

16-17 September 2026

09:00-17:45 / 09:00-12:45

MINUTES - Agreed on 1 October 2026

Location: Gijón (Spain) / 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 (16 September), 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:

Ioannis Antonopoulos (DG ENVI, item 6.4), Paolo Caricato (DG SANTE, item 6.7)

o EFSA:

BIOHAW Unit: Laura Cabral, Sandra Correia, Beatriz Guerra, Ernesto Liebana, Winy Messens, Valentina Rizzi, Eleonora Sarno, Pietro Stella, Natisha Vatwani, Frank Verdonck, Anna Zdanowicz

COM Unit: Sharon Monti, Joana Isabel Sousa Lourenco, Giorgia Zamariola (item 6.5)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No 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 187th BIOHAZ Panel Plenary meeting held on 9 and 10 July 2026, via teleconference

The minutes of the 187th Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 24 July 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. Next meeting is scheduled on 24 September by web meeting. A total of 58 notifications were received between April and August 2026, including the pending 4 notifications for bacteriophages received for the previous Panel Statement. 25 were proposed for use in feed, 18 as food enzymes, food additives and flavourings, 10 as novel foods and 5 as plant protection products. 29 notifications were related to microorganisms generally excluded from QPS evaluation, 18 had the QPS status. Of the remaining 11 notifications corresponding to 12 taxonomic units (TUs), 2 were already assessed within this QPS 3-years cycle (*Enterococcus lactis*, *Hyphomicrobium denitrificans*) and therefore will not be reassessed. The other 10 TUs were assessed for the first time in this Statement: 2 undefined bacteriophages species against *Clavibacter michiganensis* subsp. *michiganensis* (BACMM), 3 bacteriophages species and 1 family against *Erwinia amylovora* (BAEA), 1 bacteriophage species against *Walnut Xanthomonas arboricola* pv. *Juglandis*, 1 bacteriophage species of *Pecentumvirus* P100, *Tetrademus obliquus* (microalgae) and *Weissella cibaria* (bacteria) and *Starmera caribaea* (yeast). 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 experts that Framework Partnership Agreement for the EFSA-funded Carba-R-ales project (CPEs in the EU/EFTA food Chain, ToR2 of the BIOHAZ Panel Mandate) has been updated with the inclusion of ANSES, DAFM, and NVL, from France, Malta and Ireland, respectively joining the consortium, and IHVPH, from Romania leaving it. This 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. The next meeting of the Carba-R-ales

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



project will take place on 10 November, being linked to the next meeting of the Working group Carbapenemases in the food chain (10-11 November) in Parma.

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

The most recent WG meetings were held on 13 July and 27 August 2026. During the plenary meeting, the WG Chair presented the full draft scientific opinion for detailed review. Comments received from the BIOHAZ Panel were discussed and, for the most part, resolved. The remaining comments will be addressed with the WG members at the next WG meeting. The Panel agreed with the proposed approach to the uncertainty analysis and the expression of uncertainty in the conclusions relating to pathogens. The Panel also recommended further streamlining of the conclusions and reducing the recommendations to a single recommendation addressed to food business operators. The conclusions will be revisited at the next WG meeting, and expert judgements for the outstanding uncertainties will be finalised. The next WG meeting is scheduled for 28 September 2026 and will be held by web conference. 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 24-25 August 2026. The WG chair presented all sections of the draft opinion, with the exclusion of draft conclusions and recommendations. The Panel provided comments, asking to clarify the relation between food safety culture and food safety management systems, to consider highlighting from the beginning of the draft opinion the food safety culture model proposed, and providing some suggestions to improve and simplify the text. EFSA social scientists updated the Panel on the preliminary findings from interviews with selected EU stakeholders aimed at gathering relevant information on the promotion and implementation of food safety culture in food business operators. The next WG meeting will take place on 23 September 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). Data extraction from the literature review is on-going. The protocol and answers to the questions received from the target consultation will be presented for adoption to the CONTAM Panel at their Plenary on 29 September. A public Webinar to present the protocol and the work will take place on 20 October 2026. The last specific meeting for the SubWG-BIOHAZ was held on 2 July 2026, with an additional short preparatory meeting on 15 July. The full WG (SubWG-CONTAM and BIOHAZ) meeting was on 22-23 September 2026. The next WG of the full WG will take place in January, whereas for the SubWG-BIOHAZ, the next meeting will take place on 12 November (with additional preparatory meetings scheduled for October and December). 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 latest WG meetings were held on 15 and 17 July and on 2 and 4 September 2026. The WG Chair presented the full draft opinion for a first reading. Minor comments were provided



on the sections addressing the intrinsic factors relevant to assessing bacterial growth in smoked salmon (AQ1); representative temperature profiles, including room, surface and core temperatures, for each processing step (AQ2); the pathogenic bacteria relevant to the assessment (AQ3); and the spoilage microorganisms relevant to the assessment (AQ4). The discussion focused mainly on evaluating the effects of freezing and stiffening on the lag phase and matrix effects of the relevant pathogenic and spoilage bacteria (AQ5). Evidence of post-freezing changes in microbial growth in cold-smoked salmon was presented, together with a proposal to assess the effect of frozen-storage duration on post-thaw microbial growth rates using evidence from studies on other muscle foods. Predictive microbiology models suitable for assessing the growth potential of *Listeria monocytogenes*, lactic acid bacteria and *Serratia* spp. were presented (AQ6), and the Panel experts provided several suggestions. An illustrative example was also presented showing how growth-potential outcomes, expressed as log₁₀ increases, could be reported for the relevant pathogenic and spoilage bacteria under the ToR1 (AQ7) and ToR2 (AQ8) scenarios. A proposed formulation of the conclusions was also presented. The next WG meeting will be held on 29 September and 2 October 2026. The deadline for delivery of the scientific opinion is the 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

No new meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC) took place since the last BIOHAZ Plenary meeting.

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. Rapid Outbreak Assessments and related activities

EFSA staff from the BIOHAW Unit presented the published report on a Food contamination incident linked to *Salmonella* Enteritidis ST11 in egg-based products⁶. The event background was followed by a description of the food investigations.

9. Other topics for information and/or discussion

9.1. Topics of scientific concern in the area of biological hazards

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

10. AOB

The Panel agreed to reschedule the June 2027's BIOHAZ plenary meeting; the new dates identified are 9 and 10 June 2027.

⁶ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/sp.efsa.2026.EN-10303>



EFSA staff updated the Panel on the state of play of a number of European Commission's legislative proposals: i) the Food and Feed Safety Simplification Package (Omnibus X) and the Biotech Act I, inviting the Panel members to consult the EFSA Experts' Corner web-platform for more details and further updates; ii) a draft legislative proposal amending Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, currently under public consultation.

11. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 21 and 22 October 2026, by teleconference.