

Minutes

39th MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM WORKING GROUP ON COMMUNICATIONS

VILNIUS (LITHUANIA), 04-05 JULY 2013

Chair: GASSIN Anne-Laure, Communications Director

Members of the Advisory Forum Working Group on Communications:

Belgium	BUSSCHOTS Lieve	Norway	BJERKÅS Astrid
Croatia	MIKRUT Sara	Poland	WIŚNIEWSKA Iwona
Czech Republic	MIKANOVA Karolina	Portugal	FERNANDES Paulo Cesar
Denmark	KORNHOLT Heidi	Slovakia	MENDEL Juraj
Estonia	PRIISALU Piret	Slovenia	VRDELJA Mitja
France	THOMANN Carole	Spain	GARRIDO Carmen
Hungary	SIPOS Anna	Sweden	GUSTAFSSON Karin
Lithuania	SAVICKAITE Jurgita	The Netherlands	KRIKKEN Chris
Luxembourg	KOCH Jerome	United Kingdom	SEYMOUR Jane

Observers:

FYROM	JONOVSKA Katerina
Turkey	KADIM Funda

European Food Safety Authority Staff:

GASSIN Anne-Laure	SMILLIE Laura
MANGHI Nicoletta	VAN DE VYVER Stijn
OP GEN OORTH Jan	

Apologies:

Austria	Greece
Bulgaria	Ireland
Cyprus	Italy
Finland	Romania
Germany	

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Anne-Laure Gassin opened the meeting, greeted all participants, thanked the State Food and Veterinary Service (SFVS) of Lithuania for the kind invitation and hospitality and welcomed Dr. Zenonas Stanevicius, Deputy Director of SFVS, member of EFSA's Advisory Forum and Focal Point in Lithuania. She then officially welcomed Croatia to the AFWGC and thanked Sara Mikrut for her strong contribution to date. She also welcomed the new members Karolina Mikanova from the Czech Republic, Jerome Koch from Luxembourg as well as Jane Seymour attending in an alternate function from the UK FSA. She also welcomed Katerina Jonovska from FYROM and Funda Kadim from Turkey, who are joining the AFWGC in an observer capacity. Anne-Laure Gassin indicated that apologies had been received from Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Romania.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

- 2.1. Anne-Laure Gassin went through the agenda and asked whether any of the members wished to make comments or additional points. With no additional agenda items, the draft agenda was adopted.
- 2.2. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked the members for submitting their ADOIs on a regular basis.

3. SFVS WELCOME

- 3.1. Anne-Laure Gassin then gave the floor to Dr. Zenonas Stanevicius, Deputy Director of the State Food and Veterinary Service (SFVS) and member of the EFSA Advisory Forum.
- 3.2. Deputy Director Stanevicius warmly welcomed the members of the AFWGC to Lithuania and especially Croatia to the European Union. He was speaking on behalf of Dr Jonas Milius, Director of the State Food Veterinary Service (SFVS). He introduced participants to the SFVS which develops and implements the Government's policies in food safety and quality as well as in animal health and welfare and referred to the SFVS' relationship with the National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute. He emphasised how important transparent, clear and effective communication is for the credibility of institutions and indicated the SFVS' achievements in communications in the past years (number of published press releases, mentions in the media and visits to SFVS' website). He then mentioned the case of African swine fever in Belarus (which is next to the Lithuanian border) and stressed in this regard the importance of cooperation in risk assessment on a European level. In conclusion, he thanked EFSA for the good cooperation with SFVS in the past and looked forward to future collaboration.
- 3.3. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked Deputy Director Stanevicius for his welcome and reiterated the importance of close cooperation between EFSA and the Member States as well as Lithuania's strong contribution to the work of the Advisory Forum.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING IN DUBLIN 21-22 FEBRUARY 2013 AND MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1. Anne-Laure Gassin informed the members that the minutes of the last meeting held in Dublin, which had been circulated, have been adopted after minor comments had been integrated.

- 4.2. Anne-Laure Gassin outlined that the matters and points arising from the last meeting that was held in Dublin, would be discussed with the group in the course of the two days in Vilnius, as outlined in the agenda: a discussion on the review of EFSA's communication strategy, the review of the AFWGC's Term of Reference (ToR), social media approaches, risk assessment information needs, a brainstorm session on how risk assessment can be better explained, and cooperation initiatives including updating the risk communications guidelines and the lexicon project.

5. UPDATE ON EFSA'S ACTIVITIES

- 5.1. Anne-Laure Gassin updated the members on a number of EFSA's activities. She mentioned that the progress report prepared by EFSA for its Management Board and circulated to the Advisory Forum has also been shared with the group. The report brings together all the major developments at EFSA as well as scientific and communications outputs and initiatives. She focussed on a few things of particular interest, such as the visit of Commissioner Borg to EFSA in May, the European Parliamentary vote on the discharge of EFSA's 2011 budget, as well as important consultations with stakeholders on EFSA's scientific work on aspartame and endocrine active substances. Key highlights since the group's last meeting included: EFSA's first inconclusive opinion on a GM application, EFSA's work in the area of bee health (recent opinions on neonicotinoids, scientific colloquium), the new EU Food additives list as well as EFSA's Open Door initiative on Schuman Day.
- 5.2. Laura Smillie then gave an overview of EFSA's activities concerning the 8th World Conference of Science Journalists 2013 held in Helsinki and the opportunities with regards to the FoodRisC Conference (FP7 project on food risk/benefit communications) that will take place in Brussels on the 12 September 2013.

6. KEY POINTS ARISING FROM THE 47TH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM (DUBLIN, IRELAND, 6 - 7 MARCH 2013) AND THE 48TH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM (LONDON, 18 – 19 JUNE 2013)

- 6.1. Jeffrey Moon of EFSA's Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation Unit (AFSCO) joined the meeting by telephone from Parma to summarise the outcome of EFSA's 47th and 48th Advisory Forum meetings.
- 6.2. He said that the Chair of the Management Board, Sue Davies attended the meeting in Dublin and the main items included an update on the Multi-Annual Plan and recommendations following the external evaluation report. Furthermore, feedback on the discussion group on future needs in risk assessment were given, along with a presentation from Ireland on the "lessons learned" from the horse meat fraud incident and conclusions and recommendations on the "self review" of EFSA's networks. Other topics that were presented at that meeting included routine updates on operations in the areas of pesticides and emerging risks and EFSA's transparency initiative. There was also a discussion about how best to share work plans between Member States and EFSA. At the March meeting, the Scientific Committee's work on endocrine active substances was coming to a close and the members were provided with an update on the outcome of this work.
- 6.3. At the 48th Advisory Forum Meeting held on 19-20 June in London, the Management Plan for 2014 was presented and an update on the Multi-Annual Plan was provided. In March there was a meeting of an Advisory Forum Discussion Group on Scientific Cooperation which was considering how scientific cooperation can be developed in the upcoming years. At the June AF Meeting a number of break-out groups generated further ideas about how scientific cooperation can be taken forward. The UK presented details of their activities on risk mapping and ranking according to public health threats.

Anne-Laure Gassin and Laura Smillie then presented a review of the Communication Strategy and the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the AF Working Group on Communications (AFCWG). Advisory Forum members suggested that within the Strategy, EFSA could develop a greater role in crisis communications and could further clarify its target audiences. On the review of the (ToR) of the AFCWG, the Advisory Forum expressed general support for the development of a multi annual work plan approach. The members were keen to link the work plan with those areas where there is likely to be the greatest impact on public health and/or impact on risk perception.

- 6.4. The cooperation in the areas of food ingredients and packaging was discussed at the meeting with details provided on topics of particular interest such as aspartame and BPA. The UK indicated that their study on aspartame was still ongoing and that results would be provided in due course. Other updates included energy drink consumption among consumers of different ages, applications for regulated products and “stop- the-clock” issues, updates on chemical occurrence data collection and acrylamide, where there was discussion about the timeframe proposed by EFSA for carrying out its risk assessment on this substance. A final item was presented by Germany on mass catering and outbreaks of food-borne illnesses. Whilst recognising that this topic was primarily addressed by risk managers in member states, the Advisory Forum suggested that the working group on communications could consider developing core/common messages regarding food hygiene for catering trade. The next meeting of the AF will be on 25-26 September in Lithuania.
- 6.5. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked Jeffrey Moon for his presentation of the items of the last two AF meetings and added that the points made with regard to the communications strategy and the ToR of the AFWGC are both on the agenda of the AFWGC and will be discussed in greater depth during the two days. Jeffrey Moon added that the minutes of the meeting in Dublin are already on the website and the minutes of the meeting in London should be available in the coming weeks.
- 6.6. Sweden expressed interest in the subject of Risk mapping and the inclusion of this topic on a future meeting agenda. Laura Smillie said that the presentation given by the UK FSA would be provided to the group via the extranet. She further indicated that EFSA is commissioning a critical review of methodologies for risk ranking and the possible application of this tool to support prioritisation food and feed related issues taking into account the anticipated public health impact.

Action: AFWGC Secretariat to share results of the UK study on risk mapping asap and EFSA’s work on risk ranking methodology as project progresses. .

7. UPDATE ON EFSA’S COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

- 7.1. Jan Op Gen Oorth of EFSA’s Editorial and Media Relations Unit gave a presentation on EFSA’s recent communications activities and future plans. He informed the group about new initiatives to improve access to information (such as use of social media Flickr, Pinterest and Slideshare) as well as the ANS/CEF Panel renewal campaign which was promoted online (web banner and a video featuring EFSA scientific experts on EFSA website) and offline materials.. Other new formats have been introduced to facilitate understanding and increase outreach of EFSA’s work and include the following new multimedia products: infographics (antimicrobial resistance; pesticides to be addressed in future); the first animation to illustrate the risk assessment workflow (selection of scientific experts for EFSA’s working groups), an interactive, online version of EFSA’s corporate brochure (publication pending) and new “Understanding Science” videos on Listeria, Food contact materials and environmental risk assessment.
- 7.2. He then gave an update on EFSA’s work by thematic area mentioning past and future activities. With respect to “chemicals in food,” Jan Op Gen Oorth highlighted EFSA’s risk assessment of Fipronil, the

Authority's draft opinion on the re-evaluation of aspartame, the mandate for a scientific risk assessment of the artificial sweetener advantame, EFSA's and EMA's joint advice on the risks from phenylbutazone in horsemeat, EFSA's statement on Allura Red as well as the Authority's work on the risks to human health of acrylamide in food. In the area of GMOs, Jan Op Gen Oorth mentioned communications activities with regards to EFSA's inconclusive opinion on the safety of GM maize 98140 and the final guidance on the environmental risk assessment of GM animals. In the area of zoonoses he explained the activities carried out to promote findings from the joint EFSA/ECDC the EU Summary Report on Trends and Sources of Zoonoses, Zoonotic Agents and Food-borne Outbreaks in 2011 as well as the 2011 EU Summary Report on antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic and indicator bacteria from humans, animals and food. Jan Op Gen Oorth concluded with an update on other significant outputs in the area of biological hazards, listing EFSA's work on Listeria, in the field of meat inspection and on risks related to mechanically separated meat derived from poultry and swine.

- 7.3. Anne-Laure Gassin then highlighted a few points that Jan Op Gen Oorth had mentioned, explaining the rationale for the new video produced for the ANS/CEF panel renewal campaign featuring EFSA's scientific experts and their motivation for joining EFSA scientific panels. Regarding pesticides, EFSA is working on a more holistic communications programme to outline how EFSA, Member States and the European Commission work together to ensure the safety of pesticides in the EU. The group was then shown the Authority's new animation on how EFSA selects experts for its scientific working groups.
- 7.4. Croatia took the floor, saying that the animation as well as the "Understanding Science" videos are very useful and help Member States to explain EFSA's work as the European risk assessor. Norway indicated that they will set up a blog in September which will serve as a new communication instrument for lay audiences. The animation concept is useful and creative and will fit well into a blog format. Sweden took the floor and suggested that there could be different animations for different target groups; one animation for journalists and an easier to understand animation for the general public.

Members do not have the resources to produce videos or animations and they would put them on their website if the language would be Swedish and not English.

Laura Smillie followed up and asked if translations and subtitles of the "understandings science" videos series should be something EFSA should be looking at. She mentioned that EFSA already translated 10 videos into Spanish following a request from Spain.

- 7.5. Anne-Laure Gassin came back on the general subject of animations and videos and mentioned that the "Understanding Science" video series could be extended to include the Member States. This could be a joint project of the group with videos produced also featuring WG members. This would bring to life the work of the network through concrete, visual outputs.

Anne-Laure Gassin then came back to a few other points such as the co-ordination of EFSA's work on the safety evaluation of azo dyes used as food and feed additives carried out by the two respective panels (the Panel on Food Additives and Nutrient Sources Added to Food -ANS and the Panel on Feed Additives - FEEDAP).

With regards to acrylamide, Anne-Laure Gassin said that EFSA is considering comments made by Advisory Forum members and will communicate an update on its work plan on acrylamide shortly.

8. UPDATE ON COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- 8.1. Anne-Laure Gassin gave an update on lessons learned and future plans with regards to EFSA's communications strategy. She mentioned the key priorities that had guided the development of the Authority's current 2010 – 2013 strategy, organisational changes made in EFSA's Communication Directorate from 2010- 2012 to support its implementation as well as learning and key results related to the strategy's execution. Importantly, the review of EFSA's 2010-2013 strategy was informed by the findings of EFSA's external evaluation.
- 8.2. Anne-Laure Gassin said that, with respect to public health issues such as zoonoses, the thematic approach had not resulted in a significant increase in media coverage; however online campaigns drove traffic to EFSA's website content and increased page views and the length of stay on EFSA's website. Looking ahead to 2014 – 2018, EFSA would need to take stock of its different target audiences, each with different needs and expectations. Although all target audiences had an interest in scientific information and want to understand the relevance of EFSA's work, in order to build further understanding of its work, the Authority needs to develop more tiered levels of communications, with differences in technical complexity, tone, language and format in order to better meet target audiences' information requirements and content expectations. She then mentioned the following key projects that EFSA will undertake in the context of the revised strategy: reviewing the Authority's "brand identity", redesign EFSA's website, pursue a more storytelling/thematic approach and reinforce co-ordination of stakeholder relationship management across EFSA. Anne-Laure Gassin highlighted that EFSA will work on building trust through more engagement and enhanced transparency e.g. through public access to data, open panel meetings and improved explanation of the risk assessment process.
- 8.3. Anne-Laure Gassin then commented on the feedback from the Advisory Forum saying that there was overall support for EFSA's findings related to the implementation of its communications strategy as well as the overall approach put forward for 2014-2018. Members welcomed the priorities focussing on clarity of messages and welcomed the web redesign as a means of facilitating information delivery. Whilst supporting the review of EFSA "branding," they recommended that this encompass EFSA's relations with its partners (Commission, Member States..) ie EFSA as an integral part of an overall food safety network albeit with a differentiated role. The Advisory Forum members stressed the importance of fostering coherence in communications with risk managers, in particular the European Commission, and highlighted the importance of clear guidelines in crisis situations. The role of the AFWGC as a learning platform for risk communications was also highlighted including the opportunity to develop common communications agendas as well as the need to evaluate the effectiveness of risk communications initiatives.
- 8.4. Norway took the floor to thanked Anne-Laure Gassin for the presentation. It was stressed that coherence in communications is important, especially in crisis communications and that building strong relationships with journalists in peace times will have a positive impact on media coverage in a crisis.

Anne-Laure Gassin mentioned the annex to the review of EFSA's Communications Strategy 2010 - 2013, which was provided to the group as a print out, and which included graphs with the overall number of articles by country and coverage on scientific issues by country.

Sweden said that the Swedish National Authority refer to scientific findings from EFSA and use materials from the Authority. While it is more likely that an issue is picked up by Swedish journalists when it is backed by EFSA's work, this does not necessarily mean however, that EFSA will be mentioned in the media coverage.

Norway commented that EFSA is well-know now in Norway and that stakeholders in recent years tend to increasingly mention EFSA's name and work.

With respect to possible topics for adopting a more thematic communications approach, Sweden and Norway mentioned, respectively, endocrine disruptors and “cocktail effects” given the challenges and the level of uncertainty associated with these concepts.

9. DISCUSSION AFWGC ToR AND FUTURE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- 9.1. Laura Smillie presented feedback from the input the Advisory Forum gave on the AFWGC’s ToR. She then gave a brief overview of the objectives of the group e.g. develop co-operation and co-ordination of communications on all areas within EFSA’s remit, exchange information and experiences gained both at Member State and European levels and share information and knowledge on public perception on food and feed safety. She presented six questions, which were posed to the Advisory Forum asking: if the activities of the AFWGC met with members’ expectations; how EFSA and the Member States could improve cooperation in communications, if the AFWGC ToR needs to be revised; how an annual work plan for the group would fit with the priority setting of Advisory Forum members at a national level; and if there were priority areas where EFSA/the AFWGC should focus their attention to maximise the mutual benefits from the group.

The key feedback from the Advisory Forum included the fact that the ToR are satisfactory to enable the group to fulfil the expected remit from the perspective of the Advisory Forum. The objective setting for the AFWGC should reflect the Advisory Forum’s objectives and be used to promote a better alignment of activities. It was recommended that this should be added to the ToR.

Laura Smillie said that objectives jointly held by the AFWGC and members at national level would be welcomed by the Advisory Forum. Priorities should be given to areas where the greatest impact on public health could be made. Any joint activities would necessarily reflect the diversity of Member States with messages tailored to fit the respective national contexts.

Feedback was also received about the opportunity that EFSA has to better repackage information that it collects from individual Member States; for instance lines-to-take for issues arising in one/several country(ies) could be shared more broadly with group members.

- 9.2. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked Laura Smillie for her presentation and, reiterating that the opinion of the Advisory Forum was that the ToR did not require a major revision and met the needs of the group, asked if the group agreed with this. Members agreed that this was the case.

With regard to EFSA’s support on new issues e.g. sharing lines to take, Anne-Laure Gassin asked if the group could give examples on how this could be best addressed.

Croatia took the floor and asked if it is possible to create an interactive exchange platform, where informal communications between the members of the group could take place. This would be a fast and informal way to exchange ideas when new issues arise.

Norway suggested the creation of a dedicated group on LinkedIn as an interactive exchange platform.

Stijn Van de Vyver said that the most appropriate platform might be Yammer and that EFSA needed to look into which was the most appropriate platform to serve everyone’s needs.

Sweden agreed that an interactive exchange platform, such as LinkedIn or Facebook would be very useful and confirmed that the extranet was difficult to use for such a purpose.

The UK took the floor and said that they use Yammer, which they think is really helpful.

Anne-Laure Gassin concluded that EFSA would look into the issue of collaborative platforms and come back to the AFWGC with a status and, if possible, a proposal at the October meeting.

Action: AFWGC secretariat to revise ToR and share with members for discussion/endorsement at 10-11 October meeting.

Action: AFWGC secretariat to follow up and coordinate with members which software is suitable for a collaborative, information-exchange platform (eg LinkedIn, Yammer, Facebook... etc.)

Action: Members to inform EFSA if there are any IT restrictions (eg firewalls) which would restrict their access to such collaborative platforms.

- 9.3. Norway informed members of key upcoming initiatives including: an opinion on organic food in 2014; an opinion on the risk/benefits of breast milk by the end of 2013; and that the Norwegian Agency will celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety in 2014.

The UK took the floor, saying that they will be working on Campylobacter and GMfood, which is back on the agenda in 2014.

Laura Smillie suggested that it may be a good idea to launch an EU calendar on food hygiene-related topics; looking to eating patterns / new eating trends which may increase public health risks e.g. as mentioned by some members, pink chicken liver parfait (UK), fondue cross-contamination during the festive season...

Belgium took the floor and said that four times a year the website of the Belgian food safety agency is updated with seasonal topics, such as advice on barbecue hygiene.

Laura Smillie reminded the group that the 50th meeting of the Advisory Forum will take place in December in Parma and asked for creative ideas and input from the group to mark this occasion.

Action: AFWGC to discuss at next meeting possible priorities for common work programme. Members to provide EFSA with input on their key priorities for 2014 by 13 September for consolidation by EFSA and circulation in advance of 10-11 October meeting. This could include the possibility of creating a food hygiene calendar related to certain eating occasions in context of establishing annual plans for the group.

END OF MEETING OF DAY ONE

DAY TWO - 05 JULY 2013 - 09H00 – 12H45

10. TWITTER

- 10.1. Anne-Laure Gassin followed up the discussion from the first day and asked the group to give feedback in advance of the next meeting on key priorities for the next year, which could feed into further more concrete discussion on group priorities and annual objectives/plans at the AFWGC meeting in October.
- 10.2. Stijn Van de Vyver then presented an update on the draft Twitter guidelines and on the discussion that was held in Dublin. The guidelines focussed on language, content, engagement and interaction on Twitter. He said social media should be part of an overall communications strategy and should reflect the key messages of the organisation and the target audience. With regards to language on Twitter he made clear that tweets should be informal and hashtags should be used where possible. With regards to interaction with followers he distinguished three forms of interaction: 1. replying to tweets, 2. following and 3. re-tweeting.

The overall recommendation concerning following on Twitter was to follow public bodies, which have a similar remit. With regards to re-tweeting he recommended that it should be in line with the defined role of Twitter in the overall communications strategy. He then gave an update on EFSA's revised Twitter strategy and informed the group that EFSA started to tweet open calls and vacancies and also started to follow other organisations.

He then moved on to the topic of social media monitoring. According to him the key metrics that should be measured are: 1. volume (how many people are following a Twitter account), 2. Reach 3. Engagement (how many people are participating), 4. Influence of the followers and 5. Share of voice. He mentioned a number of tools, which are suitable for measuring the mentioned key metrics, giving an overview of around 50 social media monitoring tools some of which are available freely online.

Stijn Van de Vyver explained how EFSA is measuring its involvement with social media channels. With regard to Twitter the number of followers and the level of engagement are measured. He concluded that EFSA has a new tool for consolidating the monitoring and managing of social media; an update would be provided at the next meeting of the AFWGC in Parma.

Anne-Laure Gassin thanked Stijn Van de Vyver for his presentation and the group members who participated in the discussion on the role of Twitter.

The UK took the floor and added that Twitter gives a very quick feedback/reaction to published issues. The UK participant gave two examples of how the FSA's use of Twitter has brought valuable learning (an interactive check of refrigerator temperatures in relation to food hygiene campaign and information on the badger cull and related interest around possible public health risks from bovine TB).

- 10.3. Croatia asked if EFSA sets measurable goals on Twitter and what was EFSA's strategic plan on social media. Following suggestion from Croatia, a tour de table was organised to sound members on which social media they were engaged in and why.

Tour de table on social media:

The UK gave the recommendation to be as open as possible but not to reply if a question is closed completely (open questions will trigger new questions). Users expect to receive answers in "real time"

and important to be able to answer during working hours (ie when expertise is available). The UK is on Twitter, Facebook and pinterest.

The Netherlands: Twitter is used for risk management purposes. There is an ongoing discussion how far the Dutch risk assessment Authority should interact with consumers. Facebook and YouTube are not very much used.

Sweden is using different kinds of social media as part of its overall communications approach. Discipline and strategy are needed. Experts involved in the agency's work also need to receive guidelines regarding their own social media engagement.

Spain is not using Twitter but appreciate the social media guidelines.

Slovenia is not using social media yet, but will implement social media next year.

Slovakia has started to use Facebook.

Portugal is not using social media due to the human resource implications.

Poland is using social media at a low level. Twitter is used e.g. for videos .

Norway is not on Facebook as an institution, but interacts through personal accounts. Twitter is used for new scientific opinions and a LinkedIn account for communications with stakeholders. A blog is planned for 2014.

Turkey: The website is the main communication platform with videos and games for kids. Currently Turkey is not on Facebook or Twitter.

FYROM: Twitter is not popular and so far social media are not used.

Luxembourg is neither using Twitter nor Facebook.

Lithuania: Twitter is not popular and not used. Maybe Facebook will be used in the future.

Hungary is not using social media.

France: ANSES started a Twitter account six months ago. In France, Facebook is more often used by individuals than organisations.

Estonia: So far only the website is used. A blog is used for questions with regards to risk management.

Denmark has a LinkedIn account and will have a Twitter and a Facebook account this year for communication with students (The National Food Institute is part of the Technical University of Denmark)

Czech Republic: Facebook and Twitter are used. Official information is published on the website of the Ministry.

Croatia: Has a website and a You Tube channel but not using other social media yet.

Belgium: Twitter and Facebook are used as additional channels to the website.

- 10.4. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked the members for the tour de table on social media and suggested that EFSA collate and keep up-to-date the use of social media by AFWGC members. EFSA will circulate a short document with key questions as to how and why the members use different social media platform.

Anne-Laure Gassin added that EFSA will finalise and amend the Twitter guidelines and upload them to the extranet as a living document.

Laura Smillie then announced the Food RisC Conference in Brussels and said that there will be an interesting session, which will be looking at the use of social media in relations to risk/benefit communications related to food.

Action: EFSA will circulate a document to collect information from AFWGC members regarding their use of social media platforms, rationale, target audiences reached, and how they are organised to support this engagement (ie human resource implications).

Action: EFSA to finalise Twitter engagement guidelines based on members' input.

Action: EFSA to ensure that members of AFWGC have access to all documents and papers from the Food RisC Conference

11. EXPLAINING RISK ASSESSMENT – SCOPING EXERCISE

- 11.1. Laura Smillie announced the brainstorm session on explaining risk assessment. The discussion focussed on how to better explain scientific processes, methodologies and basic principles used in risk assessment as well as on how to provide target audiences with greater clarity on the criteria used for evaluating / excluding new scientific studies.

Questions to be answered in this session were: Do you explain the risk assessment process? How do you deal with uncertainties? Can the AFWGC Platform play an assisting role? Does your organisation have standard selection criteria for the inclusion / exclusion of scientific studies? Do you make raw data publicly available?

She then asked members to discuss in (4) breakout groups which tools would support Member States in explaining risk assessment and shared several initiatives in this area.

Feedback from group one

Denmark was reporting for the first group (Denmark, Croatia, Belgium, Estonia, and the Czech Republic). This group would appreciate if EFSA could produce simple materials e.g. simple infographics explaining risk assessment, which could be used by the national authorities. The group also highlighted the importance of ensuring transparency with respect to any underlying uncertainties.

Feedback from group two

France was reporting for the second group including (France, Lithuania, Hungary, Luxembourg, and FYROM). This group did not see a need per se to explain the risk assessment process but rather to focus on the results. These countries did not have specific tools for explaining risk assessment. France highlighted the importance for their agency to inform and seek support of multipliers in disseminating risk assessment results.

Feedback from group three

Portugal was reporting for the third group (Portugal, Turkey, Norway, and Slovakia). For this group, risk assessment is not the core business as such. They do not need to explain the risk assessment

process; explaining food inspection (ie controls) is more of a priority. The exception in this group was Norway, which explains the risk assessment process on their website; having better explanations of uncertainty in risk assessment would be a priority as well as implications of risk assessment findings (eg what does it mean to go over the TWI?).

Feedback from group four

The UK was reporting for the fourth group (the UK, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Slovenia). This group discussed target audiences and found that audiences often are more interested to know if their food is safe and are not interested in understanding the risk assessment process.

Laura Smillie thanked members for the discussion and indicated that members' input would be considered in further development of EFSA's communications strategy and initiatives related to furthering understanding of the scientific process.

12. KEY COUNTRY ISSUES IN MS

12.1. France took the floor and presented which tools and channels ANSES used for publishing the renewal of its Scientific Board and panels.

The call has been published on the website, in a special ANSES newsletter dedicated to the renewal of the Board and on Twitter. The newsletter was sent to 14,000 French and 4,000 English speaking recipients. Furthermore, ANSES published the call for expression of interest in monthly scientific magazine *La Recherche* and in French's daily newspaper *Le Monde*. Targeted email campaigns were also used in order to reach spokespersons from various scientific organisations.

Norway took the floor and announced that the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety will renew all panels in 2014 and is currently planning the campaign. Norway will share their lessons learned from the renewal of their panels.

Laura Smillie outlined the initiatives put in place by EFSA to address issues related to gender balance and geographical outreach. She shared EFSA's lessons learned from the big panel renewal in 2012, when eight panels were renewed. EFSA's experience with placing advertisements in key scientific magazines has not proven successful and word-of-mouth proved to be the most effective way of attracting scientists.

Anne-Laure Gassin added that EFSA organised two scientific conferences in Bucharest and in Warsaw in order to further outreach of the call for experts in these countries/regions. She also indicated that sharing information on the promotion of calls for scientific experts could be a regular item on AFWGC agendas in order to learn from each other's experiences.

12.2. The Netherlands then took the floor and did a presentation on the horsemeat scandal in Holland. Chris Krikken indicated that the horsemeat issue was more of a food confidence / food integrity issue than a food safety issue. The presentation followed chronologically the main steps of the horse meat scandal. In April the Netherlands recalled 50,000 tons of beef, which was contaminated with horse meat; while there were no indications of public health risk, the food in question was mislabelled. In June the Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit (VWA) published the results of the recall. During the horse meat scandal the VWA monitored and used social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook to inform consumers and to link to FAQs on the VWA's website.

Anne-Laure thanked Chris Krikken for the presentation and added that this issue of food fraud had triggered a comprehensive action plan put in place by the Commission and Member States. While

traceability of the food chain had worked and the sourcing of products identified very quickly, the incident undermined consumer confidence in the food chain and in public authorities.

13. COOPERATION ON COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

Laura Smillie gave an update on communications activities e.g. the Lexicon / Glossary initiative and guidelines in risk and crisis communications.

With respect to the definition of a common glossary of risk assessment terms (with definitions for lay audiences), Laura Smillie reminded the group that it would be helpful to share experiences. For instance, Greece and Germany have plans regarding their respective glossaries. Norway indicated that the Lexicon initiative is very useful and that Norway is compiling something similar at the moment.

Laura Smillie also mentioned that there will be a discussion with EFSA's Scientific Committee, which is looking at harmonisation of risk assessment terminologies. She announced that EFSA will come back with a revised draft of the glossary by the next meeting. Anne-Laure highlighted that the glossary is not just an EFSA project but would be a useful product which AFWGC members could utilise on their respective national websites.

Moving to risk communications guidelines, Laura Smillie reminded the group that this is a living document which members agreed to keep updated with new case studies. She asked for volunteers to prepare new/additional case studies for the risk communications guidelines.

Norway offered to volunteer with the work carried out on lead in game meat and Sweden offered to share lessons learned from the case of dioxins in salmon from the Baltic Sea. EFSA will in addition prepare a case study on the 2011 *E.coli* incident in co-operation with Germany, France and Spain.

Laura Smillie moved on to crisis communications guidelines and asked if additional guidance regarding the role of EFSA in such instances could be helpful. She also asked if guidelines for crisis communications exist at member state level.

Croatia took the floor and said that crisis is a difficult term and should be further defined.

Anne-Laure Gassin clarified that at European level it is the Commission, who decides what a crisis is. However, the Commission could seek scientific support from EFSA when urgent issues arise; EFSA's role in the EHEC crisis was not necessarily that of a risk assessor but the Authority supported the Commission and Member States in addressing this public health issue in co-operation with ECDC.

Norway took the floor and indicated that greater clarity regarding what is the role and what is expected of Member States in such instances would be helpful.

Laura Smillie added that EFSA is currently pursuing a four year training programme in the area of crisis response; previous training sessions have been organised together with the Commission and Member States. In 2014 the programme will focus on communications with training foreseen for October 2014.

Action: Norway and Sweden to prepare case studies in risk communications, respectively on lead in game meat and dioxins in salmon from the Baltic Sea.

Action: Members to give input to EFSA on which terms need to be included in the Lexicon by 23 September.

Action: EFSA to provide a project plan for development of the Lexicon following discussion with the Chair of the EFSA Scientific Committee

14. TRAINING & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2013

- 14.1. With regards to training, Laura Smillie asked how many times per year training would be appropriate for the group and if an annual or a multi-annual training plan would be better.

The group agreed that adding a half day to AFWGC meetings for training purposes would be extremely helpful and welcomed. The group also agreed that the training could be done when the meetings are in Parma (twice per year).

- 14.2. *Tour de table for most interesting trainings:*

The UK: Social media follow up; content delivery through different channels; crisis communications

The Netherland: Social media and cross media approach (ie managing the communications mix)

Sweden: Crisis communications; social media and their use in campaigns

Spain: Crisis communications

Slovenia: Crisis communications (share experiences across sectors, eg public health)

Slovakia: Social media, especially Facebook and LinkedIn

Portugal: Social media, especially Facebook; crisis communications

Poland: Cross-media approach / best practice in communications; co-operations with lay journalists

Norway: How to develop good and effective messages / stakeholder engagement / “train the trainer”

Turkey: Social media (advantages and disadvantages); how to develop good and effective messages adapted to different target audiences

FYROM: Crisis and stakeholder communications

Luxembourg: Crisis communications

Lithuania: Generic communications and “train the trainer”

Hungary: Social media

France: Social media (review/update of different platforms); monitoring and evaluation

Estonia: Crisis communications and different tools; sharing case studies

Denmark: Social media, media relations / press work across borders.

Czech Republic: Social media

Croatia: “Train the trainer”; stakeholder engagement; brand identity

Belgium: Social media and a cross-media approach

Action: EFSA to consolidate feedback and come back to group with suggestions for training for 2013/14 at AFWCG meeting of 10-11 October.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 15.1. Laura Smillie informed the group that EFSA has been contacted by FAO who are currently developing risk communications guidelines. She asked members if case studies developed for the EFSA/AFWGC guidelines could be made available, to which members agreed.
- 15.2. With regards to stakeholder mapping Laura Smillie announced that the deadline for the contribution from the Member States will be extended. She explained again the rationale behind this initiative and asked members to complete the questionnaire so that findings could be shared at the joint meeting of the AFWGC/Focal Points in October.

France took the floor and said that the questions are difficult to answer as members are being asked to give their opinion about how a wide range of national stakeholders perceive EFSA and EU risk assessment.

Anne-Laure Gassin encouraged the group members to answer the questions as an initial input based on their knowledge and experience on a national level with stakeholders.

Action: Stakeholder Mapping: Deadline for feedback extended to 17 July.

END OF MEETING

Anne-Laure Gassin reminded members that the next meetings will take place in Parma, 10 and 11 October and Parma 5 – 6 December.

The Chair thanked Jurgita Savickaite and Lithuanian colleagues for the hospitality and meeting organisation, the members for their presence, as well as EFSA staff and the interpreters for their work. As no other points were raised, Anne-Laure Gassin closed the meeting at 12:45 hours.