
ADVISORY FORUM & SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION UNIT

 Parma, 20th March 2013
 EFSA/FP/M/2013/101/PUB

Final Minutes
**SIXTEENTH MEETING BETWEEN FOCAL POINTS AND EFSA
 PARMA (ITALY), 19TH -20TH FEBRUARY 2013**
Members

Chair: Stef Bronzwaer

Austria	<i>Johann Steinwider</i>	Latvia	<i>Aivars Berzins</i>
Belgium	<i>Laurence Ballieux</i>	Lithuania	<i>Ingrida Miliute</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Donka Popova</i>	Luxembourg	<i>Nathalie Welschbillig</i>
Cyprus	<i>Eleni Ioannou-Kakouri</i>	Malta	<i>Ingrid Busuttil</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Petr Beneš</i>	Netherlands	<i>Hubert Noteborn</i>
Denmark	<i>Dennis Jensen</i>	Poland	<i>Piotr Holownia</i>
Estonia	<i>Piret Priisalu</i>	Portugal	<i>Jorge Reis</i>
Finland	<i>Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen</i>	Romania	<i>Alecsandra Dida Cozachievici</i>
France	<i>Coralie Bultel</i>	Slovak Republic	<i>Marica Theiszová</i>
Germany	<i>Stefanie Freyberg</i>	Slovenia	<i>Blaža Nahtigal</i>
Greece	<i>Gorgias Garofalakis</i>	Spain	<i>Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry</i>
Hungary	<i>Judit Sali</i>	Sweden	<i>Anita Strömborg</i>
Ireland	<i>Wayne Anderson</i>	United Kingdom	<i>Esther Heller</i>
Italy	<i>Luca Busani</i>		

Observers

Croatia	<i>Sandra Bašić</i>	Switzerland	<i>Judith Beck</i>
FYR of Macedonia	<i>Abdulezel Dogani</i>	Turkey	<i>Nevzat Birisik</i>

Staff of the European Food Safety Authority

<i>Stef Bronzwaer</i>	<i>Ilias Papatryfon</i>
<i>Sérgio Potier Rodeia</i>	<i>Kerstin Gross-Helmert</i>
<i>Elena Zeraschi</i>	<i>Tom Meyvis</i>
<i>Laura Smillie</i>	<i>Andras Szoradi</i>
<i>Stylianos Koulouris</i>	<i>Isabelle Hubert</i>
<i>Saadia Noorani</i>	<i>Hubert Deluyker</i>

1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Stef Bronzwaer from EFSA's Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation (AFSCO) Unit and Chair of the meeting opened the 16th meeting between Focal Points (FPs) and EFSA.

The Chair welcomed the representatives from 31 countries, in particular Donka Popova (Bulgaria), Stefanie Freyberg (Germany), Gorgias Garofalakis (Greece, attending this meeting only), Wayne Anderson (Ireland), Aivars Berzins (Latvia), Esther Heller (United Kingdom) and Nevzat Birisik (Turkey). Apologies were received from Iceland, Norway, Montenegro and Serbia.

The Chair presented Elena Zeraschi, the new AFSCO Administrative Assistant providing support during FP meetings.

2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Following past distribution of the draft agenda to FPs, some additional items were raised at the meeting. Cyprus and France requested to be given the floor under "Any Other Business" (AOB) so to make short announcements concerning their national websites; Spain also requested the floor to raise an issue concerning announcements on procurements. From EFSA's side, the Chair informed participants about the possible visit, on the second day of the meeting, of EFSA's Executive Director or of the Director of Science Strategy and Coordination.

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoIs) of meeting participants. No conflicts of interest related to any issues to be discussed in this meeting were identified during the screening process or at the beginning of the meeting. FPs were also reminded to update their ADoIs, especially when they receive a notification that it will soon be one year old i.e. that it will no longer be valid.

The final minutes of the 15th FP meeting were approved by written procedure and published on EFSA's website on the 28.11.2012. They were also uploaded on ScienceNet on the same date.

3 UPDATE ON COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Laura Smillie, from EFSA's Communications Directorate, presented the current MS stakeholder mapping exercise, a joint FP & AFCWG effort aiming to support and

prioritise EFSA's communications and outreach efforts. An online survey, to be addressed to FP & AFCWG members, is being prepared on the subject. In order to ensure that all relevant stakeholder groups have been well captured, FPs were asked for input during the meeting. Additional comments can also be provided after the meeting.

Reference was made to the renewal of EFSA's Advisory Group on Risk Communications (AGRC). The AGRC provides advice to the Executive Director on risk communication issues and practices, including the evaluation of risk communication initiatives and the development of best practices and communication strategies to address emerging risks. Once the renewal process is initiated, FPs will be requested to disseminate this information to potentially interested parties.

Action 1: Focal Points to provide any additional comments on the list of stakeholder groups presented during the meeting, prior to the launch of the survey on stakeholder mapping (current list of stakeholder groups to be made available on ScienceNet¹).

Action 2: Focal Points to, once prompted, disseminate information on the renewal of the Advisory Group on Risk Communications to potentially interested parties.

4 UPDATE ON NEW FEATURES ON THE EDB SEARCH TOOL & REVIEW OF 5 YEARS OF EFSA'S EXPERT DATABASE

Stylianos Koulouris briefed participants on the current state-of-play of EFSA's Expert Database (EDB). Special reference was made to the new EDB features, namely to the enhanced keyword search feature – allowing the sorting results on the basis of the number of hits on chosen keywords, and highlighting these keywords on expert profiles - and to the new extraction feature, allowing users to customise the data to be extracted from the expert profiles.

FPs were also requested to provide a first input with regards to the 5 year review of EFSA's EDB. The questions raised and comments collected during this session will be summarised and placed on ScienceNet².

5 RELEVANT ISSUES FROM THE LAST ADVISORY FORUM (AF) MEETING

Saadia Noorani provided an update on relevant issues discussed at the last AF meeting. The presentation included an overview of discussions held, in particular the 'self review' of EFSA's scientific networks carried out last half of 2012, the current proposals to change the grant system, and the strategic discussion being prepared on the review of scientific cooperation (to occur at the 48th meeting of the AF meeting in June 2013).

¹ https://scienzenet.efsa.europa.eu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_32_0_229_0_-1_47/http;/beaps.efsa.eu.int;11930/collab/do/document/overview?projID=91473&folderID=953698

² https://scienzenet.efsa.europa.eu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_32_0_229_0_-1_47/http;/beaps.efsa.eu.int;11930/collab/do/document/overview?projID=80696&folderID=888909

In the context of the ‘self review’ of EFSA’s Scientific Networks, reference to one recommendation concerning the possible greater role for FPs as main contact points of the national coordinators of EFSA’s scientific networks.

Reference also to the AF discussion group being set up with the aim to carry out a wide ranging strategic review of scientific cooperation, including aspects of the Article 36 list of organisations and other cooperation tools such as the EDB and the Information Exchange Platform (IEP). During the current meeting, FPs provided a first input on this subject – see Point 7 for further details.

6 OVERVIEW OF FOCAL POINT ACTIVITIES IN 2012 AND FOCAL POINT PRIORITIES FOR 2013

Sérgio Potier Rodeia presented a brief summary on the evolution of the FP network over the past 5 years and of the main activities carried out during that period. The main achievements of the FP network in terms of the exchange of scientific information, the support provided to Article 36 Organisations, the promotion of EFSA’s EDB, and in raising the scientific visibility of EFSA and FPs were mentioned in detail.

The proposed draft FP priorities for 2013 were presented. FPs gave a first input on the priorities and were asked to provide any additional feedback. The proposed draft priorities will be later incorporated on the Annual FP Report of Activities for 2012, which will be further discussed and endorsed by EFSA management and by the AF.

Action 3: Focal Points to provide any additional feedback on the proposed draft priorities for 2013 by 15.03.2013 (the draft priorities will be uploaded on ScienceNet³).

7 REVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION AND FOCAL POINT NETWORK

The Chair introduced the topic and explained that a breakout session aiming to receive a first input from FPs on suggested activities to be carried in the context of the review of scientific cooperation and the 5 year review of the FP network was going to be carried out. The Chair presented a set of 5 questions to participants, for discussion in four breakout groups (note: one question was common to all groups, the other four were specific for each group). The outcome of discussions in each group was presented during the meeting and will be summarised and sent to FPs for final comments.

Action 4: AFSCO to provide Focal Points with a summary note of the breakout session on the review of scientific cooperation and the 5 year review of the FP network.

Action 5: Focal Points to provide comments on the summary note on the review of scientific cooperation and the 5 year review of the Focal Point network by 15.03.2013 (the summary note will be uploaded on ScienceNet⁴).

³ https://scienzenet.efsa.europa.eu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_32_0_229_0_-1_47/http;/beaps.efsa.eu.int;11930/collab/do/document/overview?projID=80696&folderID=953225

⁴ https://scienzenet.efsa.europa.eu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_32_0_229_0_-1_47/http;/beaps.efsa.eu.int;11930/collab/do/document/overview?projID=91473&folderID=954846

ADDRESS BY HUBERT DELUKER

At the start of the second day of the FP meeting, the Chair introduced Hubert Deluyker, EFSA's Director of Science Strategy and Coordination, for a few words of welcome to FPs on behalf of EFSA's Executive Director. Hubert Deluyker expressed that 2013 is a particularly important year to FPs, as a review of their work over the past 5 years is to be carried out. On this regard, Hubert Deluyker mentioned that FPs are considered "EFSA Ambassadors" at MS level. Differences amongst MS are acknowledged and input from all FPs, amongst other stakeholders, is considered critical to ensure further building of networks tailored to EFSA and MS needs. The Chair thanked Hubert Deluyker for his address to the FPs.

8 GRANTS AND PROCUREMENT – UPDATE ON PLANNED CALLS

Ilias Papatryfon provided participants with an overview of EFSA calls planned to be launched in 2013. In order to ensure a good understanding of the content and expertise sought on calls concerning framework contracts (seen as a long term cooperation tool since they have duration of 4 years and a significant budget allocated), specific reference was made to the planned calls on framework contracts. The presentation concluded with an invitation to FPs for further disseminating information on these calls to key players in their MS networks, ensuring the widest possible participation of competent organisations on framework contracts.

Action 6: Focal Points invited to disseminate information on EFSA's ongoing and planned calls for proposals and tenders, as available on EFSA's webpage⁵. Particular reference is welcome to planned calls for framework contracts.

9 SHARING OF FIRST EXPERIENCES ON THE REVIEW OF THE ARTICLE 36 LIST

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Kerstin Gross-Helmert introduced this Agenda item, reminding FPs on the current actions expected from FPs concerning the review process of the Article 36 list of organisations and that the respective timeline is end of September 2013.

9.2 EXPERIENCES FROM ITALY

Luca Busani (IT) briefed participants on the current actions being implemented in IT to review their organisations for the Article 36 list. Reference was made to the main actions being implemented, which include the translation into IT of EFSA's guidelines; contacting relevant ministries and national organisations for dissemination of information on the review process; the preparation of internal procedures and of a checklist for the evaluation of applications by a dedicated evaluation group; and the use of a newsletter for sending out reminders on the review process.

9.3 EXPERIENCES FROM SPAIN

Cristina Alonso Andicoberry (ES) informed participants on the actions taken so far to assess the ES organisations on the Article 36 list of. Examples of difficulties faced were

⁵ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/calls.htm>

also provided, e.g. the lack of contact people from the listed organisations, the fact that the updating procedure is not considered a priority by the organisations, or the need for explaining the whole review process from the very beginning.

9.4 DISCUSSION

A short discussion on issues that came out from the presentations of IT and ES took place. FPs indicated they would appreciate the opportunity to further exchange experiences on the organisation of the review in different countries at their next FP meeting in May 2013.

Action 7: Focal Points invited to continue actively reviewing the list of Article 36 organisations of their own countries.

Action 8: AFSCO to include a discussion session on Article 36 list review at the next Focal Point meeting in May 2013.

NOTE ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOCAL POINT AGREEMENTS

During the course of the second day of the FP meeting, one copy of the signed originals of the 2013 Focal Point Agreements was handed over to FP members.

10 SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION OF REGULATED PRODUCTS – THE APPLICATIONS DESK UNIT

Tom Meyvis, from EFSA's Applications Desk Unit, presented this new EFSA Unit, which provides internal coordination (back office) and support desk (front office) for applications submitted in the context of the assessment of regulated products, supporting the work of EFSA's FEEDAP, NDA, ANS, CEF, GMO and PPR Panels and respective EFSA Units. Additional information on the work of this Unit is available of EFSA's website⁶.

11 ISSUES RAISED BY FOCAL POINTS

11.1 EU FOOD SAFETY ALMANAC: DEVELOPMENT OF A THIRD EDITION IN COOPERATION WITH THE EFSA FP

Stefanie Freyberg (DE) briefed FPs on the main aim of the EU Food Safety Almanac⁷, a BfR publication that provides an overview of the public authorities and structures operating in the area of food and feed safety risk assessment in the EU and MS. During the course of 2013, the 3rd edition of the Almanac will be published. This new edition will incorporate new developments in 35 European countries, including information on two new countries (Serbia and Montenegro), and update assignments, responsibilities and other information and icons. FPs were reminded to provide updates, if applicable, to their country profiles. The 4th edition of the Almanac is foreseen for 2016.

The Chair noted that the review of the Article 36 list of organisations is currently ongoing and will only be concluded in December 2013. By then, the EU Food Safety Almanac will have been published. Therefore, it would be important that reference is made on the Almanac to such review process and to the date it is expected to be concluded.

⁶ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/applicationshelpdesk.htm>

⁷ <http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/364/eu-food-safety-almanac.pdf>

Action 9: Focal Points reminded to provide any updates to their EU Food Safety Almanac country profiles by 15.02.2013.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 ATTENDANCE OF OBSERVERS AT EFSA SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE / PANEL MEETINGS

Andras Szoradi informed participants about an EFSA ongoing Pilot Project that allows interested individuals (i.e. Observers) to attend meetings of EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels. The project follows up on the Decision of the EFSA Executive Director implementing the Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes. The project aims, amongst others, to promote a better understanding of how scientific risk assessment work is undertaken at EFSA and to provide an opportunity for participating Observers to raise questions in relation to the work of the Scientific Committee and Panels. Support has been requested to FPs, once prompted by EFSA, to disseminate information on scientific plenary meetings open to Observers. Additional information on this topic is available on EFSA's website⁸.

Action 10: Focal Points to disseminate information on scientific plenary meetings open to Observers.

12.2 PROMOTION OF THE ANS AND CEF CALLS DURING 2013

Isabelle Hubert briefed FPs on the forthcoming calls to the ANS and CEF scientific Panels. A request for support was made to FPs for stimulating applicants with relevant scientific experience and expertise to apply for a position on the above Panels and for making use of the appropriate channels and tools. The call is expected to open on 15.04.2013 and to close on 15.06.2013.

Reference was also made to EFSA's printed publications catalogue. FPs were invited to look into the catalogue and request any of the available EFSA printed publications by filling in the respective order form, made available on ScienceNet⁹.

Action 11: Focal Points to, once prompted, disseminate information on the forthcoming calls to the ANS and CEF scientific Panels.

Action 12: Focal Points to look into EFSA's printed publications catalogue and request any available publication of interest by filling in the respective order form.

12.3 OVERVIEW OF FOCAL POINT EVENTS IN MS

Sérgio Potier Rodeia presented a draft overview table aiming to collect information on planned FP events for 2013 i.e. events that will be organised by FPs using the financial contribution provided with the 2013 FP Agreements. The table will allow EFSA and MS to better plan these events, enabling a proper preparation of EFSA's and/or MS participation on them, if applicable. The table is available on ScienceNet¹⁰.

⁸ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/stakeholders/observers.htm>

⁹ https://sciencenet.efsa.europa.eu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_32_0_229_0_-1_47/http;/bea-aps.efsa.eu.int;11930/collab/do/document/overview?projID=91473&folderID=953445

¹⁰ https://sciencenet.efsa.europa.eu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_32_0_229_0_-1_47/http;/bea-aps.efsa.eu.int;11930/collab/do/document/overview?projID=611887&folderID=953449

Action 13: Focal Points invited to fill in the overview table with the planned 2013 Focal Point events (i.e. events that will be organised by Focal Points using the financial contribution provided with the 2013 Focal Point Agreements).

12.4 FUTURE TRAINING ACTIVITIES ON THE INFORMATION EXCHANGE PLATFORM

As per request of Dennis Jensen (DK), the Chair asked FPs if there is any interest in further training on the IEP. Some FPs expressed interest on such training and therefore it was agreed that in one of the forthcoming 2013 FP meetings, EFSA would organise such training.

Action 14: AFSCO to organise training on the IEP in one of the 2013 forthcoming Focal Point meetings.

12.5 FUTURE FOCAL POINT MEETINGS

The dates scheduled for the forthcoming 2013 FP meetings are:

- 17th meeting: 07-08 May, Dublin (IE)
- 18th meeting: 09-10 October, Parma, (IT)

Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry (ES) expressed the view that, with regards to the planning of FP meetings, it would be important to receive presentations in advance of the meetings, especially those concerning topics where feedback from FPs will be requested during the meetings. It was agreed that, whenever possible such request will be accommodated in future FP meetings.

Action 15: AFSCO to, whenever possible, provide presentations in advance of the Focal Point meetings, in particular those concerning topics where feedback from Focal Points will be requested during meetings.

Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry (ES) also requested that FPs are informed whenever the lists of planned calls for proposals/tenders are updated on EFSA's website. The Chair informed that such request will be accommodated by EFSA.

Action 16: EFSA to inform Focal Points whenever the lists of planned calls for proposals/tenders are updated on EFSA's website.

FPs were reminded not to make any travel arrangements until receiving the formal invitation from EFSA. FPs were also reminded that they should have an approved ADoI before registering for a meeting.

12.6 OTHER TOPICS RAISED BY FOCAL POINTS

Coralie Bultel (FR) requested the floor to inform FPs on the implementation of new communication tools. ANSES website is currently under revision and upgrading to a new version available by 22.02.2013¹¹. Reference was made to new features to be implemented and to the Focal Point webpage. ANSES can also be followed on Twitter from the 21st of January 2013: [@Anses_fr](http://Anses.fr)

¹¹ <http://www.anses.fr>

Eleni Ioannou-Kakouri (CY) requested the floor to inform FPs that the webpage¹² of the Food Safety Council of Cyprus (the coordinating body of all food and feed risk assessment competent authorities under the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture of Cyprus) has been launched and is available in Greek and English.

CLOSURE OF MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting, thanking participants for their attendance and their active contributions in the various discussions. He also drew the attention of interested FPs to the question/answer session being organised in the afternoon on the review process of the Article 36 list of organisations. He finally wished for a continued collaboration between EFSA and FPs network during the course of 2013.

¹² <http://www.moh.gov.cy/fsc>

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	FPs	<i>Provide any additional comments on the list of stakeholder groups presented during the meeting, prior to the launch of the survey on stakeholder mapping.</i>
Action 2	FPs	<i>Once prompted, disseminate information on the renewal of the Advisory Group on Risk Communications to potentially interested parties.</i>
Action 3	FPs	<i>Provide any additional feedback on the proposed draft priorities for 2013 by 15.03.2013.</i>
Action 4	AFSCO	<i>Provide Focal Points with a summary note of the breakout session on the review of scientific cooperation and the 5 year review of the Focal Point network.</i>
Action 5	FPs	<i>Provide comments on the summary note on the review of scientific cooperation and the 5 year review of the Focal Point network by 15.03.2013.</i>
Action 6	FPs	<i>Disseminate information on EFSA's ongoing and planned calls for proposals and tenders, as available on EFSA's webpage. Particular reference is welcome to planned calls for framework contracts.</i>
Action 7	FPs	<i>Continue actively reviewing the list of Article 36 organisations of their own countries.</i>
Action 8	AFSCO	<i>Include a discussion session on Article 36 list review at the next Focal Point meeting in May 2013.</i>
Action 9	FPs	<i>Reminded to provide any updates to their EU Food Safety Almanac country profiles by 15.02.2013.</i>
Action 10	FPs	<i>Focal Points to disseminate information on scientific plenary meetings open to Observers.</i>
Action 11	FPs	<i>Once prompted, disseminate information on the forthcoming calls to the ANS and CEF scientific Panels.</i>
Action 12	FPs	<i>Look into EFSA's printed publications catalogue and request any available publication of interest by filling in the respective order form.</i>
Action 13	AFSCO	<i>Fill in the overview table with the planned 2013 Focal Point events.</i>
Action 14	AFSCO	<i>Organise training on the IEP in one of the 2013 forthcoming Focal Point meetings.</i>
Action 15	AFSCO	<i>Whenever possible, provide presentations in advance of the Focal Point meetings, in particular those concerning topics where feedback from Focal Points will be requested during meetings.</i>
Action 16	AFSCO	<i>Inform Focal Points whenever the lists of planned calls for proposals/tenders are updated on EFSA's website.</i>