

4 June 2026

14:00-18:00

**Location:** EFSA – online

**Attendees:**

○ **Discussion Group Members:**

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>NAME</b>
<b>FEFAC</b>	Arnaud Bouxin
<b>EU Specialty Food Ingredients</b>	Charlotte Bercovici
<b>ICGA-Europe</b>	Christophe Leprêtre
<b>Tea &amp; Herbal Infusions Europe - THIE</b>	Cordelia Kraft
<b>FEDIOL - EU vegetable oil and protein meal association</b>	Despoina Angeliki Stavropoilou
<b>CAOBISCO</b>	Eleonora Alquati
<b>EUPPA - European Potato Processors' Association</b>	Elsa Troullier
<b>Natural Food Colours Association</b>	Fabienne Zeugin
<b>European Dairy Association</b>	Fanny Courivaud
<b>Tea &amp; Herbal Infusions Europe - THIE</b>	Farshad La-Rostami
<b>Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council</b>	Francesca Ortolan
<b>FoodDrinkEurope</b>	Gianluca Colombo
<b>European Food Coffee Federation</b>	Giovanni Lamberti
<b>Specialised Nutrition Europe (SNE)</b>	Kata Hejjas
<b>FoodDrinkEurope</b>	Luca Terzi
<b>Specialised Nutrition Europe (SNE)</b>	Matteo Lazzari
<b>AESGP</b>	Mihai Ionita
<b>Food Supplements Europe</b>	Patrick Coppens
<b>CEEREAL European Cereal Breakfast Association</b>	Roth Sofia
<b>PROFEL</b>	Sabina Mirauta
<b>Eurosnacks - European Snacks Association</b>	Tombesi Silvia

○ **Invited by EFSA:**

<b>GUEST ORGANISATIONS</b>	<b>NAME</b>
<b>Swedish Food Authority</b>	Frida Broman
<b>Swedish Food Authority</b>	David Foster



- **European Commission**  
Ivana Poustkova
  
- **EFSA:**  
IDATA Unit: ABBINANTE Fabrizio (Head of IDATA Unit), BOCCA Valentina, FABRILE Maria Pia, GUTIERREZ LINARES Alicia, IOANNIDOU Sofia, MARCHESE Emanuela, TRIACCHINI Giuseppe Antonio (Chair), ZORMPAS Alexios, MITOULA Vaia, BELLAVERE Elena; GONZALEZ CIRIA Carmen; ZUNINO Guido; MEDINA PASTOR Paula; PASINATO Luca; BROCCA Daniela;  
FIP Unit: TARD Alexandra;  
MESE Unit: GERGELOVÁ Petra; HORVATH Zsuzsanna; GÓMEZ RUIZ José Ángel;

## **1. Welcome, adoption of the agenda. Quick tour of self-presentation of participants and temporary observers**

The Chair welcomed the StaDG Members participating online and all the EFSA attendees present in the room.

A round of introductions was facilitated to all meeting participants, including representatives from EFSA, industry associations, and the European Commission, to clarify group membership and roles. Updates were made to the group membership list, and new alternates and guests were welcomed (Luca Terzi of Food Drink Europe specified that Alessandro Piccione changed his role in FDE and can be removed from the discussion group. For FDE the active members in the discussion group remain Luca Terzi, Alejandro Rodarte and Gianluca Colombo)

The agenda for the 15th meeting was then adopted without modifications.

## **2. Update on EFSA risk assessments using industry data**

EFSA provided a comprehensive update on its recent and ongoing scientific opinions and data collection activities related to chemical contaminants, food additives, and flavourings. It was highlighted that a call for additives and flavourings is currently ongoing for the second pilot under the monitoring programme, as foreseen by the legislation. In parallel, the usual annual call for food additives data has been launched, with polyols listed among the priority substances. A previous call focusing only on sweeteners, including the same polyols, was launched in 2018; however, due to issues with the current reliability of some submitted data, it was decided that polyols, which are not yet re-evaluated, would be included again among the substances for which data are requested.

## **3. The 2024 EU monitoring report on food additives and flavourings (1st pilot)**

EFSA presented the results of the 2024 European Union (EU) pilot monitoring programme on food additives and flavourings, in response to a mandate from the European Commission. This pilot focused on three food additives, green S (E 142), ponceau 4R (E 124) and tartrazine (E 102), and



two flavourings, caffeine (FL No 16.016) and pulegone (Annex III of Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008). The aim of the monitoring programme is to evaluate the occurrence and use of these substances, estimate chronic dietary exposure across population groups, and compare the outcomes with previous EFSA assessments. Monitoring data were collected from 22 EU Member States and five food business operators, comprising 18,296 analytical results from 8943 food samples and 663 use levels. Dietary exposure was assessed using three refined exposure scenarios: non brand loyal, brand loyal, and food supplement 'consumer only' scenarios. For the three food additives, all exposure estimates were well below their respective acceptable daily intakes (ADI). For pulegone, exposure estimates were below the tolerable daily intake (TDI). For caffeine, as already reported in previous EFSA assessments, exposure estimates in several dietary surveys exceeded doses of no safety concern, particularly in adults and the elderly, largely driven by the consumption of foods with naturally occurring caffeine such as coffee and tea rather than foods with added caffeine. Caffeine exposure was higher as compared with previous assessments; the current estimates are considered as largely overestimated due to some limitations in the concentration data, and the methodology used in the assessment. Overall, different challenges and misreporting were identified when preparing the monitoring report that might have biased, to different extent, the dietary exposure estimations for the substances assessed. Therefore, conclusions derived in the framework of this first pilot are not yet considered to be sufficiently robust for decision-making, and further actions will be taken to strengthen the collection and analysis of the monitoring data in the next report.

#### **4. Safety of acute exposure to glycerol (E 422) from beverages**

EFSA presented the recent assessment on acute exposure to glycerol (E422) from beverages, focusing on slush ice drinks and proposed use in de-alcoholised wines, highlighting data limitations, exposure results, and implications for different age groups. It was explained that the assessment was prompted by concerns over acute effects of glycerol (E 422) in children, especially from slush ice drinks, and a proposal to authorise glycerol (E 422) in de-alcoholised wines. The mandate required EFSA to assess acute exposure and determine safe consumption volumes and concentrations, at which the exposure remains below Acute Reference Dose (ARfD). Results showed that the ARfD for glycerol (E 422) was exceeded in all age groups for both slush ice drinks and de-alcoholised wines. The maximum safe volumes for consumption were found to be very low, especially for young children. In conclusion, the assessment showed that current and proposed uses of glycerol (E 422) in these beverages pose a risk of exceeding the ARfD, particularly for children, and provided guidance on maximum safe concentrations and volumes.

#### **5. Dietary exposure to lycopene from background diet, novel foods and food additives use in the European population**

EFSA presented the exposure assessment to lycopene from all dietary sources—including the background diet, food additives, and novel food uses—detailing the data collection, methodology, and findings of the mandate received in 2023 and published in April. This marked the first EFSA assessment to incorporate actual use level data for novel foods alongside a literature review of 159 articles to capture natural occurrence across various red and orange fruits and vegetables.



Since the call for data yielded no usable analytical values due to left-censoring, the assessment relied primarily on industry use levels and literature data. A key methodological advancement was the application of EFSA's new Raw Primary Commodity (RPC) model to the Comprehensive Food Consumption Database, which allowed the disaggregation of composite foods into standard recipes and their subsequent conversion back to raw equivalents to precisely isolate natural occurrence values. EFSA explained that standard exposure scenarios were applied, including the regulatory maximum level and a refined, non-brand loyal scenario. The findings indicated that for the general population, in the refined non-brand-loyal scenario, the highest exposure at the 95th percentile (P95) reached approximately 1 mg/kg body weight per day, with the vast majority of dietary exposure originating from naturally occurring lycopene in unprocessed fruits and vegetables; the use of food additive in flavoured drinks showed also substantial contributions in all populations. Furthermore, evaluating food supplements required an innovative, non-standard approach to harmonize different metric units (confronting mg/kg for additives against mg/daily dose for novel foods), calculating exposure from a maximum daily limit of 15 mg/day matched to each food supplements consumption days indicated in the dietary surveys. This analysis revealed that food additive quantities were negligible compared to novel food uses due to their different technological functions (food colour versus antioxidant), and that the inclusion of food supplements significantly impacted total exposure, nearly doubling it and frequently exceeding both natural and additive dietary sources for certain population groups. Another scenario was performed on infants and young children consuming food for special medical purposes (FSMP). For them too, the natural occurrence was the main source of exposure. finally a last scenario was performed for the infants < 16 weeks of age for which the only source considered was the novel food use from FSMP.

## **6. Update on the EFSA Rebuild project and the ongoing pilot**

EFSA provided an update on the Rebuild Project, focusing on Work Package 2 and the completion of the foundation layer for the new data ingestion and management platform that will replace the current DCF, DWH, and Microstrategy system.

The new platform is based on Azure, Databricks, and Power BI, and it offers multiple channels to submit and access data, with an improved user interface, APIs, a Databricks environment and dashboards and reports. The new system offers support for various file formats, and enhanced error management. A pilot is currently on-going with volunteers from two data collections, and will conclude in September, followed by adjustments before going live in 2027. The migration to the new system is planned over a three-years period, and the exact details and timelines for each data collection will be discussed and agreed with the Networks/groups.

## **7. AI Assisted Data Mapping for SSD2**

This presentation shared insights from the Swedish Food Agency's work on applying AI to data mapping and reporting workflows. It explores how domain knowledge, business rules and reporting context can be combined with AI to reduce manual effort (cutting classification times from minutes to seconds) and improve consistency in SSD2 reporting. The session also included a demonstration of the Data Mapping Tool (DMT), a practical implementation of these concepts, and discuss opportunities for collaboration and pilot testing with industry stakeholders. The presentation concluded by emphasizing that the tool's success depends on real-world use cases to continuously refine its mapping logic. Stakeholders are actively invited to collaborate through pilot testing and data sharing—with confidentiality assured—to ensure the tool fits effectively into practical reporting workflows. During the Q&A session, industry representatives (EDA and FEDIOL) expressed strong interest in participating in the pilot tests, while the Swedish Food Agency clarified



that the tool is flexible enough to handle incomplete datasets and that its chatbot generates suggestions by relying directly on official EFSA catalogues and guidance documents as its source of truth.

## 8. Draft Minimal Excel Tool for industry data reporting

EFSA presented a draft minimal Excel tool for reporting occurrence data on contaminants, food additives, and food flavourings. The tool aims to simplify the data submission process for industry by reducing the number of required data elements, based on a frequency analysis of data available in the data warehouse over the past seven years.

The analysis highlighted industry- and domain-specific patterns and recurrent reporting issues in data element entries, including frequently missing or misinterpreted data elements. These findings were assessed against exposure assessment requirements for data usability, with the objective of identifying a balanced approach between regulatory necessity and data providers' practical constraints.

EFSA identified nine core data elements as essential, requiring direct input from data providers. The remaining data elements could be derived and pre-populated based on frequency analysis, or assigned default values when mandatory but not essential for exposure assessment.

The proposed tool integrates automation features to support data providers during data entry, including colour-coded messages to highlight errors, warnings, and potentially inconsistent values, as well as the possibility to manually override automatically generated entries. Additional functionalities include dropdown lists, preliminary validation checks, and the generation of XML files for submission.

Further developments are planned to improve usability and functionality, including enhanced validation aligned with the business rules of the current Chemical Monitoring Reporting Guidance, and an interactive form for building sample matrix codes. Initial feedback from a demo session was positive, with suggestions focused on strengthening validation logic and expanding the tool's applicability to additional data collection areas

## 9. Discussion and conclusions

Participants congratulated the developer for the significant progress made on the draft Minimal Excel Tool, which is available immediately and can be piloted in the frame of the current data collection. Data providers are requested to express their interest and then to test the tool over a two-week period to practice and identify any technical issues or bugs, which should be reported directly to Elena Bellavere with Giuseppe Triacchini in copy. EFSA offers dedicated one/two-hours meetings for support, as soon as possible in dates to be agreed in the next days. Regarding technical constraints, the tool is currently fully operational on Windows, whereas some functionality limitations have been identified on Mac systems, meaning the use of Windows machines is recommended for the time being while EFSA works on a fix. It was also clarified that while the tool covers a number of controls based on the core business rules from the guidance document, it performs a validation that has to be considered partial and preliminary that does not replace the full validation that occurs upon data transmission to the DCF. Anyway the Minimal Excel Tool proved to be a very good starting point towards data reporting simplification, moving from the 30 mandatory variables requested by the previous tool, to the 9 variables requested by the Minimal tool. Finally, regarding potential extension to other data domains, EFSA noted that while additive occurrence data shares similarities with contaminant data, there is currently insufficient historical data to extend the SSD2 parametrization to use level data.



The frequency and organization of the group's meetings were proposed for short discussion. This discussion group has recently met twice a year by leveraging logistics already in place in Brussels for the Stakeholders forum, but the upcoming Stakeholder Forum 2026 will be held in Granada (ES) and this will make a physical meeting in Brussels unfeasible this year in November. Consequently the participants have been consulted on whether to hold a second meeting later this year in an online or hybrid format, or to postpone it until next year. Participants supported the proposal to have a second meeting before the end of the year. It was widely agreed that a six-month interval is optimal to closely monitor upcoming changes, the rapid development of new tools, and the outcomes of ongoing pilot projects, such as the Sweden pilot on assisted data mapping and the pilot on the Minimal Excel Tool. Additionally, next meeting this year could be used to announce the priority substances list for the call for data, and to provide updates on the rebuild tools perceptions and on the efforts to simplify reporting for industry associations through new applications and AI integration. A specific question regarding the second meeting has been included in the post-meeting satisfaction survey to formally confirm the majority's preference. The upcoming meeting will be held online or in a hybrid format towards the end of the year, with a flexible duration tailored to the content of the final agenda.

EFSA concluded by thanking the presenters, the organizing teams, and the attendees in Parma, inviting all members to reply to the post-meeting survey, submit proposals for topics and presentations via email to co-design the next agenda together.