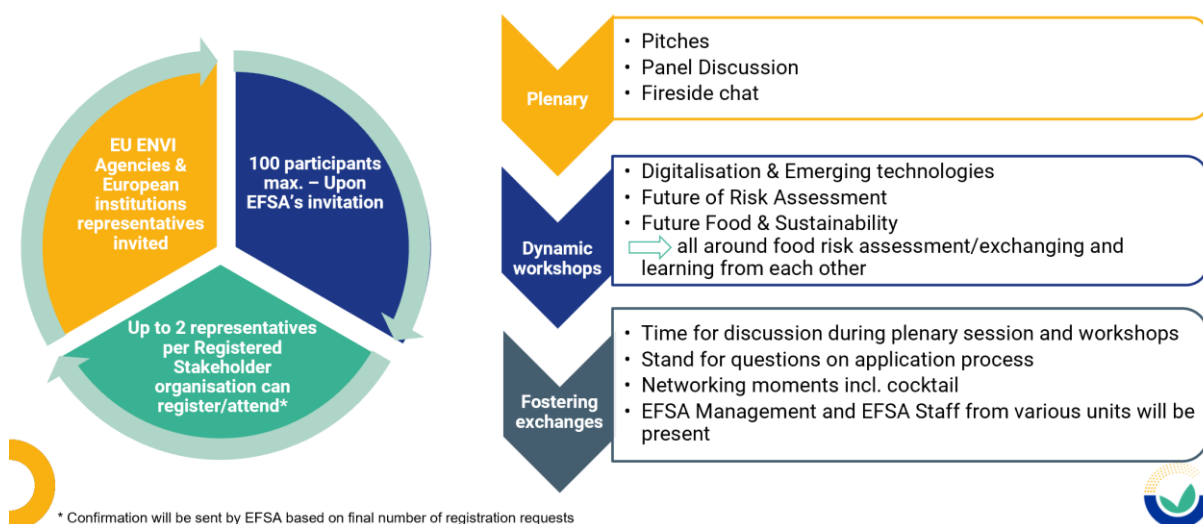
Discussion on the Program of the Forum

- Stakeholders inquired about the format of the afternoon workshops, which will be held in parallel, and about the participation of applicants. EFSA clarified that

attendees will be asked for their workshop preferences during registration, and efforts will be made to balance participation.

- Emphasis was placed on considering the interactions between different aspects of food innovation, adopting a holistic approach.
- Participants stressed the importance of ensuring consumer safety in food innovations.
- Concerns were raised about including socio-economic sustainability alongside environmental sustainability in Forum discussions.
- EFSA emphasised that the Forum is not intended as a scientific conference for in-depth technical discussions, but as a stakeholder event aimed at gathering input to help steer future work and engagement. A stand will be available for questions on the application process.

KEY ELEMENTS: BETWEEN TRADITION AND NOVELTIES

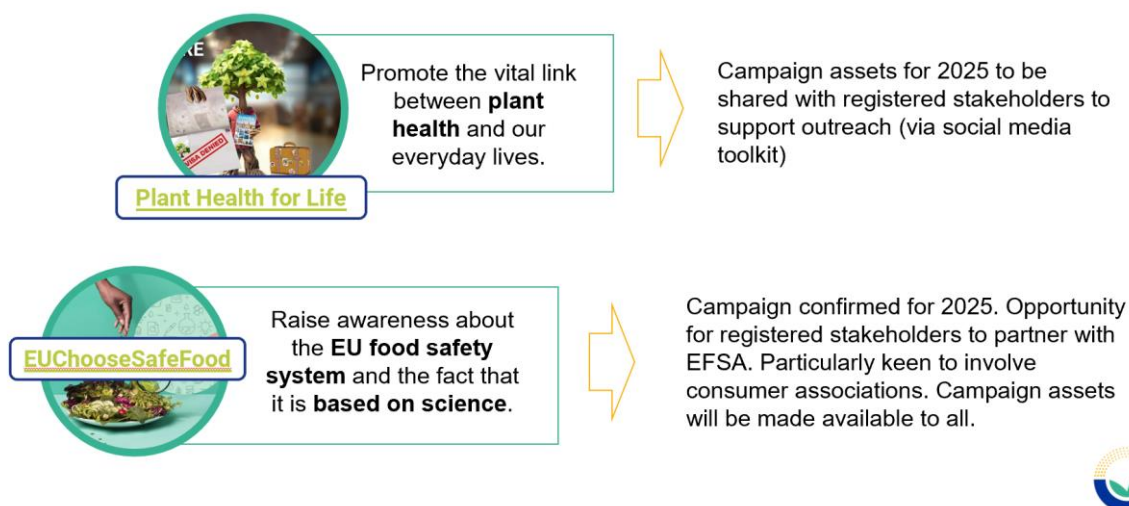


Upcoming Engagement and Communication Activities

Barbara Gallani, Head of ENGAGE Department, presented an overview of EFSA's upcoming activities, covering the following:

- EFSA's Communication Campaigns

EFSA'S COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS AND SH INVOLVEMENT



- EFSA's Calls for Data and Public consultations.
- Stakeholder discussion groups, including one on environmental risk assessment.
- Scientific events.

Discussion

- Stakeholders inquired about EFSA's revised guidelines for risk assessment on novel foods, which have recently been published, and a workshop for applicants is being prepared.
- Questions were raised about how EFSA manages its public consultation platform and tracks participation trends. EFSA acknowledged the need to understand how to make it easier for stakeholders to provide input.
- EFSA was developing a three-year roadmap to strengthen public engagement and risk communication.

AGENDA ITEMS REQUESTED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Interaction with Applicants

EFSA's Scientific Officer Sara De Berardis provided an update on the different possibilities for applicants to engage with EFSA during the application lifecycle. She also announced a new initiative to enhance dialogue on application matters: the establishment of a community on aspects related to applications, open to all stakeholders. This community will focus on thematic discussions about procedural aspects, support initiatives, digital tools, and general aspects of guidance documents, with a call for expression of interest to be launched by the end of the year. This initiative was welcomed by stakeholders.

- **Call for expression of interest** to establish a community of interested parties (open to all stakeholders)

By end of
2024



- **EFSA Stakeholders Forum:** opportunity for further exchanging and getting more details

November
2024



- The **new Community** on application matters will be operational

Q1 of
2025



Development and Implementation of Guidance Documents

Head of Methodology and Scientific Support (MESE) Unit Claudia Roncancio-Peña presented EFSA's view on the development of guidance documents. The aim is to have clear, concise, and user-friendly guidance. EFSA is working on a Target Operating Model (TOM) for guidance development, with a draft TOM planned for public consultation in the second semester of 2025.

EFSA is also developing a catalogue of guidance documents to improve accessibility. Pilot projects are ongoing, such as the development of guidance on biomarkers of effect and the revision of guidance on terrestrial ecotox, involving stakeholder consultation. Collaboration with scientific societies in this process was also discussed positively.

One Health

EFSA One Health & Research Coordinator Stephan Bronzwaer provided an update on the implementation of the One Health approach across EFSA. He highlighted the importance of collaboration between different agencies and stakeholders to address cross-cutting health challenges, citing the joint risk assessment on the impact of using azole fungicides on the development of azole-resistant *Aspergillus* spp. as an example.

EFSA and four other EU agencies have signed a joint statement on the One Health approach, outlining strategic objectives for enhanced collaboration in the next three years.



AOB

The following points were addressed and briefly discussed:

Broader Participation in the Stakeholder Bureau

Luca Capodiecici representing the Business and Food Industry category raised the question of expanding participation in the Bureau, suggesting allowing two representatives per stakeholder group, particularly for the business and industry sectors, to better share efforts and report back to their communities. It was reiterated that while the current Management Board decision allowed one voice per group, this request could be considered within the ongoing reflection on stakeholder categorisation. This point was noted for later discussion.

Board Highlights and Adoption of EFSA's Independence Policy

Angeliki Lysimachou representing the NGOs category inquired about the process of replacing NGO representatives on EFSA's Management Board and requested an update on EFSA's independence policy. EFSA's Management Board Chair Aivars Bērziņš provided updates from recent board meetings, emphasizing the adoption of EFSA's revised independence policy by consensus, acknowledging the significant work of a board subgroup chaired by Pamela Byrne. He also noted the ongoing process of appointing a new NGO member to the Management Board. The latter point was complemented by EC representative Athanasios Raikos who provided a timeline update: the selection committee in the Commission has finalized the decision, which was now under inter-service consultation (finalized on October 14). The decision will be sent to the Council within approximately one month, followed by consultation with the European Parliament (up to three months to react). It is anticipated that new NGO representatives might be on board by the June Management Board meeting.

Role of Council and European Parliament in Board Appointments

Athanasios Raikos clarified that the Council was responsible for appointing EFSA Management Board members, taking into account the European Parliament's position.

EFSA's Performance Evaluation

Athanasios Raikos provided an update on the ongoing evaluation of EFSA by the European Commission. Targeted consultations are expected to launch in mid-November, followed by a public consultation. The study should be finalized by July 2025, with a report to the European Parliament, Council, and EFSA Management Board by March 28, 2026.

Review of Transparency Rules

In response to the representative of Business and Food industry category, the EC representative indicated that the evaluation of EFSA will also assess the implementation of provisions of the Transparency Regulation.

Ultra-Processed Foods and Health

Consumers alternate member Luigi Tozzi asked whether EFSA planned to conduct scientific studies on the link between ultra-processed foods and health issues, particularly regarding the microbiome. Bernhard Url responded by stating that EFSA currently had no mandate for scientific studies on ultra-processed foods and the microbiome, but EFSA followed microbiome research and collaborated with international partners. Stakeholders were encouraged to share any relevant scientific evidence.

MEETING CLOSURE

Bernhard Url thanked the participants for their valuable contributions and invited them to attend the 7th Stakeholder Forum in Brussels on November 27. He noted the productive and insightful discussion, reinforcing EFSA's commitment to transparency, stakeholder engagement, and collaboration. Aivars Bērziņš also thanked everyone for the interesting interaction and indicated he would bring notes back to the Board.

Key takeaways from the 15th EFSA Stakeholder Bureau Meeting

- *Endorsement of the 7th Stakeholder Forum Draft Program:* Stakeholders provided feedback on the planned agenda and workshops. EFSA will finalize the Stakeholder Forum agenda and send invitations.
- *Updates on EFSA's Risk Communication Strategy:* EFSA is developing a three-year roadmap to strengthen public engagement and will continue working on its risk communication strategy and guidance document model.
- *New Initiative to Enhance Applicant Dialogue:* EFSA will launch a dedicated stakeholder community for application-related discussions. A call for expressions of interest will be issued for the new stakeholder community on application matters, likely in November
- *Progress on EFSA Guidance Documents:* EFSA is working on a Target Operating Model for clearer and more accessible guidance.
- *Strengthening One Health Implementation:* EFSA remains committed to cross-sector collaboration on public health challenges and will continue working with other agencies and stakeholders to implement the One Health approach.

ANNEX 1: AGENDA

15TH STAKEHOLDER BUREAU MEETING
ENGAGEMENT AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS UNIT



DRAFT AGENDA 15TH STAKEHOLDER BUREAU MEETING *ONLINE MEETING - 15 OCTOBER 2024*

Time	N	Item	Speakers
			Bernhard Url Executive Director
10:00-10:10	1	Welcome to the meeting	Aivars Bērziņš Chair of the EFSA Management Board
Follow up on the feedback received regarding engagement processes with registered Stakeholders, incl. Q&A:			
10:10-10:40	2	7th Stakeholder Forum: Agenda update on the draft programme. <i>For discussion:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>Main topic:</i> challenges set by competitiveness and food innovation➤ <i>Involvement of SHs:</i> call for active participation	Elisa Siméoni Engagement officer, Engagement and External Relations Unit
10:40-11:00	3	Upcoming Engagement and Communication activities	Barbara Gallani, Head of Communication and Partnership Department
Agenda items raised by stakeholders:			
11:00-11:15	4	Interaction with applicants: recent updates	Sara De Berardis Front Desk & Workforce Planning Unit
11:15-11:35	5	Development and implementation of guidance documents	Claudia Roncancio-Peña Head of Methodology and Scientific Support (MESE) Unit
11:35-11:50	6	One Health (OH): latest update of the implementation of OH approach across EFSA.	Stef Bronzwaer <i>Research Coordinator - Chief Scientist Office</i>
11:50-12:00	7	AOB & Closing remarks	Bernhard Url, Executive Director

ANNEX 2: PARTICIPANTS LIST

STAKEHOLDERS

Name	Category
Luigi Tozzi	Consumers - Alternate
Angeliki Lyssimachou	NGOs and Advocacy Groups - Member
Eva Sali	Farmers and Primary Producers – Alternate
Luca Capodiecì	Business and Food Industry – Member
Francisco Herrera	Distributors and HORECA - Alternate
Klaus Hellmann	Practitioners - Member
Jose Julio Ortega	Academia – Alternate

EFSA

Name	Position
Bernhard Url	Executive Director
Aivars Berzins	Chair of the EFSA Management Board
Barbara Gallani	Head of Communication and Partnership Department
Victoria Villamar	Head of Engagement and External Relations Unit
Claudia Roncancio	Head of Methodology and Scientific Support Unit
Sara De Berardis	Team Leader, Front Desk & Workforce planning Unit
Stef Bronzwaer	Research Coordinator, Chief Scientist Office
Sérgio Potier Rodeia	Community Management Team Leader, Engagement and External Relations Unit
Elisa Simeoni	Engagement Officer, Engagement and External Relations Unit
Christophe Wolff	Policy Officer, Engagement and External Relations Unit
Martina Liccardo	Junior Officer, Engagement and External Relations Unit

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Name	Position
Athanasios Raikos	Policy Coordinator, E.1, DG SANTE, European Commission