

Minutes

56th Meeting of the ADVISORY FORUM

Jurmala, Latvia 11-12 June 2015

Chair: Bernhard Url, Executive Director, EFSA

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM

Belgium	Benoît	Horion
Bulgaria	Boiko	Likov
Czech Republic	Jitka	Götzová
Denmark	Flemming	Bager
Germany	Reiner	Wittkowski
Estonia	Martin	Minjajev
Ireland	Bernard	Hegarty
Greece	Eirini	Tsigarida
Spain	Ana	Canals
France	Rozenn	Saunier
Croatia	Andrea	Gross-Bošković
Iceland	Jón	Gíslason
Italy	Giancarlo	Belluzzi
Latvia	Aivars	Bērziņš
Luxembourg	Patrick	Hau
Hungary	Ákos Bernard	Jóźwiak
Malta	Ingrid	Busuttil
Netherlands	Hub	Noteborn
Norway	Marie Louise	Wiborg
Austria	Klemens	Fuchs
Poland	Jacek	Postupolski
Portugal	Pedro	Portugal Gaspar
Romania	Nicușor	Ciocănea
Slovenia	Urška	Blaznik
Slovak Republic	Gereková	Petra
Finland	Matti	Aho
Sweden	Leif	Busk
United Kingdom	Penny	Bramwell

OBSERVERS

European Commission	Jeannie	Vergnettes
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GUEST SPEAKER

Food and Veterinary Service of Latvia	Janis Altenburgs
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Chair of EFSA's Management Broad	Susan Davies
Chair of BIOHAZ Panel Management Broad	John Griffin
Facilitator	Jaana Husu - Kallio
	Malcolm Parker

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Advisory Forum Secretariat:

Jeffrey Moon

Stef Bronzwaer	Ernesto Liebana
Marta Hugas	Tobin Robinson
Juliane Kleiner	Alberto Spagnolli

1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Bernhard Url opened the meeting and welcomed the Management Board Chair Sue Davies and Vice Chair Jaana Husu-Kallio and the Chair of the BIOHAZ Panel John Griffin to the meeting.

Bernhard Url also welcomed Aivars Bērziņš, AF representative from Latvia as host of the meeting and opening Mr. Janis Altenburgs, the Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer of the Food and Veterinary Service of Latvia who made an opening speech to the members.

Bernhard noted that apologies had been received from Switzerland, Cyprus, Iceland and Lithuania.

2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Before finalising the Agenda, additional items were raised by Croatia (information on forthcoming conference), Luxembourg (on activities during the Presidency), France (information on conference) and Germany (information on workshop).

The members agreed the adoption of the final agenda.

Bernhard reminded members of the requirements to ensure they have submitted an up to date Annual Declaration of Interests and asked for any additional Oral Declarations of Interest for this meeting. No declarations were made.

3 MATTERS ARISING

Since the last meeting, members had received the minutes of the 56th Advisory Forum meeting (adopted by written procedure) which were circulated 7 April, 2015. An overview of the agreed action points from the last meeting were circulated as part of the documentation for the current meeting.

Bernhard Url noted that since the last meeting Country Visits had been held in the UK, Spain, Lithuania and Estonia. Members of those countries in turn provided a verbal feedback to members on the scope of the discussions, pointing out in particular areas for potential collaboration with EFSA that had been identified.

Bernhard Url also informed members of the changes to the organisational structure with the dissolving of the Science Strategy and Coordination (SCISTRAT) Department and the movement of the Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation (AFSCO) unit to Communications and External Relations Department and of the Scientific Committee and Emerging Risks (SCER) Unit to the Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance (RASA) Department.

4 STRATEGIC ISSUES

4.1 Address by Chair of the Management Board

The Chair of the Management Board, Sue Davies and Vice Chair Jaana Husu-Kallio addressed the members on the developing EFSA strategy and the challenges of implementing the scientific cooperation roadmap while balancing workload and resources.

Sweden, Finland, Germany, Spain, France Italy and the UK welcomed the comments from the Management Board noting in particular the importance of developing young scientists in order to have expertise in the future, the need to streamline the risk assessment process and ensure sustainability of the panel system, the harmonisation of methodologies at European and international level and ensuring that cooperation tools are adaptable, flexible and resourced to be effective.

4.2 EFSA Planning/Single Programming Document 2016-2018/EFSA Annual Plan

Ana Afonso (by teleconference) presented the details of the single programming document, preliminary annual plan and development of the EFSA strategy.

Members welcomed the overview of the process noting the importance of activities relating to the international arena.

Bernhard Url concluded reminding members that the Management Board were to discuss the EFSA Strategy at the forthcoming meeting and that consultation on the strategy and the annual plan was planned for later in the year.

4.3 Thematic Grant Topics

Stef Bronzwaer provided members with feedback on the first call for Thematic Grants which closed on 30 April. He opened for discussion the thematic areas to be considered for the next call, referring to the 2014 paper which outlined 12 thematic areas of which one was covered in first call.

Belgium, Finland, France, UK, Norway and Sweden welcomed the update and sought clarification on a number of matters including details of the topics, how they would be selected and the budget for the grants. Stef Bronzwaer informed members that the overall planned budget was €1M and that since the evaluation process is on-going no details on the proposals received can be shared. After conclusion of the evaluation process more information on the pilot call will be shared with the Advisory Forum. In concluding he requested that proposals for themes should be sent to the secretariat in the coming weeks.

Bernhard Url noted that the EU Risk Assessment Agenda will help to identify and prioritise topics.

(Action 1: AF members to comment and/or to propose additional themes for thematic grants (based on the list tabled or additional themes) by 7 August)

4.4 Building the EU risk assessment community: PhD exchange and Fellowship Programme

Following on from discussions at the last AF meeting, Stef Bronzwaer presented a proposal for a PhD exchange scheme.

Members welcomed the proposal and supported the start of a pilot scheme, asking for more flexibility about the current 6 month term of placement, and asked whether EFSA could provide financial support for hosting PhD students, which Stef Bronzwaer agreed to explore.

Stef Bronzwaer then presented a discussion paper for a Fellowship programme made available in the supporting documentation for the meeting. Members supported the proposal, with France asking clarification on the funding, and the UK noting that the European Centre for Disease Prevention (ECDC) model on which the proposal was based gives a good platform for the programme to work.

Members were invited to make additional comments by the end of the month and to lodge expressions of interest to participate in a Discussion Group to develop the programme further with the secretariat. Bernhard Url noted that members endorsed the programme and France, Italy, UK, Latvia, Denmark, The Netherlands, Austria and Germany expressing interest in participating in a Discussion Group.

(Action 2: AF to comment on Fellowship discussion paper by end of June; Action 3: members to express their interest to be a Fellowship Site and/or to host the induction course or 1-week course modules)

4.5 Update on the “REFIT” Exercise

The European Commission provided an update on the upcoming discussions with the General Food Law Expert group on 29 June 2015 regarding the Fitness check on Regulation 178/2002 including those chapters relevant to EFSA, outlining the expected timeframes and consultation period on the concluding report. In order to maximise the input into the process, members were advised to make contact with their national representatives who would attend the meeting on 29 June.

(Action 4: EFSA to circulate names of members that participate in Commission REFIT WG meeting on 29 June)

5 BEE HEALTH – Review of current activities

Tobin Robinson presented an overview of EFSA’s activities in the area of bee health, in particular the MUST-B project. Members were invited to inform EFSA of national bee monitoring programmes.

Bulgaria, France, The Netherlands, Norway, Austria and Finland shared views and information on ongoing work in the area, requesting clarification on the impact of the ban on neonicotinoids, recommending linkage at all international levels and highlighting the area as an example of where a good strategic communications activity is needed with a possible role for the Communications Working Group.

Juliane Kleiner informed members that the consultation with Member States on the ongoing risk assessment on the neonicotinoids would close at the end of June for completion by the end of July.

Tobin Robinson thank members for their interest and assured them that the international and communications aspects of the work were being managed.

6 COMMUNICATIONS/AFCWG

Shira Tabachnikoff (by teleconference) provided members with an update on communications activities, in particular proposals shared with members before the meeting on creating closer links between the Advisory Forum and the AF Communications Working Group. Shira outlined the proposal to have members of the AF attend meetings of the AFCWG.

France, Spain and The UK welcomed the initiative to have a closer working relationship between the two groups, but expressed concern on creating any further permanent steering group. Sweden welcomed the proposal and noted the need for social science skills in the communications arena to ensure engagement with the target audiences. Shira Tabachnikoff noted the concerns on creating an extra burden and clarified that the intent was to have a short term arrangement to better inform AF members of the mechanics of the AFCWG.

Bernhard Url concluded that further consideration would be made on developing stronger links between the two groups and with further discussions at a future meeting.

7 ADVISORY FORUM REVIEW

As part of the process initiated in December 2014, the plenary meeting was suspended in order for members to participate in a breakout session facilitated by an external consultant, Malcolm Parker.

By way of introduction, Malcolm Parker presented the finding of telephone interviews conducted with 12 volunteer members that were held to gain further insight into the role the members play in the Forum and at national level. Members then broke into groups to further discuss the issues raised for feeding back to all members.

A separate report on this activity will be prepared for discussion with members before the December AF meeting.

(Action 5: EFSA to circulate draft report on review of operation of AF for comments to members)

8 EFSA SCIENTIFIC PANEL PRESENTATION

Bernhard Url welcomed John Griffin, Chair of the BIOHAZ Panel and Ernesto Liebana Criado, Head of the Biological Hazards and Contaminants Unit to the meeting. John Griffin presented an overview of the work of the Panel completed in recent years and of upcoming work, highlighting a number of the most significant Opinions from the Panel, the future work plan and areas of close cooperation with the Member States.

Latvia questioned questions on the categorisation in meat inspection and how often the categories were reviewed. John Griffin clarified that the role of the Panel was to consider the scientific aspects of meat inspection and issues relating to costs, responsibilities and review were in the remit of the Commission. Finland and the UK welcomed the food chain analysis approach and the relevant to antimicrobial resistance and informing risk management options, with the UK referencing work being done at national level and involvement in the GMI project. France asked about the change in nature and number of mandates over the last 10 years. Marta Hugas noted the shift in the last years from requests demanding qualitative to the ones asking for more quantitative risk estimation

which required more modelling, the use of predictive microbiology and statistical techniques and more specific advice to risk managements on control options for the reduction of the disease burden attributed to particular hazards and that the Microbiological Risk Analysis (MRA) network one the first of EFSA's scientific networks, was established in this area and proved very successful in terms of identifying self tasking activities from MS's suggestions as well as in the prevention of divergent opinions.

9. FORTHCOMING RISK ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

a. Introduction

Jeffrey Moon informed members of the recent changes to the spreadsheet with details of forthcoming risk assessment activities from the MS, explaining that the guideline is now included in the table. He noted that as agreed at the inception of the activity the information is shared on a confidential basis, but feedback from Focal Points was that to make this work information needs to be shared between organisations and institutions at national level. Members agreed that it was an advantage to share the information within their national networks, but there needed to be a means of restricting information, as indicated in the disclaimer within the Excel front sheet. Jeffrey noted that several members had indicated errors on the extract from the table presented at the meeting and agreed to check the information on the table with members.

Bernhard Url summarised that trust was needed between national organisations to handle information carefully and to respect confidentiality of the information provided.

(Action 6: EFSA to circulate updated forthcoming risk assessment activities table for verification to members by end of June)

b. EFSA Mandates

Tobin Robinson tabled a summary of EFSA mandates received since the last Advisory Forum meeting in March and noting recent and forthcoming consultations, particularly on uncertainty in risk assessment, methodology and biological relevance.

c. MS Mandates/Activities

Members provided a verbal update to supplement the information provided on the summary table of forthcoming risk assessments, with the UK noting the information from Germany on pesticides, Austria informing members on the completed work on risk mapping; Belgium provided information on food contact database. All members agreed that the exercise of sharing the information on forthcoming activities was useful and should continue.

d. Emerging Risks

Tobin Robinson presented an overview of the current activities of the EMRISK area including the Emerging Risk Exchange Network (EREN), the Stakeholder Consultative Group, a project on cyanobacteria and testing a procedure for the identification of emerging chemical risks.

10 OPEN DATA + BONUS programme

Latvia led a discussion on Open data with reference to priorities during the Latvian Presidency and presentation of the BONUS programme, the joint Baltic Sea research and development project initiated under the Framework 7 programme.

Members welcomed the ongoing discussions on open data noting the difficulties of harmonisation due to different approaches in the public and private sectors and the translation of data between languages. Bernhard Url reiterated EFSA's developments and vision in relation to Open Data and referred members to the reference 'Science as an Open Enterprise'.

(Action 7: EFSA to circulate link to paper 'Science as an open enterprise')

11 MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBER STATES

11.1 Need for reliable disease burden estimates to support food safety decision making: the example of human campylobacteriosis in the EU

Hungary presented details of estimates of cost associated with foodborne illness in the EU with the particular example of QALY (Quality Adjusted Life Year) modelling related to the burden associated with campylobacteriosis.

The UK and Finland noted ongoing work in this area and agreed to follow up with Hungary further on the issue. Luxembourg noted the similarity with case information from ECDC where there was a degree of under reporting. Hungary welcomed collaboration from other members in this area and acknowledged that while there are data gaps, the use of tools such as those presented the assumptions made are more transparent.

(Action 8: Denmark to share 2012 study/data on disease burden estimates)

11.2 ANSES Opinion on Insects

France presented information on the "Self-referral on the use of insects as food and feed and the review of scientific knowledge on the health risks related to the consumption of insects", noting that possible health hazards and health safety issues deriving from the rearing and production of insects had been analysed, along with the respective recommendations to prevent them.

Several members noted ongoing work at national level in this area. Luxembourg questions whether the intention was to establish a 'positive list' of insects permitted for feed or food use. France clarified that the scope of the work was to review the scientific issues only. In answer to a question from Greece on the activities of EFSA relating to the mandate on insects, Tobin Robinson advised that the draft Scientific Opinion is expected in September 2015.

11.3 Risk-ranking in the red meat supply chain

The Netherlands informed members of a new holistic approach to risk ranking in the red meat supply chain, outlining recommendations and proposals for use of the approach to other types of meat production and subsequently for plant products.

11.4 National Survey – Article 36 Organisations

Greece presented the conclusions of a recent survey relating to Article 36 organisations recommending earlier communications of calls, improved means of being able to identify partners to participate in calls, simpler processes for updating details on the Article 36 list and more involvement through consultations prior to preparation of calls.

11.5 Workshop on Foodborne Viruses

The UK presented proposals to hold an international workshop on foodborne viruses focussing on Norovirus, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis E, early on 2016 in the UK, and indicated a note on the workshop would be circulated in the near future. France, Spain, The Netherlands, Germany and Finland noted willingness to support the UK initiative.

(Action 9: UK to share note on workshop organisation regarding Foodborne virus)

11.6 Bisphenol F in Mustard

Bernhard Url tabled a document from Switzerland, in the members' absence, relating to a newly identified issue of the presence of Bisphenol F formed in the production of mustard.

12 NEW NETWORK – Residues of Veterinary Medicinal Products Data Collection

Marta Hugas tabled proposals for a new scientific network in the area of residues of veterinary medicinal products to be established. Members had received a background document setting out the justification for establishing the network which goes back to Council Directive 96/23/EC on measures to monitor certain substances and residues thereof in live animals and animal products and the request from the EC to EFSA to be in charge of the data collection and the production of the annual report. Luxembourg noted that there is a need for clarity on the reporting of some substances which are covered by both veterinary medicinal products and pesticide controls.

Members agreed to the establishment of the network.

(Action 10: EFSA to seek nominations from members to participate in new network on Veterinary Medicinal Products data collection)

13 ARTICLE 30 (4) GUIDELINE

Following the last meeting of the AF where it was proposed that a reduced guidance covering only issues of substantive divergence under Article 30 (4) was produced and other issues to be taken up with a review of the Rules of Procedure of the AF, Tobin Robinson tabled a short 'Good Practice' guideline that had been prepared and circulated for comment.

After discussion on minor editorial changes, the document was agreed. The document is published as an annex to the minutes of the meeting (See Annex 1).

(Action 11: Guideline to good practice on Article 30(4) to be included as annex to minutes of meeting)

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Joint AF/FP session

In preparation for the forthcoming joint AF and Focal Points meeting taking place on 13 October in Milan, Stef Bronzwaer asked for a small number of volunteers to participate in preparatory phone conference with Focal Points to prepare the agenda for the meeting. The UK and Ireland agreed to take part.

(Action 12: Teleconference to be organised to discuss agenda for joint AF/FP session in Milan to include UK and Ireland)

Update on Scientific Conference: Italian Session 14 October

Italy extended an open invitation to members to participate in an event being organised in conjunction with the EFSA Scientific Conference and the EXPO entitled “Globalised trade as a driver of emerging risks” to be held in Milan on the morning of 14 October.

EU Food Safety Almanac

At the request of Germany, members were reminded to respond to a questionnaire have circulated a questionnaire on the EU Food Safety Almanac published by the BfR

Delphi Study – EU Risk Assessment Agenda

Jeffrey Moon provided a brief update members on a proposed Delphi Study linked to the development of the EU Risk Assessment Agenda which will be launched later in the month of June, involving members of the AF, FPs, Panel and Network Members.

Conference Updates

France informed members of a forthcoming MedVetNet conference being held on 8-October; Croatia updated members on the Scientific Conference being held on 6-7 October and Germany provided details on upcoming activities relating to the FoodChain-Lab computer aided method for identifying causes of disease outbreaks.

Luxembourg outlined events associated with the Luxembourg Presidency in the last half of 2015.

(Action 13: Details of conferences MedVetNet conference in France (8-9 Oct.), Croatian conference (6-7 Oct.), FoodChainLab Seminar in Germany to be circulated. Action 14: Presentation on presidency events from Luxembourg to be distributed).

Close of Meeting

Bernhard Url closed the meeting thanking the Latvian hosts, members of the Forum for their contributions to the discussions and to colleagues from EFSA who participated in and supported the meeting.

The next meeting of the Advisory Forum will be a joint meeting of the Advisory Forum and Focal Points Network on 13 October, Milan, Italy.

56TH ADVISORY FORUM MEETING

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Action Number	Action
1	AF members to comment and/or to propose additional themes for thematic grants (based on the list tabled or additional themes) by 7 August
2	AF to comment on Fellowship discussion paper by end of June
3	Members to express their interest to be a Fellowship Site and/or to host the induction course or 1-week course modules
4	EFSA to circulate names of members that participate in Commission REFIT WG meeting on 29 June
5	EFSA to circulate draft report on review of operation of AF for comments to members
6	EFSA to circulate updated forthcoming risk assessment activities table for verification to members by end of June
7	EFSA to circulate link to paper 'Science as an open enterprise' (https://royalsociety.org/policy/projects/science-public-enterprise/Report/)
8	Denmark to share 2012 study/data on disease burden estimates
9	UK to share note on workshop organisation regarding Foodborne virus
10	EFSA to seek nominations from members to participate in new network on Veterinary Medicinal Products data collection
11	Guideline to good practice on Article 30(4) to be included as annex to minutes of meeting
12	Teleconference to organised to discuss agenda for joint AF/FP session in Milan to include UK and Ireland
13	Details of conferences MedVetNet conference in France (8-9 Oct.), Croatian conference (6-7 Oct.), FoodChainLab Seminar in Germany to be circulated
14	Presentation on presidency events from Luxembourg to be distributed

Annex 1

Advisory Forum Recommended Good Practice: Substantive divergence over scientific issues (Article 30 (4))

1. Introduction

Regulation (EC) 178/2002¹ sets out provisions in Article 30 relating to diverging scientific opinions, with obligations on EFSA to maintain vigilance in order to identify potential sources of divergence at an early stage and for EFSA and Member State (MS) bodies to cooperate in circumstances where divergence occurs. Specifically, Article 30(4) states obligations for EFSA and MS in cases of substantive divergence over scientific issues.

In addition, the Advisory Forum has a role in ensuring cooperation in these circumstances by virtue of Article 27 (4b).

2. Scope

These guidelines describe the actions to be taken by EFSA in cooperating with a national body to resolve divergence or prepare a joint document as described in Article 30 (4).

3. Substantive divergence (Article 30 (4))

3.1 Diverging scientific opinions can arise at any stage of development of a scientific output prepared by EFSA and a national body in parallel. In addition, there is the possibility that either EFSA or the national body will commence work on developing a new opinion relating to an issue where there is already a published opinion.

3.2 As soon as it becomes evident there is likely to be substantive divergence over a scientific issue, the Head of the relevant Units in EFSA and the national body should ensure that their line management is made aware of the situation leading to divergence without delay. The AF member of the MS and the respective European Commission services should also be informed.

¹ *OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1-24*

Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety

3.3 If not already available, a request for any missing information and data relating to the relevant opinion should be made. The information should be provided without delay in the spirit of cooperation and the *Declaration of Intent* (signed at the 18th EFSA Advisory Forum meeting in Berne, 29 September 2006) and in meeting the obligation of Article 30 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002. EFSA will share with the national body all relevant supporting data and documents. The sharing of information, data and documentation shall be done without prejudice to requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality.

3.4 A scientific meeting (physical or by telephone/web conference) should be convened and held involving appropriate experts and staff from both parties. Where relevant, the European Commission may be invited as an observer.

EFSA and the national body will discuss and agree on appropriate expertise and number of experts and staff to attend the meeting. The meeting will be co-chaired by a senior representative of EFSA and the concerned national body. The purpose of the meeting will be to review the scope and progress of both the EFSA and MS draft or already adopted opinions to discuss the areas of divergence.

Where possible, all relevant documents for discussion at the meeting should be made available by both parties to each other two weeks before the meeting.

3.5 The outcome of the meeting will be the production of a joint document (which may take the form of detailed meeting minutes agreed by both parties) as described in Article 30 (4). The document shall reflect the main discussions and conclusions of the meeting, and if the divergence of views cannot be resolved, the document shall clearly identify the areas of the divergence and the explanation. The document should be completed with as little delay as possible after the meeting. Additional meetings (physical or virtual) can be arranged as necessary, but in a time frame intended to minimise any delay in concluding the document.

3.6 Once the document is agreed between the parties, it will be published on EFSA's website and the web site of the national body, along with the final Opinions.

4. List

EFSA will maintain a list of all matters that have been subject to Article 30(4) procedures.