

22 and 23 April 2026

09:00-16:30 / 09:00-13:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 7 May 2026

Location: Teleconference

Attendees:

o Panel Members:

Ana Allende, Avelino Alvarez-Ordóñez, Valeria Bortolaia, Sara Bover-Cid, Alessandra De Cesare, Wietske Dohmen, Laurent Guillier, Lieve Herman, Liesbeth Jacxsens, Maarten Nauta, Lapo Mughini-Gras, Jakob Ottoson, Luisa Peixe, Fernando Pérez-Rodríguez, Panagiotis Skandamis

o Hearing Experts¹:

Not Applicable

o Applicants participating in a technical hearing²:

Not Applicable

o European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Kris De Smet, Gunilla Eklund (DG SANTE)

o EFSA:

BIOHAW Unit: Laura Cabral, Sandra Correia, Chiara Fabris, Raquel Garcia-Fierro, Beatriz Guerra, Ernesto Liebana, Winy Messens, Valentina Rizzi, Eleonora Sarno, Pietro Stella, Natisha Watwani, Frank Verdonck, Anna Zdanowicz

CSO: Marta Bisaschi

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes (changes to be listed).

3. Declarations of Interest of Panel members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence³ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management⁴, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Panel members invited to the present meeting. No conflicts of interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the Panel members at the beginning of this meeting.

¹ As defined in Article 34 of the document "Implementing Rule of the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority laying down the rules on the selection, appointment and operations of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and of their Working Groups": <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/paneloperation.pdf>

² As defined in the "EFSA's Catalogue of support initiatives during the life cycle of applications for regulated products": <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/sp.efsa.2021.EN-6472>

³ https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/independence-policy-2024.pdf

⁴ https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/decision-ed-on-competing-interest-management-2024.pdf



4. Agreement of the minutes of the 184th BIOHAZ Panel Plenary meeting held on 12 March 2026, via teleconference

The minutes of the 184th Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 26 March 2026.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for adoption/endorsement

No scientific outputs submitted for adoption.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

6.1 Statement on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feed as notified to EFSA. 24: Suitability of taxonomic units notified to EFSA until March 2026 ([EFSA-Q-2025-00686](#))

The last working group (WG) meeting was held on 13 April, and the next meeting is scheduled on 20 May. A total of 103 notifications were received between October 2025 and March 2026 (inclusive), of which 47 were proposed for use in feed, 33 as food enzymes, food additives and flavourings, 5 as novel foods and 18 as plant protection products. 30 notifications were related to microorganisms generally excluded from QPS evaluation (including 22 were notifications of filamentous fungi, 6 of *Escherichia coli*, 2 *Streptomyces*) and 55 have the QPS status. Of the remaining 18 notifications corresponding to 15 taxonomic units (TUs), 7 have already been evaluated for a possible QPS status in previous Panel Statements of the previous QPS 3-years cycle and therefore will be assessed again now: *Bacillus thuringiensis*, *Ensifer adhaerens*, *Enterococcus lactis*, *Heyndrickxia faecalis*, *Hyphomicrobium denitrificans*, *Microbacterium foliorum* and *Papiliotrema terrestris*. The other 8 TUs will be assessed for the first time: *Listeria innocua*, *Pseudomonas protegens*, bacteriophages against *Clavibacter michiganensis subsp. michiganensis* (BACMM), bacteriophages against *Erwinia amylovora* (BAEA), bacteriophage against Walnut *Xanthomonas arboricola* pv. *Juglandis*, Pecentumvirus P100, *Lactococcus cremoris* (new species, previously a subspecies, which was part of a QPS status species - *Lactococcus lactis*) and *Companilactobacillus pabuli* (new species "split" from a previous QPS TU - *Companilactobacillus farciminis* (synonym *Lactobacillus farciminis*). The search strategy (keywords) was revised for this QPS cycle. No changes were found in the nomenclature of the current QPS status TUs for this 6-month period. The new ELS cycle is almost finalised for this statement. The deadline for adoption of this Panel statement is 30 June 2026.

6.2 Scientific opinion on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feeds as notified to EFSA ([EFSA-Q-2025-00689](#))

The last WG meeting was held on 13 April, and the next meeting is scheduled on 20 May. The WG Chair described the follow up of the new challenges for this new three-years cycle and discussed them with the Panel. The deadline for adoption of this Opinion is 31 December 2028.

6.3 Scientific opinion(s) on the current status of the occurrence and spread of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales in the food chain in the EU/EFTA

No discussion took place under this agenda item.



6.4 Scientific opinion on the implementation of point 2 of Annex V of Regulation (EU) 2025/40 on Packaging and Packaging Waste ([EFSA-Q-2025-00456](#))

The WG Chair provided an update of the work, as discussed at the WG meeting on 23 March 2026. The revised list of unprocessed fresh FVH commodities to be assessed in this mandate (subquestion (SQ) 1.1.) was agreed by the BIOHAZ Panel. The group of so called “ready-to-eat fruits”, meaning fully ripened fruits, will not be further evaluated considering that fully ripe fruit is not transported long-distance, alternative packaging exists and protection needs are quality-related. On SQ 1.2., the WG chair informed that only the packaging that is currently in use are to be considered, encompassing both single-use plastic and alternative packaging. The packaging materials included are: (a) plastic packaging materials derived from non-renewable fossil feedstock such as PET, PP and PE and chemically modified biopolymer, and (b) alternative packaging materials, such as wooden, non-chemically modified biopolymer and cardboard crates/boxes/bags with less than 5% plastic. The 5% limit applies only to composite packaging materials and not to the multi-component packaging unit made of separable parts. Thus, if the plastic window or film is a separate component of the unit of packaging, it is considered as fully plastic. The approach to define the common list of most relevant foodborne pathogens for public health to be applied across FVH commodities (SQ 1.4) was agreed. For SQ 1.6., a long list of spoilage microorganisms that were found to be associated with each group of unprocessed fresh FVH commodities was presented. The next WG meeting will take place on 28 and 30 April 2026. The deadline for delivery of the scientific opinion is end of November 2026.

6.5 Scientific opinion on Food Safety Culture and its microbiological food safety impact in the EU ([EFSA-Q-2025-00553](#) and [EFSA-Q-2025-00554](#))

The WG chair updated the Panel on the progress and on the outcome of the WG meetings held on 30 March and on 21 April 2026. The WG chair presented the draft protocol, which was discussed in detail by the Panel, including the clarifications of the terms of references, the formulation of the assessment questions and the methodology to be used to address them. The WG will perform a literature search and extract relevant information, also with the possible support of artificial intelligence tools, and will collaborate with EFSA social scientists to gather related information from selected stakeholders. The draft protocol was discussed and approved by the Panel, with few updates. The deadline for adoption of the first scientific opinion is end of December 2026.

6.6 Scientific opinion on the health risks posed by microplastics in food, water and air ([EFSA-Q-2025-00702](#))

The Chair of the SubWG-BIOHAZ briefly updated the Panel on the progress of the mandate, which is allocated to the CONTAM Panel with the contribution of the BIOHAZ Panel. The BIOHAZ Panel covers the role of micro- and nano-plastics as vectors for human foodborne microbiological hazards in food of plant and animal origin (ToR5). The SubWG-BIOHAZ will develop the related sections that will need to be endorsed by the BIOHAZ Panel. The joint draft protocol for this opinion was presented to the CONTAM Panel experts at their plenary on 21 April. Comments received on the ToR-5-related text included in the protocol were discussed with the BIOHAZ Panel experts, and, after agreement of the changes proposed, the draft protocol was endorsed for public consultation by the CONTAM Panel on 23 April. Comments received by the BIOHAZ Panel experts on the draft scientific opinion (interpretation of ToRs) were clarified. The next meeting of the full working group will be on 29 April, and the next meeting of the subWG-BIOHAZ will be on 21 May 2026. Deadline for the adoption of the scientific opinion is end of December 2027.



6.7 Scientific opinion on the microbiological status of fishery products following the stiffening process with focus on smoked salmon ([EFSA-Q-2026-00032](#))

The second WG meeting took place on 13 and 15 April 2026. The clarifications to the mandate were discussed in the presence of EC colleagues. The WG Chair presented the protocol, including the clarifications to the mandate, translation of the terms of reference of the mandate into assessment questions and the planning of the methods to conduct the assessment. Of note is that the assessment focuses on smoked salmon; however, the conclusions are expected to be applicable to other smoked salmonid fish species with similar characteristics. As hot smoked salmon is typically not sold in thin, delicate slices like cold-smoked salmon, the assessment will further be restricted to cold smoked salmon. The starting point of the assessment is the smoked salmon immediately after smoking, while the end point is after chilled storage at 4°C for 30 days. After discussion, the protocol was approved. The next WG meeting will be held on 29 May 2026 by web-conference. The deadline for delivery of the scientific opinion is end of December 2026.

7. Update on new Mandates

No new mandates have been received since the previous BIOHAZ Panel plenary meeting.

8. Feedback from the Scientific Committee, other Scientific Panels, EFSA and the European Commission

8.1. Scientific Committee

The Panel Chair reported to the Panel the main topics discussed during the 129th Plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC)⁵, that took place on 25 and 26 February 2026, in particular: an update on a project related to the classification of EFSA guidance documents, that recently brought to the publication of a new catalogue of guidance documents on EFSA website, an update on research and innovation needs in support to the new EFSA strategy, as well as additional activities and assessments discussed within the SC.

8.2. European Commission

No discussion took place under this agenda item.

8.3. Presentation of the EU Summary Report on AMR 2023-2024

EFSA Staff from the BIOHAW Unit presented the main findings of the EU Summary Report on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) 2023-2024⁶, published on 18 February 2026. It presents the main findings of the 2023–2024 harmonised AMR monitoring in *Salmonella* spp., *Campylobacter jejuni* and *Campylobacter coli* from humans, food-producing animals (broilers, laying hens, fattening turkeys, fattening pigs and bovines under 1 year of age), and derived meat. For animals and meat, AMR was also assessed for indicator commensal *Escherichia coli*, presumptive extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-/AmpC beta-lactamase (AmpC)-/carbapenemase (CP)-producing *E. coli*, *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Enterococcus faecium* and the occurrence of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

⁵ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/129th-plenary-meeting-scientific-committee>

⁶ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2026.9887>



9. Other topics for information and/or discussion

9.1. Topics of scientific concern in the area of biological hazards, including an update on the activities of the EFSA EREN and StaDG-ER platforms

No detailed discussions took place in relation to this agenda item.

9.2. Experts' feedback survey

EFSA staff presented to the Panel the outcome of the Experts' feedback survey, a survey held at the end of 2025 with Panel members (all Panel) in order to gather feedback on the scientific and administrative support Panel members receive from EFSA and on their level of involvement, commitment and satisfaction of working with EFSA. EFSA staff reminded the Panel that within the principle of providing each other mutual feedback, EFSA will be soon providing feedback to Panel members about their participation and contribution to EFSA activities.

9.3. Dates of 2027 BIOHAZ Plenary meetings

The Panel agreed on dates for 2027 plenary meetings, which will be made public on EFSA website in due time.

10. AOB

The Panel was informed about logistic details in relation to the 188th BIOHAZ Plenary meeting, scheduled on 16 and 17 September 2026 in Gijón (Spain).

11. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 3 and 4 June 2026, in Parma.