SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON FOOD ADDITIVES AND FLAVOURINGS (FAF)

66th FAF Panel meeting

30 June-2 July 2026
14:00-18:00 / 09:00-18:00 / 09:00-13:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 14 July 2026

Location: EFSA, Parma

Attendees:

- Panel Members onsite:
Monica Andreassen, Gabriele Aquilina, Maria Lourdes Bastos, Polly Boon, Laurence Castle, Biagio Fallico, Rex FitzGerald, María José Frutos Fernández, Ursula Gundert-Remy, Rainer Gürtler, Eric Houdeau, Marcin Andrzej Kurek, Patricia Morales, Sabina Passamonti

- Panel Members online:
Bettina Grasl-Kraupp, Henriqueta Louro

- Hearing Experts[1]:
Ellen Bruzell, Cristina Fortes

- European Commission:
Georgia Giannikou, Heidi Moens, Jiri Sochor

- EFSA:
Food Ingredients and Packaging (FIP) Unit: Fabio Alfieri, Simona Aprile, Stefania Barmaz, Costanza Bonnici, Valeriu Curtui, Maria Carfi, Samuele Di Ciano, Borana Dino, Federica Lodi, Carla Martino, Elena Mazzoli, Francesca Mercogliano, Davide Mesto, Paula Podea, Josef Rasinger, Ana Rincon and Camilla Smeraldi.

- Others: see Annex I for the list of Observers (participation on 1st and 2nd July)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants and the observers.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Panel members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence[2] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management[3], 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 the 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] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/independence-policy-2024.pdf
[3] 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 66th Panel plenary meeting held on 27-29 May 2026

The minutes of the 66th Panel plenary meeting were agreed on 29th May 2026.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion/adoption

5.1 Application for the modification of the food additive rebaudioside M E960c(ii) (EFSA-Q-2024-00293)

The FAF Panel discussed the draft opinion. The opinion was unanimously adopted, subject to the incorporation of changes as agreed during the meeting and editorial changes. The full text of the opinion will be available in the EFSA Journal.

6. OPEN SESSION – Welcome to Observers

The Chair welcomed the participants and the observers (see Annex I).

7. Panel members introduction

The Chair invited the Panel members to introduce themselves.

The Chair presented the agenda items covered during the Open plenary.

8. Presentation of Guidelines for observers

Observers were reminded about the code of conduct to be followed when attending the open plenary meeting.

9. Scientific outputs

9.1 Re-evaluation of E962 Salt of aspartame-acesulfame, 6-methyl-1,2,3-oxathiazine-4(3H)-one-2,2-dioxide salt of L-phenylalanyl-2-methyl-L-a-aspartic acid (EFSA-Q-2011-00727)

The FAF Panel discussed the draft opinion. The opinion was unanimously adopted, subject to the incorporation of changes as agreed during the meeting and editorial changes. The full text of the opinion will be available in the EFSA Journal.

10. Other scientific topics for information/discussion

10.1 Update on the re-evaluation of sweeteners

A presentation on the status of the remaining sweeteners to be re-assessed under the re-evaluation programme was given. The main features of the upcoming revised protocol on hazard identification and hazard characterization of sweeteners were also presented.

EFSA informed on the ongoing re-evaluation of polyols (with the exception of erythritol (E 968), which was re-evaluated in 2023). A tailored protocol for polyols is currently being prepared and is expected to be published for a short public consultation by the end of 2026.

The supporting presentation is available in *Annex II*.

10.2 Updated scientific opinion as regards the safety of talc (E 553b) as a food additive (EFSA-Q-2021-00560)

An update on progress in the characterisation of talc materials used as E 553b and on the data needed for the safety assessment was presented.

10.3 Update on the evaluation of new food additive applications submitted under Regulation (EC) No 1331/2008

An update on the planning of new food additive applications and the key challenges encountered during the risk assessment process was presented.

The supporting presentation is available in *Annex III*.

11. Update on new mandates

- **New questions received since the 66 FAF Plenary:**

The following mandates have been received

Food8f Sector	EFSA-Q-Number	Subject	Creation date
FA	EFSA-Q-2026-00325	Application for the authorisation of water soluble rosemary extract as a new food additive	15/06/2026
FA	EFSA-Q-2026-00354	Application for the authorisation of rebaudioside M produced by enzymatic conversion as a new food additive	26/06/2026

The new mandates EFSA-Q-2026-00325 and EFSA-Q-2026-00354 will be assigned to the FAF WG on Food Additives Applications.

- **Valid/accepted questions since the 66 FAF Plenary:**

The following mandates have been accepted for risk assessment by EFSA since the 66th FAF Plenary meeting.

Food Sector	EFSA-Q-Number	Subject	Validity date
FLV	EFSA-Q-2026-00312	Request for evaluation of flavouring substances FL No.: 12.009, 12.013, 12.020, 12.023, 12.045, 12.074, 12.155 and 12.280 from Flavouring Group Evaluation 74 (FGE.74)	12/06/2026
FA	EFSA-Q-2026-00089	Application for the extension of use of the food additive glycolipids (E 246)	5/06/2026

The mandate EFSA-Q-2026-00312 will be assigned to the FAF WG on Flavourings for the drafting of the scientific opinion and the mandate EFSA-Q-2026-00089 will be assigned to the FAF WG on Food Additives Applications.

- **Withdrawn questions since the 66 FAF Plenary:**

The following mandates have been withdrawn since the 66th FAF Plenary meeting

Food Sector	EFSA-Q-Number	Subject	Withdrawal date
FA	EFSA-Q-2024-00415	Application for the modification of the food additive E960c(i) to add Rebaudioside D	24/06/2026
FA	EFSA-Q-2024-00416	Application for the modification of the food additive E960c(i) to add Rebaudioside E	24/06/2026

12. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/ Scientific Panels/EFSA/ EC

12.1 Scientific Committee

Related to the Scientific Committee (SC), no plenary meeting took place since last FAF plenary meeting. The Chair of the FAF Panel informed about the topics to be discussed at the forthcoming SC meeting.

12.2 EFSA

The current workload of the FAF Panel was presented, covering all the sectors falling under its remit. The presentation included an update on the progress made in the re-evaluation of food additives and their follow-up, as well as an outlook on the possible upcoming assessments from the Panel.

The supporting presentation is available in *Annex IV*.

12.3 FAF Panel Working Groups

A meeting of the FAF Working Group (WG) on Flavourings took place since the last FAF plenary meeting and no issues were brought to the attention of the Panel further to what is already recorded in the **minutes of the WG.** The supporting presentation is available in *Annex V*

Meetings of the FAF WG on Food Additive Applications took place since the last FAF plenary meeting and no issues were brought to the attention of the Panel further to what is already recorded in the **minutes of the WG**.

Meetings of the FAF WG on Sweeteners took place since the last FAF plenary meeting and no issues were brought to the attention of the Panel further to what is already recorded in the **minutes of the WG**.

Meetings of the FAF WG on Food Additives Re-evaluation and Follow-up took place since the last FAF plenary meeting and no issues were brought to the attention of the Panel further to what is already recorded in the **minutes of the WG**. The supporting presentation is available in *Annex VI*

14.4 European Commission

None

13. Questions from and answers to Observers (in application of the guidelines for Observers)

Responses to the questions submitted during the registration and related to the scientific topics were provided at the end of each respective presentation (ppt), with the remaining questions addressed during the session allocated to this agenda item. Additional responses to oral and written questions raised during the discussions of the scientific topics were also provided

Questions (Qs) received from observers at registration and answers (As) provided are reported below:

Q1	As I am currently drafting my Master's thesis focusing on the regulatory ban of Bisphenol A (BPA) in FCMs —specifically examining the implementation of Commission Regulation (EU) 2024/3190—I am highly interested in observing how EFSA envisions the practical and international evolution of this landmark decision. In relation to my research, I would ask: How does EFSA view the current divergence between its updated Scientific Opinion on BPA and the risk assessment frameworks applied by other international bodies (e.g FDA or others)? What role can EFSA play in steering international alignment or addressing the challenges of fragmented global standards for food packaging exports? And how is monitored the safety of emerging alternatives?
A1	This question is considered outside the remit of the FAF Panel The Question can be submitted via EFSA's "Ask a Question" service
Q2	We are interested to know whether pending re-evaluation is currently expected to significantly impact on the timelines for the authorisation of sugar alcohols derived from a new manufacturing process.
A2	This was presented in agenda item 10.1
Q3	Could you provide an updated timeline for the re-evaluation of food additives for the 2026–27 period, as well as indicate whether and when calls for data are expected to be launched?
A3	This was presented in agenda item 12.3
Q4	*Innovative Approach for Controlling Black Rot of Persimmon Fruits by Means of Nanobiotechnology from Nanochitosan and Rosmarinic Acid-Mediated Selenium Nanoparticles.* *https://www.mdpi.com/2073-4360/14/10/2116*
A4	Title of a publication; it is not a question. The observer is one of the authors
Q5	Considering that the 2026 EFSA Guidance foresees an in-house dietary exposure assessment for sweeteners due to the absence of a publicly available exposure tool meeting EFSA's requirements, does the Panel foresee the development of such a tool or additional methodological guidance to support applicants in designing realistic use patterns and use levels? This would be particularly valuable for substances such as steviol glycosides, where

	recent EFSA assessments have already identified potential ADI exceedances in younger population groups.
A5	Exposure to sweeteners is calculated using a brand-loyal exposure scenario for consumers only. In addition, information on the foods recorded in the EFSA Comprehensive European Food Consumption Database, captured through facets, is used to identify the foods to be included in the assessment, namely those likely to contain the sweetener. For this type of assessment, consumers are first selected if they have consumed a food that could contain the food additive. Then, as part of the brand-loyal exposure scenario and at individual consumer level, the maximum concentration is assigned to foods belonging to the food category for which the consumer is assumed to be brand-loyal, while typical concentrations are assigned to other relevant foods. The currently available tools, FAIM and DietEx, allow one concentration value, i.e. maximum or typical, to be applied per food category across all individuals, but not at individual consumer level. Furthermore, these tools do not allow the selection of relevant foods within a food category based on facet information. Therefore, this type of exposure assessment cannot currently be performed using these tools. EFSA continues to develop and update its exposure assessment methods and tools. For example, the option to assess exposure for consumers only has recently been implemented in FAIM. However, because of the complexity of sweetener exposure assessments, particularly the selection of relevant foods based on facet information, it is currently not feasible to update the available tools so that they can also be used to calculate exposure to sweeteners. Applicants may use conservative assumptions, such as maximum proposed use levels across relevant food categories, to support a screening comparison with the ADI. It should be noted, however, that EFSA's internal assessment will form the basis for the regulatory evaluation.

Questions raised during the discussions of the scientific topics:

Q1	**Should we expect an update of the erythritol opinion in the light of the new "under development" protocol (together with new use levels data)?**
A1	**[Reply provided after the ppt agenda item 10.1]** The re-evaluation of erythritol (E 968) was completed in 2023, and an ADI of 0.5 g/kg bw per day was established. In that opinion, the Panel recommended that the European Commission request more detailed occurrence data (use levels and analytical data) and label information, in order to be able to refine the exposure assessment. Therefore, a follow-up mandate to EFSA may be expected once the exposure data requested through EFSA's call https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/call/open-call-food-additives-analytical-data-and-use-levels-food-and-beverages-intended-human become available. The tailored protocol for polyols which is currently under development will not trigger an update of the scientific opinion on erythritol adopted in 2023. Only the exposure assessment will be refined, based on the updated use levels and analytical data requested in this latest call for data.
Q2	**Can you provide an estimated timeline for polyols opinions publication**
A2	**[Reply provided after the ppt agenda item 10.1]** At this stage, it is not possible to provide a precise estimated timeline for publication of the opinions on the six remaining polyols. The tailored protocol is expected to be finalised in 2026 and, accordingly, the

	drafting of the scientific assessments, including the technical, exposure and toxicological assessment, will continue during 2027.
Q3	**Would xylitol be prioritized?**
A3	**[Reply provided after the ppt agenda item 10.1]** As a general rule, when new food additive applications are submitted for changes to the currently permitted uses of already authorised food additives that are still subject to re-evaluation (under Regulation (EU) No 257/2010) or follow-up re-evaluation, the opinion on the new application is handled jointly with the re-evaluation assessment. This applies both to changes to permitted uses and to changes to the manufacturing process, such as the new mandate on xylitol (E 967) presented under agenda item 13. This is taken into consideration when deciding priorities for the re-evaluation.
Q4	**Is Zinc Acetate also included in this batch (presented on slide 10)?**
A4	**[Reply provided in the chat]** Yes, zinc acetate (E 650) is included in the EFSA call https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/call/open-call-food-additives-analytical-data-and-use-levels-food-and-beverages-intended-human together with the other acetate food additives
Q5	**Hello. I have a question regarding to what extent the assessment will be impacted by the proposed classification as Category 1B carcinogen? Would this classification not trigger automatic restrictions for the use as a food additive? Thank you**
A5	**[Reply provided after the ppt agenda item 10.2]** The proposed classification as Category 1B carcinogen, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 (the CLP Regulation), does not have any direct implications for the use of talc (E 553b) as a food additive. Talc (E 553b) is an authorised additive in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008, and the assessments of EFSA represent the reference for the food additive authorisation. Nevertheless, Regulation (EC) No 1907/2007 (the REACH Regulation), does have direct implications as regards restrictions applicable to substances and mixtures, including food additives, which meet the criteria for classification as carcinogen, mutagen or reproductive toxicant (CMR) Category 1A or B. The CLP Regulation thus triggers the REACH restrictions banning the sale of CMR Category 1A or B substances to the general public provided no derogation to these restrictions (e.g. for the specific authorised food additive uses) is introduced. The threshold is 0.1% of talc as a constituent to another substance or in a mixture. The CLP classification of talc, within Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008, has not been adopted yet.
Q6	**Good morning. Please can I ask if there is an expectation for Histopathology to be performed on all dose groups tested for nanoparticles (to be applied in food) in general, or is this specific to talc?**
A6	**[Reply provided after the ppt agenda item 10.2]** For non-particulate materials, in the absence of adverse effects, histopathological examination is generally performed in the control and highest dose groups. However, considering the potential for atypical dose–response relationships associated with small particles, including nanoparticles, examination of at least the lowest and highest dose groups is recommended. Examination of the mid-dose groups is preferable to facilitate a more robust interpretation of dose–response relationships

Q7	**Has this publication been taken into account? Genotoxicity evaluation of kaurenoic acid oxicol Rep. 2025 Oct 16;15:102144. doi: 10.1016/j.toxrep.2025.102144**
A7	**[Reply provided after the ppt agenda item 10.3]** The FAF Panel thanked the observer for sharing the publication. Kaurenoic acid is considered to be of concern for in vivo genotoxicity. The TTC approach was used to assess whether the presence of kaurenoic acid as an impurity in food additives could raise a health concern. *As a post meeting note*: EFSA would like to comment that the publication refers to in vitro tests and negative results in an in vitro genotoxicity test do not rule out a concern identified in an in vivo test (EFSA SC guidance 2011).
Q8	**Thank you for your explanations. Regarding glutamates, you said that it was put slightly on hold. Is it likely that the current assessment timeline as indicated in Open EFSA will be still be met?**
A8	**[Reply provided after the ppt agenda item 12.3]** The assessment of the safety of glutamic acid (E 620), sodium glutamate (E 621), potassium glutamate (E 622), calcium glutamate (E 623), ammonium glutamate (E 624) and magnesium glutamate (E 625) as food additives **(EFSA-Q-2024-00397**) was put on hold because resources were allocated to other higher-priority assessments. EFSA will resume this assessment, and the deadline for its finalisation, currently indicated as November 2026, will be renegotiated with the European Commission. The assessment requires an update of the dietary exposure assessment, including all dietary sources, as well as an update of the safety assessment.

14. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 17-18 September 2026, via teleconference.

Annex I List of Observers

Online:

A total of 37 observers attended the meeting (out of 66 registered observers)

	Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
1	Alquati	Eleonora	Coabisco
2	Arapahni	Sita Jumatin	Asli labs
3	Avalos Clerici	Veronica	Aulss6 Euganea
4	Bercovici	Charlotte Marie	EU Specialty Food Ingredients
5	Borello	Luisa	knoell
6	Cappa	Carola	Università degli Studi di Milano
7	Chappuis	Eric	cargill
8	Cluzelle	Cécile	Synpa - the French specialty food ingredients association
9	Cogalniceanu	Elena	EAS strategies
10	Collopy	Patrick	Chromologics
11	Darr Lavi	Jonatan	Ministry of health
12	De'Rosa	Santino	Labcorp
13	Elbasyouny	Malk	National Food Safety Authority
14	Franzen	Allison	ToxStrategies, LLC
15	Galante	Joana	University of Lisbon (last affiliation)
16	Geiser	Stefanie	EAS Strategies
17	Guder	Tina	Ajinomoto Foods Europe SAS
18	Haskin	Joseph	MOH
19	Kaumbuthu	Karen	KENAFF
20	Khan	Tahmina	FSA (Food Standards Agency)
21	Latino	Alessio	Perfetti van Melle SpA
22	Leprêtre	Christophe	ICGA-Europe
23	Marigliano	Lucile	JRS Rettenmaier France
24	Mensik	Petr	EPA, European Association of Polyol Producers
25	Oger	Laurent	International Sweeteners Association
26	OHagan	Sue	PepsiCo International
27	Panchal	Bhupesh	Mars Wrigley
28	Pappalardo	Simona	Perfetti Van Melle
29	Post	Jan Dirk	Coca-Cola GmbH
30	Rey	Caroline	EU Specialty Food Ingredients
31	Ronsmans	Stefan	Coca - Cola Services
32	Rosario	Sara	Rosapharma Consulting
33	Shaheen	Muhammad Saqib	Punjab Food Authority, Lahore Pakistan
34	Silva	Andre	Merck
35	Sparans	Mihail	Unil AS
36	Vladas	Cinga	Pen & Tec Consulting SLU (Argenta Barcelona)
37	Woods	Ian	Labcorp

Onsite:

A total of 6 observers attended the meeting (out of 9 registered observers)

No.	Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
1	Bravo	David	Coabisco
2	Jaskolska	Joanna	International Sweeteners Association
3	Kalantari	Ghazal	University of parma
4	Piffanelli	Pietro	Business Development Director Europe
5	Shariati	Fatemeh	University of Parma
6	Zaoui	Xavier	JRC

ANNEX II Update on the re-evaluation of sweeteners

ANNEX III Update on the evaluation of new food additive applications submitted under Regulation (EC) No 1331/2008

ANNEX IV FAF Workprogramme 2026-2027

ANNEX V Update on FAF Working Group (WG) on Flavourings

ANNEX VI Update on FAF WG on Food Additives Re-evaluation and Follow-up