European Food Safety Authority

EXTERNAL RELATIONS UNIT

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Minutes

TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING OF THE EFSA STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIVE PLATFORM

BRUSSELS (BELGIUM) 19-20 NOVEMBER 2014

MEMBERS OF THE EFSA STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIVE PLATFORM

Chair: *Andreas Varlamos*

AESGP – Association of the European Self-Medication Industry	*Hubertus Cranz*	Euro-Commerce	*Els Bedert*
AMFEP – Association of Manufacturers and Formulators of Enzyme Products	*Pia Skaerbak Henk Aalten*	Eurocoop – European Community of Consumer Cooperatives	*Emma Nolan*
BEUC – The European Consumer Organisation	*Pauline Castres, Camille Perrin*	EUROPABIO – European Association for Bioindustries	*Violeta Georgieva*
CEFIC – Food & Feed Cluster	*Marc Vermeulen, Line Jensen*	FEFAC – European Feed Manufacturers Federation	*Arnaud Bouxin, Alexander Döring*
CELCAA – European Liaison Committee for Agricultural Cooperation in the European Union	*Pascale Rouhier*	FEFANA – European Association of Speciality Feed Ingredients and their mixtures	*Didier Jans, Elena Miceli*
COPA-COGECA-European Farmers European Agri-Cooperatives	*Annette Toft, Javier Valle*	FoEE – Friends of the Earth Europe	*Mute Schimpf*
ECPA – European Crop Protection Association	*Euros Jones*	Food Drink Europe	*Beate Kettlitz*
EEB – European Environmental Bureau	*Martin Dermine*	IFAH – Europe International Federation for Animal Health-Europe	*Peter Oostenbach*
ELC – Federation of Euro-	*Maryse*	PFP – Primary Food Pro-	*Kalila Hajjar*

pean Specialty Ingredients	*Herve*	cessors Association	
EFAD – European Federation of the Associations of Dietitans	*Michael Gore*		

APOLOGIES

Freshfel Europe – Philippe Binard
EPHA – European Public Health Alliance – Dorota Sienkiewicz

ABSENT

ESA – European Seed Association (*Garlich von Essen)*
GREENPEACE European Unit (Marco Contiero)
UEAPME – Union européenne de l'artisanat et des petites et moyennes entreprises (Birte Day)

OBSERVERS

Association of Poultry Processors & Poultry Trade in the EU	*Laura Mazzei*	European Crop Care Association	*Hans Mattaar*
DG SANCO	*Giulia Bertezzolo*	European Modern Restaurant Association	*Silvia Lofrese*
DG SANCO	*Lorenzo Terzi*	Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation in the EU	*Yves Lecocq*
EU Food Law	*Sara Lewis*	Mission of Canada to the European Union	*Roxan Hooshangi*
Eurogroup for Animals	*Michel Courat, Kirsty Reid*	US Mission to the EU Foreign Agricultural Service	*Tania de Belder*

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Stakeholder Consultative Platform Secretariat: *Lucia de Luca*

Juliane Kleiner	*Andras Szoradi*
Hubert Deluyker	*José Tarazona*
Laura Martino	*Stijn Van de Vyver*
Tobin Robinson	*Vanessa Descy*

DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2014

1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chair, Andreas Varlamos, welcomed members and observers to the 26th meeting of the Platform and noted that apologies were received from Freshfel Europe and EPHA.

2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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With no further points raised for discussion, the Chair adopted the agenda.

2.1 Follow-up actions from the previous meeting

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The Chair pointed out that all actions can be considered closed since all points are going to be discussed at this meeting.

Action point 4: EFSA to look into the possibility of organising a meeting of the SHP during the Milan EXPO 2015: despite the fact that the date is set for the 15 June 2015, the Secretariat will look for a further confirmation of the date to ensure no change in the date is foreseen by the organisers of EXPO.

Action 1: EFSA to confirm the date of the meeting of the Platform to be organised within the framework of the EXPO 2015. February 2015.

3 STANDING ITEMS

3.1 Report back from EFSA on topics relevant to stakeholders

Power point presentation – 1

Andreas gave the floor to Juliane Kleiner, who, on behalf of Bernhard Url (who could not attend this meeting), shared with participants an update on EFSA's achievements and future challenges. Juliane also provided an overview of the renewal of the eight scientific panels and scientific committee, applications received and timeline for the renewal as well as an update on the number of comments received following the public consultation on "Open EFSA". The Chair invited Karine

Lheureux, connected via phone from Parma, to present an update on the activities of the EFSA Applications Desk. Karine also presented some of the preliminary results of the satisfaction survey her team carried out on the project outlining activities for the identification and development of services for applicants and other stakeholders in the areas of regulated products as well as on the Matrix project related to the optimization of the management of applications that EFSA receives for evaluation via an electronic tool. The Chair gave then the floor to Stijn Van De Vyver who provided participants with an update on upcoming communication activities as well as on EFSA's redesign projects for which stakeholders had already been consulted. Discussions followed with contributions from stakeholders on aspects EFSA should take into account in this exercise.

3.2 Update on the work of the SHP Discussion Groups

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The Chair gave the floor to Lucia de Luca, the EFSA Stakeholder Relations Officer, who provided the regular update on the work of the discussion groups. Lucia informed members about some of the key topics discussed by the groups at their latest meetings in October and provided the indicative timeline for the next meetings and/or report of the two groups.

3.3 EFSA's Scientific Cooperation Roadmap, including EFSA's International Scientific Cooperation

Power point presentation – 2

The Chair gave to the floor Juliane Kleiner who presented the Scientific Cooperation Roadmap which was finalised at the last Advisory Forum meeting on 24th September. Juliane also provided members with an update on EFSA's International Scientific Cooperation programme, whose draft version was discussed at the meeting of the Platform in March 2014. The Chair thanked the members for their interest in the subject and for having requested to receive a more specific presentation of EFSA's approach to scientific cooperation in Europe and beyond. In response to questions, Juliane clarified that the common risk

assessment agenda for Europe will be shared with the members of the Platform to gather their views.

4. STRATEGIC TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 EFSA's Scientific Opinion on the evaluation of allergenic foods and food ingredients for labelling purposes

Power point presentation – 3

The Chair referred to the presentation members received on the topic at the March meeting when EFSA updated participants on progress on the mandate received from the Irish food authority on the topic and

The Chair invited EFSA senior scientific officer Silvia Valtueña Martinez (connected by phone) to update the members of the SHP. Silvia provided a quick summary of aspects the Panel focused on when preparing the opinion, as indicated in the Terms of Reference (ToR) received from the European Commission and provided an overview of the comments EFSA received following the public consultation on the draft opinion. Comments were grouped and for each set of comments, such as clarity in the interpretation of the ToR, completeness of clinical manifestations, diagnosis and management of food allergy, clarity on EFSA's view on current methodologies for allergen risk assessment, etc, Silvia provided the rationale of the answer or the approach EFSA will provide. Silvia also clarified that the Panel looked at all submissions in detail and a more specific explanation on how the comments have contributed to a better and more clearer scientific opinion will be provided in the report which will accompany the publication of the final opinion. Silvia thanked all stakeholders for their contribution and the Chair thanked her for the clear presentation.

4.2 Open plenary meetings – state of play and way forward in 2015

Power point presentation – 4

The Chair gave the floor to Andras Szoradi who provided an overview of the past attendance at open plenary meetings at EFSA, highlighting the increased number of participants registered since 2012, and key areas of interest which remain in the areas of regulated products and health claims. Andras also went through some of the feedback EFSA received from participants and in-house colleagues working in the scientific support units, clarifying how it was translated into the revised guidelines for observers which are now available on the EFSA website. Andras also informed members that EFSA is considering organising open plenary meetings in Brussels to ease the participation of interested parties and to extend the meetings by half a day. EFSA is also considering organising public hearings with the participation of some of the panel/scientific committee members to allow for exchange with stakeholders. Andras answered questions on the organisation of such hearings which was well perceived by many of the participants.

4.3 Update on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations

Power point presentation – 5

The Chair highlighted that many stakeholders are following the negotiation currently on-going for the TTIP agreement very closely and welcomed the request of some members to discuss this topic at one of the stakeholder meetings. The Chair gave the floor to Lorenzo Terzi, Head of Bilateral International Relations at DG SANCO, who is responsible for following the negotiation on the chapter of sanitary and phytosanitary methods within the negotiation process. He presented the aspects in the negotiations which have an interest for EFSA's work. Mr. Terzi clarified the approach the European Commission is following in the negotiation rounds, differences in the approaches by the two counterparts, the difficulties encountered in the process and the desired outcome . In particular when answering questions, Mr Terzi clarified that the Commission has no intention of lowering any EU sanitary standards. The next round of encounters shall take place end of January or

beginning of February in Brussels. Mr Terzi also clarified that EFSA is not taking part in any of the negotiations while the FDA does, due to their risk management responsibilities. Many questions followed and Mr Terzi had the possibility to provide clear answers to all the questions.

DAY 2 – THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2014

4.4 How to involve a broader range of independent scientists in EFSA's activities

Power point presentation – 6

The topic of how to ensure that EFSA has access to the broadest possible scientific expertise is very important to EFSA and many stakeholders. This issue has been discussed on many occasions and the Chair welcomed the offer of the representative of the European Environmental Bureau, Martin Dermine, to share suggestions on how EFSA could best proceed to ensure this goal is meet. After presenting two cases in which EFSA called on a "limited" number of experts, that is the working groups on endocrine disruption criteria and on Bee Guidance Document, Martin suggested EFSA involves more specialists in the development of scientific opinions, avoids conflicts of interests of financial nature or linked to the citizenship o as specific expert, and organises reviews of the outputs of EFSA's working groups by external scientific experts on the occasion of international congresses in easy-to-access cities. EEB ran a survey with 11 experts, asking their availability to join such an initiative and received very positive answers. EFSA's representatives clarified that the composition of working groups is drawn up to respond to what is requested in the mandate and that any lack of expertise is duly addressed and reflected in the composition of the working groups and that through public consultations EFSA ensures to gather broad stakeholder feedback. Juliane also said that EFSA has already been pursuing the possibility of organising working group meetings back-to-back with major scientific meetings. Regard-

ing the feasibility of the proposals, some members pointed out that scientific experts may have limited time available to devote to EFSA's work on top of their daily work, especially if they work for small institutes and that this aspect should be taken into account in any future reflections on this topic. The Chair thanked Martin for his proposals and looks forward to further discussions on this topic in future.

4.5 Discussion in break-out groups: introduction

The Chair pointed out that discussions in break-out groups already took place at Platform meetings in the past and proved to be quite helpful to EFSA because they provided useful and practical feedback for EFSA's work. He then gave the floor to Juliane who said that there were two topics to be addressed by the two groups: EFSA's evidence-based approach, an EFSA initiative aimed at providing practical inputs for the further development of EFSA's methodological framework for dealing with evidence in scientific assessments, and emerging risks in which EFSA is seeking practical input from stakeholders in the further development of EFSA's methodological framework for emerging risks identification.

The break-out group sessions lasted one hour. The topic was briefly introduced by an EFSA staff member dealing with the matter and more than 50 minutes was devoted to discussions and exchange of views. Members of each group appointed a rapporteur at the beginning of the discussions to provide a short summary of the discussions in the plenary session. Juliane invited members to join their respective groups and wished them a fruitful discussion.

4.7 Feedback from break-out sessions and discussion

The Chair gave the floor to Tobin Robinson to briefly outline the subject discussed by the group, mentioning what is an emerging risk, what is the process in place to flag it and which steps are taken to address it. Tobin said that before submitting a topic for discussion by the EFSA Scientific Committee, there is an iterative approach involving consultation with different actors (stakeholders, member states, and

international bodies to assess whether EFSA should consider the topic raised as emerging risk and start any data collection activities. The Chair then invited the rapporteur of Group 1 to report on the discussions.

The rapporteur went through the questions addressed and said that overall the group felt that the approach followed by EFSA for the identification of an emerging risk is clear and that EFSA involves all key players; attention could be given to clarify how it the system works in practice, and the value of health statistics, although they should not be retained of paramount importance. Regarding the feasibility of the approach, it was suggested to learn from past cases since some issues are on the border between risk management and risk assessment. Regarding the use of data, the group believed that further data such as zoonotic and transportation/pollution could also be useful sources. The group suggested to take into account empiric data, experience, testing methods, identification of high risk processes, and climate change effects when looking at whether the system.

The Chair gave the floor to Laura Martino who provided a quick overview of the topic discussed in break-out group one, clarifying the crucial role of evidence when performing scientific assessment irrespective of who is involved in the process. Laura clarified that EFSA started a critical analysis to further enhance the scientific rigor and harmonization of the methodological approaches used when dealing with evidence, this was called the Prometheus project. Laura also clarified the guiding principles that should be fulfilled when performing a scientific assessment and the important steps in the process for dealing with evidence. The Chair then gave the floor to the rapporteur who pointed out the appreciation expressed by the group for such good practice. The group believed in the usefulness of further developing the project which could be easily translated into a ISO-type concept in light of its comprehensiveness. The group debated on the need to refine the question in particular when dealing with such an iterative process, and emphasised the need to report not only the evidence used in the assessments but also to explain the evidence that was not included and the rationale for exclusion. During the discussion clarification was pro-

vided by Laura about the distinction between "conservatorism" and bias in the results of an assessment. It was pointed out that the level of "conservatorism" adopted in the assessment should be realistic. The group also debated the need to take into account the reliability of the data used in the assessment to properly balance the evidence.

4.8 Interaction between EFSA and stakeholders, the role of the Stakeholder Platform

The Chair introduced the point by reminding members that the current mandate of the Platform is due to expire in June 2015 and that in view of EFSA's initiative to revisit the organisation approach to stakeholder engagement, as indicated in the Open EFSA initiative, it sought the members' views about the functioning of the Platform and suggestions regarding aspects to be improved or to focus on. The Chair presented the overview of the replies to the questionnaire sent regarding the current and future operation of the Platform highlighting the comments regarding the usefulness of the Platform, the improvements in recent year regarding the content and format of the meetings, the good relations built between the members and the Secretariat. Proposals regarding possible improvements in the functioning of the Platform and as a consequence of the impact of the forum on EFSA's work were also discussed. Members agreed on the idea to extend the current mandate of the Platform by one year to provide EFSA and the members sufficient time to reflect on best ways to enhance relations between EFSA with stakeholders.

4.9 Dates and topics for 2015 meetings of the Platform

The Chair gave the floor to Lucia who presented the proposed dates and topics for the meetings in 2015; 10-11 March, 15 June and 25-26 November.

Action 2: EFSA to confirm the date of the meeting of the Platform to be organised within the framework of the EXPO 2015. February 2015.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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Power point presentation – 6

The Chair gave the floor to Lucia to present the two updates on EFSA's work which was circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair asked members if they had any questions regarding the rolling plan of EFSA's activities with its stakeholders and the update on the upcoming work for the scientific panels CONTAM and NUTRI.

With no further points added to the agenda, the Chair closed the meeting for the day.

Ends---