101st MEETING OF THE EFSA ADVISORY FORUM

7 October 2026: 09H00-12H15 (CEST)
8 October 2026: 09H00 – 12H:25 (CEST)

EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Location: ONLINE

Members	Attendance
Austria (AT)	Johann Steinwider
Belgium (BE)	Fabien Bolle
Belgium (BE)	Axel Mauroy
Bulgaria (BG)	Lilyana Polihronova
Croatia (HR)	Sara Mikrut Vunjak
Croatia (HR)	Andrea Gross-Boskovic
Cyprus (CY)	Rebecca Kokkinofta
Czechia(CZ)	Jitka Götzová
Denmark (DK)	Dorte Lau Baggesen
Estonia (EE)	Mari Reinik
Finland (FI)	Leena Räsänen
France (FR)	Matthieu Schuler
France (FR)	Salma Elreedy
Germany (DE)	Andreas Hensel
Germany (DE)	Tewes Tralau
Greece (GR)	Danai Papanastasiou
Hungary (HU)	Akos Bernard Józwiak
Ireland (IE)	Wayne Anderson
Italy (IT)	Denise Giacomini
Italy (IT)	Alessandra Perella
Luxembourg (LU)	Caroline Merten
Luxembourg (LU)	Monique Faber-Decker
Malta (MT)	Mark Cassar
Netherlands (NL)	Godelieve Kranendonk
Netherlands (NL)	Dick Sijm
Norway (NO)	Tore Skeidsvoll Tollersrud
Norway (NO)	Danica Grahek-Ogden
Poland (PL)	Jacek Postupolski
Poland (PL)	Joanna Gajda Wyrebek
Romania (RO)	Monica Mariana Neagu
Slovakia (SK)	Petra Vanková
Slovakia (SK)	Kristína Lépesová
Slovenia (SI)	Urška Blaznik
Spain (ES)	Ana López-Santacruz Serraller

Sweden (SE)	Cecilia Hulten
Observers	**Attendance**
Albania (AL)	Polikseni Drazho
Montenegro (ME)	Mirjana Lekić
Republic of North Macedonia (MK)	Martin Josheski
Republic of North Macedonia (MK)	Oliver Milanov
Serbia (RS)	Tamara Boskovic
Switzerland (CH)	Christina Gut
Türkiye (TR)	Unverdi Mehmet Ali
European Commission (EC)	Anastasia Alvizou
European Commission (EC)	Athanasios Raikos
External speakers	
Denmark National Food Institute	Susan Løvstad Holdt
BfR	Denise Bloch
AGES	Lukas Meusburger
EFSA Representatives	
Nikolaus Kriz (Chair)	Barbara Gallani (Co-Chair)
Carlos Das Neves (Co-Chair)	Guilhem de Sèze (Co-Chair)
Bénédicte Vagenende (Co-Chair)	Victoria Villamar (HoU ENREL)
Sérgio Potier Rodeia (Team Leader Community Management)	Donka Popova (Advisory Forum Secretariat)
Lucia Montenegro (Advisory Forum Secretariat)	Clementine Lallier (Team Startegic Engagement)
Lorenzo Barraco (Advisory Forum Secretariat)	Virginia Spurio Salvi (CORSER)

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Day 1

Item 1: Welcome and Adoption of the Agenda by the Chair

The Executive Director opened the 101st Advisory Forum meeting and welcomed representatives from 31 countries and the European Commission, noting that 44 participants were connected remotely, and acknowledged the apologies received from several countries unable to attend.

The Executive Director informed members of recent changes to the composition of the Advisory Forum. She welcomed Urška Blažnik as the new Advisory Forum member for Slovenia, Tanja Carli as Slovenia's alternate member, and Christina Gut as the new alternate member for Switzerland. He also welcomed the external experts contributing to the morning's discussions.

Looking ahead to Day 2 of the meeting, the Executive Director drew attention to the discussions on the development of EFSA's Strategy 2034. He explained that Member States would be invited to provide input through dedicated breakout sessions and stressed the importance of their contributions in shaping the future strategy. He noted that the timeline foresees the adoption of the strategy by the Management Board in June 2027, allowing ample opportunity for consultation throughout the process.

He also noted that the minutes and action points from the previous Advisory Forum meeting had been published. While a number of action points had been completed, others would remain under follow-up as part of longer-term activities.

France and Denmark proposed items under Any Other Business.

Item 2: Current partnership opportunities

2.1 Overview on current partnership opportunities

ENGAGE Head of Department Barbara Gallani (EFSA) presented upcoming collaboration opportunities expected before the next Advisory Forum meeting in December. She highlighted initiatives open to Article 36 organisations, including activities related to OpenFoodTox, food additive re-evaluations, EU-FORA, and dietary exposure assessment. Advisory Forum members were encouraged to share these opportunities within their national Article 36 networks and support the formation of consortia.

Barbara Gallani also highlighted the success of the EU-FORA fellowship programme in strengthening scientific capacity and cooperation between EFSA and Member State organisations. She concluded by underlining the importance of these initiatives in supporting Member State participation in EFSA's scientific work and reinforcing cooperation across the European food safety system.

2.2 Feedback event on Whole Genome Sequencing – from new EU rules to action

Frank Verdonck (EFSA) presented recent developments in the implementation of the EU framework for Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) data sharing in foodborne outbreak investigations. He highlighted the entry into force of the new Commission Implementing Regulation in August 2026, requiring Member States to submit at least one genome sequence per foodborne outbreak, and emphasised its importance for strengthening outbreak investigations and cross-border cooperation. He reported continued progress in the joint EFSA-ECDC One Health WGS data collection system and encouraged Member States to further expand participation. The importance of trust, clear governance arrangements and appropriate interpretation of genomic data alongside epidemiological evidence was also underlined. EFSA confirmed its commitment to supporting implementation of the new requirements and further developing the system with ECDC.

Denmark welcomed the initiative and stressed the need to encourage data sharing beyond the minimum legal requirements in order to maximise the value of outbreak investigations. EFSA agreed, emphasising that the new legislation should facilitate broader data sharing rather than limit contributions.

2.3 Upcoming call "Support to EFSA in the risk assessment of food additives and flavourings"

Valeriu Curtui (EFSA) presented a forthcoming call for partnership support aimed at accelerating EFSA's food additive and flavouring re-evaluation programme. He highlighted the significant workload remaining and outlined plans to establish a framework partnership agreement with Article 36 organisations to provide preparatory scientific support. The framework agreement will operate through a cascade mechanism involving multiple partners. The initiative is expected to run for four years with a budget of approximately EUR 300,000. The call is scheduled to be launched in October 2026, with awards expected in early 2027. Advisory Forum members were invited to promote the opportunity within their networks. France, Ireland and Germany raised concerns regarding the predictability of workload and resource planning under the cascade mechanism, while the Netherlands sought clarification on the scope of work and budget. Germany also suggested that a more structured allocation of tasks could increase the attractiveness of the scheme. In response, EFSA clarified that the cascade mechanism is required under the applicable financial rules, that priorities will be detailed in the call documentation, and that payments will be based on agreed deliverables rather than actual costs. EFSA acknowledged the concerns raised and indicated that broader partnership-related issues would be further discussed at the December Advisory Forum meeting.

Item 3: Update on scientific activities and upcoming events

3.1 Overview on Member States risk assessment plans, mandates, public consultation and events

ASSESS Head of Department, Guilhem de Seze (EFSA), provided an overview of ongoing and planned risk assessment work identified through the Risk Assessment Hub, and mandates, highlighting opportunities for cooperation and information exchange between EFSA and Member States. Key areas included plant health, food contact materials, caffeine consumption, new genomic techniques, allergen labelling, animal health and welfare, antimicrobial resistance, and non-animal testing approaches. He also informed members about ongoing public consultations, calls for data, and upcoming scientific events, including initiatives on AI readiness and next-generation risk assessment. During the discussion, the Netherlands, also on behalf of France, proposed closer collaboration on risk assessments of pinnatoxins in shellfish and suggested bringing experts together to exchange data and knowledge. France supported the proposal, highlighted the value of greater cooperation on common assessment topics, and provided an update on the pine wood nematode outbreak in south-western France. Spain invited interested experts to contribute to an international seminar on emerging marine toxins in Vigo. EFSA welcomed the collaboration proposal and encouraged Member States to contribute expertise to ongoing and upcoming scientific activities, including work on farmed fish welfare.

3.2 NGT guidance development

Ana Luisa Afonso (EFSA) provided an update on EFSA's preparations to support implementation of the new EU Regulation on New Genomic Techniques (NGTs). She outlined ongoing work to develop guidance for the verification of NGT1 plants and the risk assessment of NGT2 plants, as well as administrative support measures aimed at ensuring readiness before applications are expected following the end of the transition period in 2028. She also highlighted the role of the NGT subgroup under the Member States GMO Network in supporting dialogue and cooperation between EFSA and

national experts during the development of the guidance. During the discussion, Austria sought clarification on the future involvement of Member States in NGT verification and assessment procedures, including opportunities to comment on dossiers and EFSA opinions. France welcomed the initiative and stressed the importance of building a common scientific understanding of both the NGT1 verification process and the NGT2 risk assessment framework, while making full use of expertise available in Member States. In response, EFSA explained that some implementation details are still being developed through forthcoming delegated and implementing acts and emphasised that the NGT subgroup will play a key role in promoting convergence on the scientific concepts underpinning the future guidance. EFSA also noted the particular importance of aligning approaches to NGT1 verification, given the responsibilities that Member States will assume under the new regulatory framework.

AOB

Matthieu Schuler (France) informed the Advisory Forum about a recently adopted French law on urgent measures for agriculture and its implications for the use of certain plant protection products. He explained that certain active substances, including some neonicotinoids, are currently subject to national restrictions established through French legislation rather than through scientific assessments by ANSES. The new law mandates ANSES to assess whether scientific grounds exist to support specific uses of these substances for certain crops. He stressed that this work is not intended to replace the EU regulatory framework and that any future authorisations would need to follow the procedures established under Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009. He also noted that ANSES faces a challenging timeline and will need to consider both the evidence underpinning existing authorisations and any new scientific information that has emerged since previous assessments, including ongoing work at EU level on substances such as acetamiprid. During the discussion, EFSA welcomed France's early communication on the issue and highlighted the importance of close cooperation between ANSES and EFSA as the assessments progress. EFSA noted the challenges associated with revisiting existing assessments in light of evolving scientific evidence and methodologies, and emphasised the value of continued dialogue to ensure a common understanding of both the scientific and regulatory implications. It was also noted that the French experience may be of broader interest to other Member States given its potential relevance for plant protection product assessment and authorisation processes across the EU.

3.3 EAT-pack: edible packaging as both food and packaging – opportunities and regulatory questions

Susan Løvstad Holdt (DTU - Denmark) presented research on edible films designed to replace conventional packaging and be consumed together with food. She highlighted the sustainability potential of the concept and outlined the regulatory challenges associated with products that function both as packaging and food. In particular, she noted the lack of a dedicated regulatory framework for edible packaging and raised questions regarding classification, additives, labelling and safety assessment. During the discussion, EFSA welcomed the innovative concept and noted that many of the issues raised relate primarily to regulatory classification. The European Commission agreed, indicating that products intentionally consumed together with food would generally fall under food legislation rather than food-contact material legislation, while noting that requirements would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis under the relevant legal frameworks. The Netherlands emphasised that, beyond classification issues, important risk-assessment questions remain, particularly regarding the safety of the materials and their behaviour under different cooking conditions. Hungary highlighted the need to consider exposure, microbiological and other food-safety aspects from an early stage of product development, and called for clearer guidance for researchers on regulatory expectations and responsibilities. EFSA referred to ongoing efforts with the European Commission to engage earlier with researchers and innovators to support understanding of regulatory requirements and data needs. In response,

Susan Løvstad Holdt explained that the edible films have undergone microbiological and contaminant testing, with results to date indicating satisfactory safety and shelf-life performance. She noted, however, that future assessments would need to take into account dietary exposure and realistic consumption scenarios, and that current development efforts are focused mainly on frozen and dry food applications.

3.4 Update on an international qualification study on organs-on-a-chip

Denise Bloch (Germany - BfR) presented an update on an international qualification study conducted under ILMERAC to assess the potential of organ-on-a-chip technologies for next-generation risk assessment and the reduction of animal testing. She explained that the project focuses on assessing the reproducibility and regulatory relevance of a gut-liver chip model through a collaborative exercise involving regulatory and scientific organisations, including BfR, the US FDA, the Joint Research Centre and other international partners. The initiative aims to generate practical evidence and recommendations on the regulatory use of organ-on-a-chip technologies rather than to qualify a specific commercial platform. During the discussion, EFSA welcomed the initiative and highlighted its relevance to ongoing work on next-generation risk assessment and alternative methods to animal testing. Members broadly recognised the value of the international collaboration and its potential contribution to building regulatory confidence in emerging methodologies. The discussion emphasised reproducibility as a key prerequisite for regulatory acceptance, with members noting the importance of demonstrating consistent performance across laboratories and regulatory contexts. The qualification approach was seen as a practical way to generate evidence on the strengths, limitations and potential applications of organ-on-a-chip systems in risk assessment. In response, Denise Bloch underlined that the project's objective is to support broader regulatory learning and develop recommendations on qualification pathways and regulatory use, rather than promote a particular technology. She encouraged Member States to contribute to the initiative by identifying laboratories with relevant expertise and supporting participation in the qualification exercise.

3.5 Update on the PFAS risk communication initiative

Francesca Avanzini (EFSA) and Lukas Meusburger (Austria - AGES) presented progress on the collaborative project launched following the Advisory Forum's request to develop communication materials on PFAS that can be adapted by Member States. EFSA highlighted that the PFAS group favours a shift towards Member State leadership and the co-creation of communication materials, moving away from an EFSA-led approach. The group currently involves 18 Member States and aims to provide a common scientific basis for PFAS communication while allowing flexibility to reflect national contexts. Work completed so far includes the creation of a repository of communication materials, collection of multilingual Q&As, and the establishment of strategic and operational workstreams focusing respectively on public trust and stakeholder engagement, and on the development of practical communication tools. During the discussion, France welcomed the initiative and highlighted several communication challenges, including increasing public interest in PFAS blood testing, the implications of PFAS monitoring under the Drinking Water Directive, and the need to explain differences in national risk-management measures despite a common scientific evidence base. In response, Austria emphasised the importance of communicating scientific uncertainties transparently and balancing harmonised messages with flexibility for national circumstances. Luxembourg welcomed the initiative as particularly valuable for smaller Member States with limited communication resources and raised the broader challenge of addressing misinformation and disinformation during food-safety incidents and crises. EFSA praised the project as a successful example of collaborative communication between Member States and EFSA and suggested that similar approaches could be used for other emerging topics attracting public attention. EFSA also confirmed ongoing work to explore additional support for Member States in addressing misinformation and disinformation.

Item 4: Update on Advisory Forum discussion groups

4.1 Updates from the Advisory Group on Data

Akos Jozwiak (HU) presented an update on the Advisory Group on Data's activities to strengthen data cooperation across the European food safety system. He reported on progress in the areas of interoperability, artificial intelligence, and data literacy, including the development of position papers to be published ahead of the upcoming AI-focused Data Symposium in Dublin (30 November – 1 December 2026). He also outlined four data-related initiatives selected for further development from 2027 onwards: a data-flow mapping exercise, an AI-supported data-mapping tool, a One Health genomic surveillance platform, and an explainable AI project on mycotoxin control. In addition, he provided an update on AGOD's exploration of a potential European Food Safety Data Space, aimed at facilitating trusted and interoperable data sharing through common governance and technical standards. During the discussion, the Netherlands welcomed the breadth of AGoD's activities and expressed particular interest in the selected tailor-made initiatives and the upcoming Data Symposium. He sought clarification on whether the status of the prioritisation process, as shared ahead of the meeting, was final and suggested that the criteria underpinning the prioritisation or non-prioritisation of proposals be provided. EFSA confirmed that the outcome of the prioritisation was final, following an EFSA managerial decision, and that feedback on the reasoning behind the different outcomes would be provided

AOB

Dorte Lau Baggesen (Denmark) provided an update on the BioPath initiative previously presented to the Advisory Forum. She explained that, following discussions with the Novo Nordisk Foundation during the co-creation phase, the scope of the initiative had been significantly expanded. While initially focused on supporting pathways for novel food applications, the proposal now also covers food enzymes, New Genomic Techniques (NGTs), and selected activities related to food additives, flavourings and food ingredients. The initiative aims to strengthen scientific and regulatory capacity, including in areas where future regulatory needs are still emerging. Denmark also informed members that the expanded scope has led to a revised timeline. The proposal is currently undergoing international review, with a final funding decision expected in the first quarter of 2027. Dorte Lau Baggesen thanked Advisory Forum members for their support during the development phase and expressed hope that the initiative would move forward. She confirmed that Denmark would provide a further update once the outcome of the funding process is known and, if successful, during the implementation phase.

Closing remarks

In his closing remarks, the EFSA Executive Director thanked Advisory Forum members, presenters and participants for their active engagement throughout the first day of the meeting. He encouraged members to maintain the same level of participation during the second day, which would be dedicated to discussions on the future EFSA Strategy 2034, and underlined the importance of Member State contributions in shaping EFSA's long-term strategic direction. The Chair closed the session inviting also all the members to take part in the 102nd meeting of the Advisory Forum, which will take place in Dublin, Ireland, on 2-3 December 2026.

Given the workshop-based format of Day 2, a separate and detailed report on the discussions and outcomes related to the Strategy 2034 workshop will be published.

ACTION POINTS

Agenda topic	Action point no.	Action	Deadlines
2.1 Overview	1	Member States to consider applying and to promote the upcoming EFSA partnership opportunities and calls within their national networks and, where needed, support the formation of consortia (list available here).	By respective deadlines
3.1 Overview on Member States risk assessment plans, mandates, public consultation and events	2	Member States to review and submit comments to ongoing EFSA public consultations (list available here).	By respective deadlines
3.2 NGT guidance development	3	Member States to continue their engagement in the development of the NGT guidance through the MS Subgroup on NGTs.	By respective deadlines
3.4 Update on an international qualification study on organs-on-a-chip	4	Member States to identify laboratories with relevant expertise and support participation in the international organ-on-a-chip qualification study.	By respective deadlines
3.5 Update on the PFAS risk communication initiative	5	Involved Member States to develop the agreed deliverables, including adaptable PFAS communication materials. EFSA to explore ways to support Member States in addressing misinformation and disinformation.	By respective deadlines