

FOOD CONSUMPTION DATA NETWORK

Minutes of the 18th meeting



29-30 September 2026

09:30-18:00 / 09:00-18:00

Minutes agreed on 21 October 2026

Location: EFSA - Parma (Boardroom)/ Webconference

Attendees:

- o Network Participants:

Country	Member State Organisation
Austria	Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety
Belgium	Sciensano
Bulgaria	National Centre of Public Health and Analyses; Risk Assessment Center on Food Chain
Croatia	Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food
Cyprus	Ministry of Health
Czechia	National Institute of Public Health
Denmark	Technical University of Denmark
Estonia	National Institute for Health Development
Finland	Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
France	French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES)
Germany	Max Rubner Institut – Federal Research Institute of Nutrition and Food
Greece	Hellenic Food Authority
Hungary	University of Veterinary Medicine Budapest
Ireland	University College Dublin
Italy	Council for Agricultural Research and Economics
Latvia	Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment
Lithuania	Institute of Hygiene
Luxembourg	Luxembourg Veterinary and Food Administration
Malta	Food Safety and Security Authority
Netherlands	National Institute of Public Health and the Environment
Norway	Norwegian Scientific Committee of Food and Environment
Poland	National Institute of Public Health NIH - National Research Institute
Portugal	University of Porto (on behalf of the Portuguese Economic and Food Safety Authority); National Institute of Health Doutor Ricardo Jorge
Romania	National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority
Slovenia	National Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Slovenia
Spain	Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition; Complutense University of Madrid
Sweden	Swedish Food Agency



- Observers:
Swiss Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (Switzerland); Food and Veterinary Agency (Kosovo); Food and Veterinary Agency (North Macedonia); Centre of Research Excellence in Nutrition and Metabolism, Institute for Medical Research, University of Belgrade (Serbia); Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Turkey)
- Hearing Experts:
Members of the Working Group on EU Menu Guidance update. The Working Group composition is available [online](#).
- EU Agencies representatives/International Organisations:
DG Joint Research Centre (JRC); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- EFSA:
iDATA Unit: Andreia Lopes (AL), chair; Fabrizio Abbinante (FA); Sofia Ioannidou (SI); Martina Pavlic (MP); Evelina Vlachogianni (EV); Alicia Gutierrez (AG); Stefania Salvatore (SS); Androniki Naska (AN); Agathi Ntzouvani (AN); Krystalia Niforou (KN); Nikolaos Koffas (NK); Petros Tzavellas (PT).
MESE Unit: Bruno Dujardin (BD); Rita Ferreira de Sousa (RF); Zsuzsanna Horvath (ZH).

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Austria, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands and Slovakia.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Food Consumption data at EFSA – updates

Evelina Vlachogianni (EV) presented the updates on EFSA food consumption data and the Comprehensive Food Consumption Database over the past year. The presentation started with an overview of the Comprehensive database according to its latest release (December 2024) and a description of its use from EFSA and the public. EFSA is currently processing six additional national surveys to fill data gaps. The presentation also highlighted the completed and ongoing FoodEx2 codes quality improvements, including the correction of outdated or incorrect codes, missing facets and consumption data inconsistencies. The next database release is planned for December 2026.

4. RPC model update: supporting flexible use of food consumption data across risk assessment domains

The Raw Primary Commodity (RPC) model converts foods as consumed into RPC equivalents, improving the linkage between consumption and occurrence data. RPC 2.0 incorporates new surveys from the EFSA Comprehensive Database and fully uses the FoodEx2 classification system. The model follows five steps: cleansing and allocating FoodEx2 codes; assigning generic foods to specific foods using reporting frequencies; disaggregating composite foods using recipes and product labels; and applying reverse yield factors to convert derivatives, such as orange juice, into their RPC equivalents, oranges. The resulting database maintains links between foods as



consumed, ingredients and RPCs, while improving flexibility, traceability and maintenance.

Croatia (CR) asked whether country-specific recipes were included. Rita Ferreira (RF) explained that this would add excessive complexity; the model currently focuses on disaggregating commercial products and foods not usually disaggregated nationally, such as cakes, although country-specific recipes could be explored in future.

Norway (NO) asked how probability assumptions and yield factors might affect exposure estimates, especially for high consumers. RF explained that exclusions are assessed case by case, alternative probabilities are used where needed, yield factors cover only food-weight changes, and sensitivity analyses are planned for future updates.

5. EU FCDB – Food Composition Project

Alicia Gutierrez (AG) presented the open-access EU Food Composition Database, which harmonises national data to support cross-country comparisons and reuse in research, dietary assessment and policymaking. Using a common model with around 160 variables, eight linked tables, controlled terminology and quality checks, the database brings together data from 16 countries: approximately 25,200 foods, 413 components and 1.6 million results, with supporting documentation. The public dashboard allows users to explore and compare data, inspect original datasets and export harmonised outputs using filters. Participants were invited to suggest improvements and missing features by the end of October.

NO asked whether collecting raw analytical data from organisations other than national database compilers could create discrepancies. AG explained that the same data model and submission process would apply, with raw rather than aggregated data collected, while maintaining harmonised European sources.

Netherlands (NL) asked how new data collections would be prioritised and whether the budget was per country. AG clarified that the budget covers the overall call and priorities will reflect user feedback and gaps in components and geographical coverage.

6. New FAO food composition website

FAO presented the new Food Composition website and updated FAO/INFOODS global directory of food composition tables and databases (FCTs). The user-friendly platform improves access to harmonised food composition data, tools, training and technical guidance. The updated directory contains over 300 records from more than 100 countries, with metadata and, for selected FCTs, results of a quality assessment based on the FAO/INFOODS Evaluation Framework. The review found improved global data availability but identified gaps in accessibility, documentation, descriptions, publication formats and update frequency. The directory is available at <https://www.fao.org/food-composition>.

Luxembourg (LU) asked how the FAO resource differs from EFSA's database. FAO explained that it provides a global directory of existing food composition tables including bibliographical information, links and selected quality assessment results, and selected quality assessments, while EFSA contains harmonised European data; the two are complementary.



AL asked about expanding FoodEx2 coding. FAO highlighted the need for awareness, training and capacity building to ensure consistency and noted that FAO is moving towards coding new food composition tables before publication.

7. National Youth Nutrition Survey (NRT) 2024-2025 in Finland

Finland (FI) presented the National Youth Nutrition Survey, conducted in 2024–2025 among 1,975 people aged 12–20. Using two 24-hour recalls, questionnaires, measurements and biomarker samples from a subsample, it covered diet, lifestyle, sustainable eating and food environments. A supplementary survey included 124 vulnerable young people, while new assessment tools and monitoring infrastructure were also developed. Preliminary results show low consumption of vegetables, fruits and berries, and high red-meat intake, particularly among boys, with differences by sex and education. Energy-drink use was common, and some participants exceeded safe caffeine levels. The findings will inform nutrition monitoring, policy and healthier, more sustainable diets.

Latvia (LA) asked whether blood sampling affected participation and when results would be available. FI said its limited regional scope made an overall impact unlikely, willingness to participate was higher than expected, and results are due next spring.

Greece (GR) asked about costs and implementation challenges. FI said costs could not be disclosed because funding came from several sources and identified school recruitment and unsuitable interview facilities as the main challenges.

NO asked about analyses by parental education and migrant background. FI confirmed that both variables were collected, but analyses are ongoing.

LU asked about the absence of summer collection. FI noted possible effects on seasonal foods, particularly berries, but explained that school-based collection was not feasible during summer.

8. Report on the national surveys on dietary habits (DANSDA)

DK presented the Danish national survey on diet and physical activity. Most Danes do not meet dietary guidelines, consuming too much meat, sweets and snacks and too little fruit, vegetables and pulses. Compared with previous surveys, fruit consumption declined and intake of sweets and sugar-rich foods increased, while pulses remained well below recommendations despite some improvement. Nutrient inadequacies were identified particularly among adolescents and women, alongside widespread supplement use. Overall, healthier and more sustainable diets remain a challenge.

NO asked about recording fatigue and declining response rates. DK reported no substantial fatigue, although intake differed between weekdays and weekends, and noted broader recruitment difficulties.

NL asked when records were completed and how supplement use was assessed. DK said records were generally completed in the evening, while supplement data—including brand, dose, strength and package photographs—were captured through the habitual questionnaire and weekly record.



Portugal (PT) asked about the survey sequence and validity criteria. DK explained that a home visit covered instructions, measurements and an interview, and that valid data required at least four recording days: three weekdays and one weekend day.

Switzerland (CH) asked which nitrogen conversion factor was used for protein intake; the standard factor of 6.25 was considered most likely.

EFSA asked about fortification policies for low vitamin intakes. DK said vitamins D and B12 are regularly discussed, but no policy has been adopted, partly due to concerns about excessive intake.

9. 2026 update of the Dutch Wheel of Five

NL presented the 2026 update of the Dutch Wheel of Five, the NL Nutrition Centre's guideline for healthy, sustainable and safe eating, developed with RIVM. The process defined the target population and nutritional and sustainability requirements, prepared the necessary data, used optimisation modelling to develop compliant diets, and translated the results into practical advice and communication tools. As a fully science-based solution was not possible, transparency and stakeholder support were essential, together with high-quality data on food composition, life-cycle analyses, contaminants, consumption and reference values. Compared with 2016, the updated diet is more sustainable, mainly due to a shift from animal- to plant-based protein sources.

A question followed by DK about the status of the NL Nutrition Centre. NL explained that it is a foundation commissioned by government ministries.

GR asked how dairy and meat alternatives were defined. NL clarified that no legal definitions were used; products were classified based on expert judgement and nutrient criteria.

Furthermore, PT asked about the less-bread dietary pattern and contaminant selection. NL explained that the pattern addressed low-carbohydrate and non-traditional eating habits (Dutch bread-based lunch), while contaminants were selected based on previous exposure assessments.

EFSA asked whether limited consumer data affected the modelling and requested a list of meat and dairy alternatives to support FoodEx2 development. NL explained that alternative assumptions were used where data were insufficient and confirmed that a product list could be shared.

A final question from NO concerned the high consumption of foods outside the Wheel of Five. NL clarified that this included sugary drinks, sweets and high-salt sauces.

10. Adapting Intake24 to National Contexts

Belgium (BE) presented its transition to a self-administered online approach for future national food consumption surveys, prompted by operational challenges, changing participant expectations and limitations of the previous software, while LU is preparing its first EU Menu-compliant survey. To meet their shared needs, Sciensano and its partners are adapting the French version of Intake24 developed by ANSES for both countries, while retaining national food and recipe databases. Development covers national food lists, facets and descriptors, quantification methods, food-composition links, multilingual versions, barcode scanning and



integration with Open Food Facts. National collaboration with universities and dietetics/nutrition sciences schools supports database development and testing, while cooperation among countries using Intake24 enables exchange of experience and best practices, greater harmonisation, pooled resources and joint development of functions for future EU Menu surveys.

Latvia (LV) asked whether supermarkets had authorised the planned barcode-scanning activities. BE explained that permission would be requested as part of the Open Food Facts.

PT then questioned how countries could join the collaboration and whether Intake24 would combine a common structure with country-specific food lists and recipes. BE clarified that the current focus is on exchanging information, coordinating future developments and avoiding incompatible national versions.

CH asked about FoodEx2 coding. It was explained that Intake24 does not currently support dynamic FoodEx2 coding; while base terms may be linked within the tool, facets would likely need to be assigned post-collection, potentially through automated or AI-supported approaches.

LU asked why GloboDiet was not retained and whether EFSA could take a stronger coordinating role. EFSA explained that it aims to define harmonised software requirements rather than prescribe a specific tool and recommend one software solution.

11. National survey of in-school snack consumption and factors influencing food choices among secondary school students in Greece

GR presented the protocol for a national survey on in-school snack consumption and food-choice drivers among secondary school students, developed in response to high childhood overweight and obesity rates and limited national data on eating during school hours. Despite resource constraints and complex school approvals, the survey will examine food availability, peer influence, food insecurity, stress and anxiety, and nutrition knowledge. A stratified, multi-stage cluster sample across 503 schools will complete an online self-administered questionnaire covering these factors, demographics and snack consumption patterns. A pilot with 192 students confirmed feasibility, and data collection is planned for autumn 2026. The study will provide the first national evidence on school snacking, inform revisions to school-canteen regulations and establish a baseline for evaluating awareness campaigns.

PT questioned about the possibility of extraction of this information on snacks consumption from the already available Greek National Dietary Survey. GR explained that these data were used, together with evidence from the literature and national legislation on school-canteen foods, to develop the qualitative FFQ.

12. New projects in EFSA

12.1 EU Menu round 2

Evelina Vlachogianni (EV) presented the roadmap and main features of the EU Menu Round 2 call, which builds on the work of ERA EU Menu project, the 2024 Task Force, the SMART EU Menu project, and Working Group on update of Guidance on EU Menu methodology with the updated Guidance and the call launching in early 2027. The



call will support national dietary surveys conducted in line with the revised EU Menu methodology, with an annual budget of €1.5 million, and contracts lasting up to 42 months. All EU Member States will be eligible, and the increased funding reflects requirements for larger samples, higher-quality data and the collection of Food Propensity Questionnaire (FPQ) data. Interested countries were encouraged to monitor EFSA's calls, review the eligibility criteria and align planned surveys with the updated guidance.

12.2 Composition data gaps

Andreia Lopes (AL) presented EFSA's planned follow-up call for 2027 to keep the European Food Composition Database aligned with changes in the food supply resulting from reformulation, fortification and production practices, while incorporating advances in analytical methods. The current database harmonises FoodEx2-mapped data from 16 countries through a common EFSA data model and makes them publicly available. The new 18-month project, with a budget of €300,000, will engage national experts to identify priority gaps in component and country coverage, generate new analytical values and provide raw data in line with EFSA's data model. The expected outcome is broader and more up-to-date coverage to support research and EFSA risk assessments.

12.3 Exposure from food supplements

Martina Pavlic (MP) presented an EFSA project addressing gaps in harmonised data for assessing exposure to nutrients and food additives from food supplements. The project will develop a standardised food-frequency questionnaire collecting information on supplement type, frequency, dose, seasonal use, product name, brand and relevant health characteristics, alongside a label database containing information on brands, product types, forms, composition and intended uses. Case studies will then evaluate how these two data sources can improve exposure estimates and inform recommendations for expanding the approach across Europe and integrating it into existing EFSA processes. The pilot survey and label database are expected to start in 2027; the call for the label database and case studies is planned for the first quarter of 2027.

12.4 Partnership for exposure

Bruno Dujardin (BD) presented a proposal for a new partnership model on dietary exposure assessment. Exposure assessments in EFSA are largely conducted in-house due to their technical complexity, the need for direct access to EFSA's data warehouse, and the requirement for specialised methodological expertise. Furthermore, formal training opportunities in this area remain limited across Europe, due to its inherent multidisciplinary nature, while there is a growing interest from MSs in building capacity. In this context, EFSA proposed piloting a partnership with a single MS or EEA organisation through the secondment of an expert, who would split their time between contributing to EFSA's exposure assessments and supporting capacity building activities in their home organisation. In a second phase, the partnership will also require support on the implementation of methodological developments. The call for proposals is expected to be launched in November 2026.

Following EFSA's presentations, NL raised concerns about potential inconsistencies if data were generated by organisations other than national food composition database compilers. AL explained that all submissions would follow the same harmonised



model based on raw data and could involve different types of organisations, provided data consistency is ensured.

CR asked how gaps would be prioritised and whether the €300,000 budget was per country. AL clarified that priorities would be based on countries' feedback on missing components or geographical coverage, and that the total budget would be shared among successful applicants.

PT asked whether the food supplements project would be integrated into national dietary surveys and whether existing national data could be reused. SI and BD explained that it is a separate methodological pilot intended to collect current and harmonised data linked to an up-to-date label database; older data may be reconsidered later once the new methodology has been tested.

Finally, a question asked whether EFSA or the partner organisation would cover 80–90% of the exposure-partnership costs, and BD confirmed that these costs would be funded by EFSA.

13. Advice for EU Menu 2: conclusions and recommendations from the SMART EU Menu project

The SMART EU Menu consortium summarised its findings and evidence-based advice for revising the EFSA EU Menu Guidance and preparing EU Menu 2. FoodEx2 analyses and input from 38 experts in 19 countries showed that just 48.8% of base terms had been used as basic codes in EU Menu datasets. This pointed to opportunities to remove redundancy, resolve unused or duplicate nodes and better handle details embedded in “with ingredient” terms. The consortium advised keeping FoodEx2 as the reference classification and testing the proposed simplifications before implementation. A Facet Compendium, practical coding guidance and revised business rules would support coding consistency, validation, interoperability and traceability. Evidence from earlier EU Menu FPQs, expert input and empirical analysis also supported a harmonised Central FPQ as a brief, non-quantitative addition to repeated 24-hour recalls or dietary records. Its design comprises harmonised core food and supplement lists, common wording, frequency categories and reference periods, predefined modules for specific population groups, and limited national adaptation only when analytically justified and without repeating core items. The proposed final data model requires FoodEx2 mapping before submission to EFSA. For future EU surveys, the consortium also recommended updated age-specific methods for self- and interviewer-administered dietary assessment, together with new and revised software specifications. Expert consultation and a literature review additionally informed an assessment of gaps in nine dietary assessment tools against those specifications and a protocol for conducting a national survey with a self-administered tool. Overall, the revised guidance is intended to facilitate implementation and introduces improvements rather than fundamental changes.

After the presentation, NO discussed the potential for biased dietary reporting when parents or caretakers are involved, particularly for older children. SMART consortium acknowledged this risk but noted that parental input remains valuable for home-prepared foods. Independent reporting from the age of 16 was suggested.

FAO also asked about the future use of GloboDiet. SMART consortium noted that the software is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain due to its outdated technology, while SI indicated that WHO is unlikely to continue developing new features or



updates. Limitations in adapting the tool to country-specific needs were also highlighted.

FI noted that while several Nordic countries already have national tools, a common European approach could enhance harmonisation. The flexibility of the SMART EU Menu recommendations was welcomed, recognising that a single tool may not yet be feasible across all countries.

14. Welcome back and Apologies for Absence

The Chair provided an overview of the timeline for the publication of the EU Menu Guidance and briefly introduced the key points to be discussed on the second day of the meeting.

15. EU Menu Guidance 2026 (Sections 2 & 3)

Working group for the update of the EU MENU guidance (WG) presented the revised structure of the EU Menu Guidance and the recommendations for Sections 2 and 3. The revised guidance places the scientific background before the recommendations, integrates quality assurance indicators and actions throughout the sections, and links each section to supporting annexes and appendices.

Section 2 covers the organisation and planning of national dietary surveys, including survey coordination, staff training, pilot work, ethics, data protection and quality assurance.

PT requested more practical guidance on monitoring and supervising interviewers, including examples of preliminary analyses and links to relevant quality indicators. WG agreed that practical examples and clearer links to quality indicators should be added.

The possibility of a more user-friendly online presentation of the guidance was also supported by NL.

DK asked for a clearer distinction between recommendations in the Guidance and mandatory requirements for EFSA-funded surveys. SI clarified that the Guidance provides recommendations, whereas minimum requirements will be specified separately in the tender specifications of future calls, and she indicated that sufficient time will be allowed between the call and the deadline for applications.

NL questioned the recommendation of a 5–10% pilot sample size. It was agreed that the Guidance should clarify the distinction between a full pilot survey and a feasibility study, with the scale of testing determined by the survey objectives, methodology and target population.

Poland (PL) raised a question on FoodEx2 training and EFSA confirmed that it can support countries through common trainings and materials.

Participants also discussed whether the planned duration of future calls (3.5 years) would allow sufficient time for all the methodological steps. EFSA noted that this matter would be considered when preparing the call specifications, and the time will be extended if needed.

Section 2 was endorsed, subject to the agreed clarifications.

Section 3 covers the target population, sampling frames and design, representativeness, sample size, weighting and documentation.



NO questioned the upper age limit of 74 years. EFSA clarified that it reflects the age groups used in current exposure assessments, with individuals aged 75 years and over treated as a separate ad hoc group.

PT requested clarification on the recommendation to oversample small or vulnerable population groups. WG explained that oversampling may improve representation of groups with lower participation, provided that appropriate weighting is applied. The Guidance will more clearly distinguish between oversampling within the main survey and the implementation of a separate ad hoc survey.

Several participants questioned the fixed minimum of 130 participants per sex and age group, arguing that it may not be appropriate across all population groups. It was suggested that sample size requirements should be based on statistical precision and the need for robust high-percentile estimates, while ensuring representativeness.

EFSA also clarified that pregnant and lactating women, vegetarians and similar groups should not routinely be excluded from the main sample.

Section 3 was endorsed, subject to revision of the wording on older age groups, oversampling, sample-size justification and inclusion of special population groups.

16. Continue (Sections 3 & 4)

Regarding section 4, WG presented recommendations on recruitment methods, measures to enhance participation, non-participation analysis and reporting of response. The main changes presented were greater clarity on the definition and calculation of the response rate and the introduction of a related figure.

PT raised concerns that the proposed distinction between participants and respondents, and between full and partial respondents, could create confusion. It was agreed that the Guidance should use one consistent term and one clearly defined rate.

Androniki Naska (AN) and other participants requested clearer definitions of full and partial response and of the minimum dietary information required to classify a person as a respondent. The definitions should be set based on EFSA's needs and exposure assessments, and the figure and glossary should be aligned.

Finally, PT recommended collecting some comparable variables beyond reasons for refusal, such as sex and simple dietary indicators, because reported reasons such as lack of time are often of limited analytical value.

Section 4 was endorsed, subject to these terminology and classification clarifications.

17. EU Menu Guidance 2026 (Section 5)

WG presented the proposed age-specific dietary assessment methods, protocols for interviewer- and self-administered collection, and the FPQ. The section also covers the number and spacing of recording days, mixed administration modes, checks of digital submissions, FoodEx2 mapping and supporting documents.

CR questioned the exclusion of food records for adolescents and adults. It was agreed that 24-hour recalls would remain the only method for adults, while adolescents aged 10–17 years could be assessed using either 24-hour recalls or food records, applied consistently within the age group. Adolescent age classes will be aligned to 10–14



and 15–17 years, and further clarification will be needed on the role of caregiver support for older adolescents.

NL requested clarification that the recommendation for trained staff to check self-administered records is not a mandatory manual review of every record. FI also suggested adding to the face-to-face interviews other possible locations such as a study clinic. The text in the guidance should be amended accordingly.

Questions were raised about collecting the brand and product name of food supplements in both the FPQ and short-term dietary records. However, since EFSA needs to test the added value in its food-supplement project, this should be retained also in the Guidance.

LV suggested adding an indicative maximum duration for the FPQ to avoid excessive burden and decline in data quality. The WG agreed to review available experience and provide a reasonable time recommendation

Section 5 was endorsed in principle, subject to the agreed methodological and wording revisions.

18. EU Menu Guidance 2026 (Sections 6 & 7)

For section 6, the WG presented the revised recommendations on food lists, composite dishes and standard recipes, food supplements, FoodEx2 food description and coding, portion-size estimation and the new section on human milk quantification. The revisions aimed to accommodate the new dietary assessment methods, improve harmonisation and provide more detailed practical coding guidance.

NL asked whether adjustable standard recipes are feasible in self-administered tools. EFSA clarified that participants may provide only the main recipe characteristics and the wording will be revised to distinguish more clearly between information collected through the software and work undertaken by the country before data submission.

FR questioned whether supplements, recipes, brands and all relevant facets could be collected while keeping a recall within the recommended duration. The need for trained interviewers, monitoring of interview performance and prioritisation of exposure-relevant facets was highlighted. The WG will reconsider the wording on interview duration and ensure that the recommended information does not create further participant burden.

PT requested explicit guidance on country-specific default average portions when respondents cannot quantify a food by other means. The WG confirmed that the intention was these to be covered and that the wording would be made clearer.

The Network also discussed nutrient composition. EFSA noted that energy and macronutrients will be mandatory in the data model for quality checks, while AN raised possible licensing restrictions where food-composition data are borrowed from external tables. The WG will consider how to reflect mandatory and optional nutrient information more clearly.

CR also asked about foods coded “as consumed”, particularly products reconstituted in water. EFSA confirmed that the new practical coding guidance will provide explicit examples on how such products should be reported.



The new human milk quantification recommendations were considered useful but still required refinement. The variables needed for prediction equations and their possible inclusion among the mandatory variables in other sections need to be considered.

Section 6 was endorsed, subject to the clarifications and amendments identified during the discussion.

WG presented then section 7. More specifically, the expanded software recommendations, covering tool selection, national adaptation, food recording functions, databases, and other functions, quality checks, training, interoperability, data protection and supporting specifications were presented. The section reflects the broader use of self-administered methods and the findings of the SMART EU Menu software gap analysis.

DK questioned whether mandatory databases must be incorporated into the software or could be connected as external modules. It was agreed that modular solutions are acceptable provided the required information is available during data collection.

Clarification was also requested on mandatory checks, responsibilities and participant-reported information. It was noted that minimum requirements are already included in the Guidance and annexes, but further clarification will be considered.

PT identified possible inconsistencies between recommendations for food records and 24-hour recalls, particularly concerning review steps, barcode scanning and photo upload. The WG will check that each function is linked to the appropriate dietary assessment method and administration mode.

EFSA also suggested stronger cross-referencing between sections and removal of unnecessary repetition.

Section 7 was endorsed, subject to the agreed clarifications and amendments.

19. EU Menu Guidance 2026 (Sections 8 & 9)

WG presented the revised recommendations on the minimum non-dietary information needed to assess representativeness, support data analysis and identify energy-intake misreporting. The section covers sociodemographic variables, anthropometry, physical activity and quality assurance, with greater emphasis on harmonised indicators, validated tools and limiting respondent burden.

After presentation, it was clarified that the exact date of birth does not need to be transmitted as a mandatory variable, whereas calculated age will be mandatory.

The discussion continued with the need for better use of the terminology around accelerometry as a reference method and for clarifications in the applicable IPAQ versions. The Guidance will be amended accordingly.

Questions were raised about whether "type of diet" belongs in the non-dietary section and whether questions on unusual intake or activity days should be included. It was agreed that the key requirement is that the information is collected and clearly linked across sections; the location and cross-references will be reviewed.

IT noted inconsistent wording on height and weight measurements in children and adolescents. It was clarified that self-measurement using a validated protocol is



acceptable across age groups, while self-reporting should be limited to adults. The text will be amended accordingly.

Section 8 was endorsed, subject to clarification of the wording and the agreed cross-references.

Regarding section 9, WG presented the revised recommendations on dietary and non-dietary data cleaning, coding and consistency checks, treatment of missing or implausible values, identification of energy-intake misreporting, documentation of edits and pre-submission quality checks. The revisions aim to ensure that residual issues are handled systematically and transparently before data transmission to EFSA. For greater comparability, NL suggested selecting either the Henry or Schofield equation for basal metabolic rate estimation rather than retaining both options. The equation that is aligned with the EFSA's opinion on dietary reference values will be used.

FAO requested clarification on whether outliers should be assessed by age and sex, food group, FoodEx2 group or subgroup, and whether the checks refer to consumed amounts or nutrient values. EFSA clarified that the current recommendation primarily concerns food amounts, not nutrients, and will revise the wording to make the intended level and flexibility clearer.

FAO requested guidance on imputation methods. The discussion emphasised that imputation should be restricted to erroneous or missing values, be transparently documented, and distinguish between anthropometric variables and implausible food amounts. The use of age- and sex-specific, or more refined, stratification was also considered where suitable.

Section 9 was endorsed, subject to the clarifications and further refinement of the background and recommendations.

20. EU Menu Guidance 2026 (Sections 10 & 11)

MP presented Section 10, and more specifically the revised data transmission schema. In addition to the existing subject, consumption and food files, a new FPQ table will support transmission of FPQ data. The remaining tables have been reworded or expanded to reflect changes introduced throughout the Guidance.

LT noted that collecting the brand of food supplements may be challenging, particularly when participants are asked to recall supplement use over longer periods. It was clarified that mandatory variables with unknown values may be transmitted as "not available". Participants were also encouraged to consult the data transmission schema early in survey planning, as mandatory variables may influence questionnaire and software design.

Section 10 was endorsed, with the agreement that the annexes will be circulated for review.

For section 11, MP presented the proposed reporting templates. The supporting documents will include a concise final survey report template with a section-specific reporting checklists, and a survey-details template with mapped fields to harmonise collection of information feeding the Comprehensive dashboard.

NO asked about the availability of an updated validation tool. EFSA explained that EU Menu 2 will incorporate more checks into the initial validation stage and may provide



dashboards for pre-submission data review. However, a second validation stage will remain necessary for plausibility checks that cannot be fully automated. Additional checks will be described in a separate annex to the Guidance.

No objections were raised to section 11, which was therefore endorsed.

21. Conclusions

Before closing the meeting, the Chair informed the Network that the WG would revise the guidance and invited members to contribute to the annexes and submit any remaining questions in writing.

LU raised concerns about the potential implications of the Guidance for the requirements that would subsequently be set out in the tender specifications, and the time MSs would have to prepare for these requirements.

In response, SI clarified that the methodological Guidance provides recommendations, whereas the tender specifications will define the mandatory requirements for funded surveys.

Following this discussion, it was agreed that EFSA would aim to circulate a revised version of the Guidance, together with the appendices and annexes, within three weeks. Network members would then have a further three weeks to review the complete package and submit comments and questions by 13 November 2026. EFSA would subsequently revise the text and aim to publish the Guidance in early January 2027.

22. Closure of the meeting

The Chair thanked all participants for their active participation and valuable contributions and formally closed the meeting.