

18th MEETING OF EFSA STAKEHOLDER BUREAU

VIRTUAL MEETING, 21 April 2026

INTRODUCTION

Dr Nikolaus Kriz, EFSA's Executive Director, opened the 18th meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau by welcoming all attendees and congratulating the newly joined members and alternates following the recent renewal of the Bureau. He particularly welcomed Mr Aivars Bērziņš, the Chair of EFSA's Management Board, noting that this meeting marked Mr Bērziņš's final participation in the Stakeholder Bureau in his current role. This was followed by a short round of introductions by each attendee, reflecting the new composition of the Bureau.

He emphasised the strategic importance of the Stakeholder Bureau as a space for forward-looking dialogue, detached from individual applications or dossiers, and aimed at improving EFSA's overall performance, relevance, and trust.

Mr Bērziņš underlined that stakeholder engagement is a strategic priority for EFSA's Management Board. He highlighted the Board's increasingly diverse composition, including civil society representatives, and reaffirmed that stakeholder input is a key contributor to the accountability, transparency, legitimacy, and long-term orientation of EFSA's work. He appreciated the stakeholders' past contributions to forums and meetings, and expressed his anticipation of future discussions.

Dr Kriz further drew attention to the broader context in which EFSA is currently operating, including ongoing legislative proposals such as the "*Food and Feed Omnibus*" and the "*Biotech Act*", as well as the forthcoming outcome of the evaluation of EFSA's performance expected in the third quarter of the year.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES WITH REGISTERED STAKEHOLDERS

This section of the agenda was divided into three parts:

1. The first part was dedicated to the introduction of new Stakeholder Bureau members and gathering of their initial expectations.
2. The second part outlined the Engagement Plan for the next strategic cycle, including the concept for the 2026 Stakeholder Forum.
3. The third part provided updates on EFSA's upcoming communication and engagement activities.

New Stakeholder Bureau

EFSA's Engagement Officer Christophe Wolff provided a recap of the role, composition, and functioning of the Stakeholder Bureau, recalling that it is an advisory body established by a 2022 Management Board decision and composed of one representative (a member and an alternate) for each of the seven EFSA's stakeholder categories. Members and alternates are appointed by the registered stakeholders themselves for a three-year mandate and may serve no more than two mandates. Given the limited number of organisations in some categories, the latter rule (max. two mandates) could potentially be made more flexible. Mr Wolff also stressed that both members and alternates should advocate for their entire stakeholder group, not just the specific organisations they are part of.

He stressed the importance of preparation, timely internal consultation within stakeholder categories, and active dissemination of EFSA information through the various channels available. Members were encouraged to maintain continuous engagement with their respective stakeholder communities to ensure balanced and representative input.

Stakeholder Feedback: Several participants emphasised the importance of Bureau representatives receiving meeting documents well in advance, in order to facilitate a thorough consultation within their respective category, which often include numerous and diverse organisations. It is reminded that the call for agenda items is being sent normally around six to eight weeks prior to the Bureau.

EFSA Strategy 2034

Victoria Villamar, Head of EFSA's ENREL Unit, introduced the agenda item by explaining the central role of stakeholders in the preparation of EFSA's next strategic cycle. She highlighted that the Stakeholder Bureau would be among the first engagement platforms informed about the planned consultation process.

EFSA's Engagement Officer Clémentine Lallier presented EFSA's engagement plan supporting the development of the Strategy 2034. She explained that three targeted consultation workshops would be organised in late September / early October 2026: one with the Scientific Committee, one with Member States, and one with EFSA's community of registered stakeholders.

For 2026, the Stakeholder Forum will exceptionally take the form of a half-day online consultation workshop on 12 October 2026, fully dedicated to gathering stakeholder input on the draft strategy. This format was chosen to ensure consistency across the three targeted consultations. The discussions will be led by EFSA's Chief Scientist Carlos das Neves, with support from the EFSA strategy team, and the outcomes will feed directly into the draft strategy to be endorsed by the Management Board by the end of 2026.

A broader public consultation, open to all interested parties, is planned for 2027, following which the final Strategy 2034 will be endorsed and presented during EFSA's 25th anniversary conference.

Stakeholder Feedback: Petra Kostolaniova, representing the Business and Food Industry, welcomed the opportunity to contribute early to EFSA's next strategy. However, she raised concerns about the decision to hold the 2026 Stakeholder Forum online, with participants having noted the high added value of face-to-face interactions during previous forums. She also inquired where to receive potential updates on initiatives if the forum is held online. Clémentine Lallier and Victoria Villamar stressed the need for consistency in the participation modes of participants, but reiterated the benefits of face-to-face interactions and expressed willingness to compensate through adequate formats during the online forum and to organise in-person meetings through other channels.

Upcoming Engagement and Communication Activities

Barbara Gallani, Head of EFSA's Communication and Partnership Department (ENGAGE), provided an overview of EFSA's key communication and engagement activities planned for the next six months.

She highlighted EFSA's ongoing major communication campaigns, including the "Safe to Eat", "Plant Health for Life", and the "No Bird Flu" (Avian Flu) campaigns, noting their expanding reach across Member States and pre-accession countries. Stakeholders were encouraged to actively use campaign toolkits and provide feedback on their dissemination and reception. Ms Gallani also presented insights from EFSA's annual strategy survey,

underlining high levels of trust and overall positive evaluations of EFSA’s work among stakeholders, while noting continued expectations regarding speed, clarity and timeliness of communication.

An overview of upcoming scientific publications, calls for data, public consultations, public events and discussion groups was provided, covering the period from April to September 2026, with an emphasis on transparency and early awareness to support stakeholder participation and dissemination within stakeholder networks. However, dates remain subject to change due to a potential delay in the publication of the evaluation of EFSA’s performance.

Stakeholder Feedback: Petra Kostolaniova expressed appreciation for the improvements in access to EFSA communication in terms of quality and quantity. She then proceeded to ask for updates regarding the EC general plan for risk communication. Ms Anastasia Alvizou, DG SANTE, noted that the priority currently lying with finalising EFSA’s external evaluation. She emphasised EFSA’s ground work acting within its remit as risk assessor, coordinating closely with DG SANTE and Member States on aligned campaigns and messaging.

AOB & MEETING CLOSURE

Nikolaus Kriz closed the meeting by thanking all attendees for their active engagement and constructive dialogue. He pointed towards the open communication channels should new concerns arise and reiterated EFSA’s commitment to maintaining open, two-way communication. Dr Kriz noted that the next Bureau in half a year’s time will take place after further developments will have proceeded, including new legislative proposals, evolutions in EFSA’s strategy, and the composition of a new Management Board.

Key takeaways from the 18th EFSA Stakeholder Bureau Meeting

- *Renewal of the Stakeholder Bureau:* The 18th meeting marked the first session of the renewed Stakeholder Bureau, with a strong emphasis on onboarding new members, clarifying the Bureau’s role and expectations, and gathering early, category-specific signals on future stakeholder engagement needs in view of EFSA’s next strategic cycle (2028–2034).
- *EFSA Strategy 2034 Consultation:* Stakeholders were informed about the structured engagement plan supporting the development of EFSA’s Strategy 2034, including three targeted consultation workshops (Scientific Committee, Member States and Registered Stakeholders).
- *2026 Stakeholder Forum dedicated to strategy consultation:* The 2026 Stakeholder Forum (12 October 2026) will exceptionally take the form of a half-day online consultation workshop fully dedicated to collecting stakeholder input on the draft EFSA strategy. This format will ensure consistency across all targeted consultations feeding into the draft Strategy 2034. In person stakeholder meetings are planned in 2026 as part of thematic engagement plans.
- *Upcoming communication and engagement initiatives:* EFSA continues major campaigns (“Safe to Eat”, “Plant Health for Life”, “No Bird Flu”), and offers a broad range of upcoming calls for data, public consultations, events and discussion groups.

ANNEX 1: AGENDA

DRAFT AGENDA 18TH STAKEHOLDER BUREAU MEETING

ONLINE MEETING - 21 APRIL 2026 (10:00 - 12:00)

Time	N	Item	Speakers
10:00-10:10	1	Welcome to the meeting	Nikolaus KRIZ <i>EFSA's Executive Director</i> Aivars BERZINS <i>Chair of the EFSA Management Board</i>
Engagement processes with registered Stakeholders			
New Stakeholder Bureau			
10:10-10:55	2	a. Role and composition b. Tour de Table for new Members/Alternates to present themselves	Christophe Wolff <i>Engagement Officer, ENREL</i>
10:55-11:20	3	EFSA Strategy 2034 <i>Stakeholder Engagement plan (presentation)</i> Stakeholder forum 2026: targeted consultation on EFSA strategy 2034 (to be held on 12 October 2026. - concept)	Clémentine LALLIER <i>Engagement Officer, ENREL</i>
11:20-11:50	4	Upcoming Communication and Engagement activities	Barbara GALLANI <i>Head of Engagement, Cooperation and Partnership Department (ENGAGE)</i>
11:50-12:00	5	AOB & Closing remarks	Nikolaus KRIZ, <i>Executive Director</i>

ANNEX 2: PARTICIPANTS LIST

STAKEHOLDERS

Name	Category
Davide Esposito	Consumers - Member
Angeliki Lysimachou	NGOs and Advocacy Groups - Member
Stephen Lennon	Farmers and Primary Producers – Alternate
Petra Kostolanieva	Business and Food Industry – Member
Francisco Herrera	Distributors and HORECA – Alternate
Miroslava Piskorikova	Practitioners’ Associations – Member

EFSA

Name	Position
Nikolaus Kriz	Executive Director
Aivars Bērziņš	Chair of the EFSA Management Board
Barbara Gallani	Head of Communication and Partnership Department (ENGAGE)
Victoria Villamar	Head of Engagement and External Relations Unit (ENREL)
Clémentine Lallier	Engagement Officer, ENREL
Christophe Wolff	Engagement Officer, ENREL
Lola Witzel	Guest Scientist, ENREL

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Name	Position
Anastasia Alvizou	Deputy Head of Unit, E.1, DG SANTE, European Commission