

9 - 10 July 2026

09:00-17:00 / 09:00-12:30

MINUTES - Agreed on 24 July 2026

Location: Parma and teleconference

Attendees:

o Panel Members:

Ana Allende, Avelino Alvarez-Ordóñez, Bojan Blagojevic, 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:

Paolo Caricato (DG SANTE, item 6.7)

o EFSA:

BIOHAZ Unit: Sandra Correia, Beatriz Guerra, Ernesto Liebana, Winy Messens, Valentina Rizzi, Eleonora Sarno, Pietro Stella, Natisha Vawani, Frank Verdonck, Anna Zdanowicz

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants, and in particular the new BIOHAZ Panel member Bojan Blagojevic, recently nominated by the EFSA Management Committee. Apologies were received from Maarten Nauta and Fernando Pérez-Rodríguez.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

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 186th BIOHAZ Panel Plenary meeting held on 3 and 4 June 2026, via teleconference

The minutes of the 186th Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 18 June 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. 25: Suitability of taxonomic units notified to EFSA until September 2026 ([EFSA-Q-2025-00687](#))

The last working group (WG) meeting was held on 11 June. A total of 9 notifications were received between April and May 2026, which add to the pending 4 notifications for bacteriophages received in the past. Of these 13 notifications, 4 were proposed for use in feed, 2 as food enzymes, food additives and flavourings, 4 as novel foods and 3 as plant protection products. 7 notifications were related to microorganisms generally excluded from QPS evaluation, 6 have the QPS status. Of the remaining 6 notifications corresponding to 8 taxonomic units (TUs), none 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: Bacteriophages against *Clavibacter michiganensis* subsp. *michiganensis* (BACMM), Bacteriophages against *Erwinia amylovora* (BAEA), Bacteriophage against Walnut *Xanthomonas arboricola* pv. *Juglandis*, Pecentumvirus P100, *Tetrademus obliquus* (microalgae) and *Weissella cibaria* (bacteria). The deadline for adoption of the next Panel statement is 31 December 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 11 June, and the next meeting is scheduled on 24 September 2026. The follow up of the new challenges for this new three-years cycle was discussed 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

EFSA informed the Panel on the update of the Framework Partnership Agreement for the EFSA-funded Carba-R-ales project (CPEs in the EU/EFTA food Chain, ToR2 of the BIOHAZ Panel Mandate), with three Institutions from new countries joining. The project runs until mid of 2027. Generated data will be used for the update of the CPE in the food chain scientific opinion Part 1⁵.

⁵ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2025.9336>



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](#))

In the absence of the WG Chair, the EFSA staff and Ana Allende provided an update of the work, as discussed at the WG meeting on 4 and 5 June. The sections dealing with SQ1.1 to 1.5 were presented for thorough review. Minor comments were discussed in the section dealing with the list of unprocessed fresh FVH commodities to be assessed in this mandate (subquestion (SQ) 1.1.). The section on SQ 1.2. (possible packaging units and packaging materials for the selected commodities) was significantly improved. Most comments were addressed in the section on SQ 1.3 (related handling scenarios across the supply chain). The text related to the most relevant foodborne pathogens to be applied across FVH commodities (SQ 1.4) and of spoilage microorganisms that were found to be associated with each group of unprocessed fresh FVH commodities (SQ 1.5) was agreed. The narrative approach to deal with SQ 1.6 (potential impact of alternative packaging units and bulk handling compared with plastic packaging units on growth/survival of selected pathogens and spoilage microorganisms or cross-contamination) was presented. The Panel commented to try and express the uncertainty in the conclusions. The next WG meeting will take place on 13 July 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 of this mandate and on the outcome of the WG meeting held on 18 June 2026. The WG chair presented the interim results of the screening of scientific literature, identification of grey literature, extraction of information from the screened scientific papers through artificial intelligence (AI), and its subsequent review and validation by the WG. Results from a trial to synthesise the validated information with the support of AI tools was presented. The WG is collaborating with EFSA social scientists in drafting an interview guide to support interviews with selected EU stakeholders aimed at gathering relevant information on the promotion and implementation of food safety culture in food business operators. A preliminary structure of the draft scientific opinion (part 1) was presented to the Panel, together with preliminary indications on the expected length of the different sections. The next WG meeting will take place on 24 and 25 August 2026. 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) and will contribute to the related issues within the One Health aspect (ToR1). The last specific meeting for the SubWG-BIOHAZ was held on 2 July 2026 (an additional preparatory meeting will take place on 15 July). The questions and draft answers received from the targeted consultation of the WG draft protocol for this opinion were presented to the BIOHAZ Panel. Full-text screening of the BIOHAZ scientific literature has been finalized, so that data extraction will begin. The next meeting of the subWG-BIOHAZ together with the full WG will be on 22-23 September 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 fourth WG meeting took place on 23 and 25 June 2026. The WG Chair presented updates for each of the assessment questions. He clarified that the assessment will only consider cold smoked fish not containing preservatives and that the type of smoking will not be



distinguished. The remaining comments made at the previous plenary meeting were addressed. The updated data on the intrinsic factors were presented as well as the effect of freezing/stiffening on intrinsic factors based on biological reasoning and experimental studies. The first results of the heat transfer model to simulate temperature evolution during stiffening, freezing, and thawing, and distinguishing between surface and core were shown. The Panel agreed that the pathogenic hazard relevant for growth assessment is *Listeria monocytogenes*, while the relevant spoilage microorganisms are lactic acid bacteria and *Serratia* spp. The model was updated as more data were extracted on the effect of prior freezing stress on the physiological state of *Listeria monocytogenes*, expressed through the parameter h_0 . It was noted that the practical impact of lag phase on the final conclusions may be limited because the additional drivers of risk are cells introduced after processing and matrix effects. The next WG meeting will be held on 15 and 17 July 2026. 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 131st Plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC)⁶, that took place on 7 and 8 July 2026.

8.2. European Commission

A brief update was given by EFSA staff in relation to possible topics for future EC mandates to EFSA in the area of biological hazards.

8.3. Scientific Network on Microbiological Risk Assessment

The 27th MRA Network Meeting was held on 10–11 June 2026 in Parma, with representatives from 25 Member States and Norway, as well as six observer countries. The meeting covered approaches to ranking microbiological and chemical hazards according to public health burden, including Anses' "PrioR" tool, advanced quantitative microbiological risk assessment modelling for raw milk cheeses, and the use of whole-genome sequencing combined with machine learning to support source attribution in *Listeria* outbreaks. In addition, studies on risks associated with plant-based dairy, meat and fish substitutes were presented, including a Tailor-made activity involving 15 Member States. Several *Salmonella*-related topics were presented, including Norwegian data supporting a possible extension of egg shelf-life beyond the EU's 28-day limit under national conditions; findings on *Salmonella* Enteritidis in laying hens and humans in the Netherlands; and Belgian studies suggesting that *Salmonella* biofilms may contribute to chronic gut colonisation in pigs, as well as evaluating tool disinfection methods in slaughterhouses. Minutes are published on EFSA website.⁷

⁶ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/131st-plenary-meeting-scientific-committee>

⁷ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/27th-meeting-efsa-network-microbiological-risk-assessment>



8.4. CarbaCamp : Assessment of phenotypic carbapenem susceptibility and genomic epidemiology of *Campylobacter* from animal, food and human domains – results from an EFSA Grant

Elisabeth Dohmann Chang (DTU) presented the outcome of the EFSA-funded CarbaCamp Grant. The project aimed at determining: i) the wild-type distribution between *C. jejuni* and *C. coli* as well as between the four animal domains of broilers (meat and caeca (turkey caeca)), pig and pork, cattle and beef, as well as in humans by disk diffusion (DD) and MIC determination; ii) ECOFF values for ertapenem, imipenem and meropenem for DD and MIC determination; iii) the comparability between the EUCAST and CLSI recommended media for MIC determination of *Campylobacter*; iv) which of ertapenem, imipenem and meropenem would be most suitable for the monitoring of *Campylobacter*; v) the genomic diversity (clustering) of susceptible and non-susceptible *C. jejuni* and *C. coli* across the different animal species and humans in EU; and vi) to investigate potential resistance mechanism conferring non-susceptibility to carbapenems as well as the role of *bla_{OXA}* genes observed in *Campylobacter*. The report of the project is published on EFSA website.⁸

8.5. Rapid Outbreak Assessments and related activities

EFSA staff from the BIOHAW Unit presented the published reports on a Multi-country outbreak of *Salmonella* Stanley ST2045 infections linked to consumption of flavoured noodle products⁹, and on a Multi-country outbreak of *Salmonella* Bovismorbificans ST377 linked to the consumption of alfalfa sprouted seeds¹⁰. The event backgrounds were followed by a description of the food investigations and the joints EFSA-ECDC assessment.

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.

10. AOB

EFSA staff reminded the Panel of the ongoing mutual feedback exercise, with EFSA providing feedback to Panel members between July and September 2026.

EFSA staff and the Panel Chair shared some information with the Panel about practical arrangements for attendance of the next BIOHAZ Panel Plenary meeting.

11. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 16 and 17 September 2026, in Gijón (Spain).

⁸ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.2903/sp.efsa.2026.EN-10100>

⁹ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2026.10237>

¹⁰ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2026.10220>