

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY FORUM UNIT

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Report

**JOINT MEETING OF EFSA'S
MANAGEMENT BOARD AND ADVISORY FORUM
PARMA (ITALY), 16 MARCH 2011**

MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD

<i>Diána Bánáti (Chair)</i>	<i>Jan Mousing</i>
<i>Sue Davies (Vice-Chair)</i>	<i>Milan Pogacnik</i>
<i>Piergiuseppe Facelli (Vice-Chair)</i>	<i>Jiri Ruprich</i>
<i>Manuel Barreto Dias</i>	<i>Sinikka Turunen</i>
<i>Marianne Elvander</i>	<i>Bernhard Url</i>
<i>Matthias Horst</i>	<i>Pieter Vanthemsche</i>
<i>Milan Kovác</i>	<i>Robert Vanhoorde (European Commission representative)</i>
<i>Stella Michaelidou-Canna</i>	

MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

<i>Vittorio Silano (Chair)</i>

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM

Austria	<i>Roland Grossgut</i>	Italy	<i>Giancarlo Belluzzi</i>
Belgium	<i>Benoît Horion</i>	Latvia	<i>Gatis Ozoliņš</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Boiko Likov</i>	Lithuania	<i>Snieguolė Ščeponavicienė</i>
Cyprus	<i>Popi Kanari</i>	Luxembourg	<i>Félix Wildschutz</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Jitka Götzová</i>	Malta	<i>Ingrid Busuttill</i>
Denmark	<i>Henrik C. Wegener</i>	Netherlands	<i>Evert Schouten</i>
Estonia	<i>Hendrik Kuusk</i>	Norway	<i>Kirstin Færden</i>

Finland	<i>Jaana Husu-Kallio</i>	Poland	<i>Jan Krzysztof Ludwicki</i>
France	<i>Valérie Baduel</i>	Portugal	<i>Maria João Seabra</i>
Germany	<i>Andreas Hensel</i>	Romania	<i>Liviu Rusu</i>
Greece	<i>George-Ioannis Nychas</i>	Slovakia	<i>Zuzana Bírošová</i>
Hungary	<i>Maria Szeitzné Szabó</i>	Spain	<i>Ana Troncoso</i>
Iceland	<i>Jón Gíslason</i>	Sweden	<i>Leif Busk</i>
Ireland	<i>Alan Reilly</i>	United Kingdom	<i>Andrew Wadge</i>

ADVISORY FORUM OBSERVERS

Croatia	<i>Zorica Jurković</i>	Switzerland	<i>Michael Beer</i>
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	<i>Dejan Runteviski</i>	Turkey	<i>Nergiz Özbağ</i>
Montenegro	<i>Jelena Vracar</i>	European Commission	<i>Jeannie Vergnettes</i>

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

<i>Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle</i>	<i>Christine Majewski</i>
<i>Hubert Deluyker</i>	<i>Torben Nilsson</i>
<i>Riitta Maijala</i>	<i>Gisèle Gizzi</i>
<i>Anne-Laure Gassin</i>	<i>Jeffrey Moon</i>
<i>Olivier Ramsayer</i>	<i>Gianluca Bonduri</i>
<i>Djien Liem</i>	<i>Elena marani</i>
<i>Bernhard Berger</i>	

WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Diána Bánáti opened the joint meeting between EFSA's Management Board (MB) and Advisory Forum (AF) and welcomed the participants. She referred to the participation of some AF members at previous MB discussions on cooperation in 2009 and 2010 and introduced the objective of this joint meeting, namely to address how to further enhance the cooperation between EFSA and the Member States in the areas of risk assessment and risk communications.

COOPERATION ON RISK ASSESSMENT BETWEEN EFSA AND THE MEMBER STATES

Sue Davies introduced the discussion on the cooperation on risk assessment between EFSA and the Member States by inviting views on what is working well, what are the challenges, and where there would be scope for closer cooperation.

There was a broad consensus that the creation of EFSA had contributed to a positive development of the European food safety system over the last ten years and that both EFSA and the Member States have benefitted from the cooperation.

The discussions addressed the following issues:

The dialogue between risk assessors and risk managers at national and EU level is important to set risk assessment priorities taking into consideration aspects such as disease burden.

There is a need to ensure continued and adequate research activities at national and EU level in support of food safety risk assessments.

It was recognised that the same pool of experts is drawn upon at national and EU level. Hence, there is a need to optimise the use of scarce resources to ensure sustainability of the risk assessment system that has been built up. The discussions addressed how to make the best use of the experts, for example by using EFSA's Panels more as "peer reviewers", and how to prepare the next generation of experts. It was suggested that better use could be made of national risk assessments through enhanced networking.

The usefulness of the mechanisms and tools that have been developed for the scientific cooperation between EFSA and the Member States, *e.g.* Focal Points, EFSA's scientific networks, article 36 projects, and the Information Exchange Platform, was widely recognised. The challenge is now to take full advantage of these tools. The important role of the networks in fostering cooperation between Member States was highlighted.

The sharing of best practices on independence and transparency would be useful to increase consumer confidence in the national food safety authorities and EFSA. The consumer confidence in the European food safety system as a whole would be influenced also by the transparency of risk management processes.

Harmonised data collection activities could be reinforced to ensure data for national exposure assessments as well as comparison between Member States.

EFSA's role in the international context could be strengthened in order to contribute to international risk assessments standards. Also, the importance of EFSA as a "European voice" during food safety crises in the EU was emphasised. This would require active coordination between EFSA and the affected Member States during crisis situations.

Sue Davies concluded that the cooperation goes well and that some interesting ideas for changes were shared in order to further enhance the cooperation which should be explored further. She emphasised the importance of ensuring the independence and transparency of the risk assessment process.

Diána Bánáti rounded off this session by expressing her gratitude to the Member States and their experts for their valuable support to EFSA's work.

COOPERATION ON RISK COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EFSA AND THE MEMBER STATES

Piergiuseppe Facelli introduced the discussion on the cooperation on risk communication between EFSA and the Member States by inviting views on how to further promote coherence in European risk communications. He said that the reorganisation of EFSA offered opportunities to take a thematic approach to the communications work in line with EFSA's new communications strategy.

The discussions addressed the following issues:

The important role of the AF working group on communications for the cooperation and coherence in the area of risk communications was highlighted.

Support was expressed to taking a thematic approach to the communications work and the need for simpler, more relevant risk communications was emphasised. This would offer an opportunity for greater outreach in and through the Member States.

Risk communications in the interface between risk assessment and risk management remains a challenge. In that regard, EFSA's pre-notification of press releases was highly appreciated by the Member States and the European Commission.

The communication opportunities offered by social media were considered as an area for further development both for the Member States and EFSA.

The influence of risk communications on consumer risk perceptions was considered and more research in this field was suggested to better target the risk communications.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Diána Bánáti concluded that EFSA and the Member States are committed to further strengthening their cooperation. She said that the report of the meeting including future actions will be shared with the MB and AF members as well as with EFSA's Scientific Committee. She closed the meeting by thanking the participants, interpreters and secretariats for their valuable contributions.

Action points arising from the joint meeting of EFSA's Management Board and Advisory Forum	
1.	There is recognition that the needs of Risk Assessment must be taken into account at national and EU level and agreement that there is a need to ensure continued and adequate research activities in the area of food safety risk assessment.
2.	There is an ongoing need for dialogue with Risk Managers at national and EU level in order to set priorities for Risk Assessment taking into consideration aspects such as health burden.
3.	The use of scarce resources needs to be optimized to ensure sustainability of the risk assessment system which has been built up by, amongst other things, making best use of available experts, preparing the development of the next generation of experts with the support of the European Commission and increase the contribution of National Risk Assessment Bodies in EFSA's work.
4.	There is a recognized need to ensure best use of mechanisms and tools that have been developed such as the EFSA Networks, the Information Exchange Platform, Focal Points and Article 36 activities.
5.	Best practice on Independence and Transparency should be shared in order to increase confidence between Member States and EFSA for the benefit of consumers.
6.	Data collection activities must be reinforced to ensure that there can be comparison between Member States and the data can be used at national level for exposure assessments.
7.	EFSA must continue to build its international context by reinforcing the importance of EFSA as a European voice during crisis even at national level and contributing to Risk Assessment on the global scene.
8.	The developing communications strategy must take account of the need for simpler more relevant communications and of the opportunity for greater outreach in Member States. One proposal is to implement a thematic approach to support this. EFSA is currently developing an approach for possible use of social media in the future. This could be used in ad hoc situations such as crises.