EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE

68th Meeting of EFSA's Management Board

Minutes of the Public Session

Parma, 16 March 2016 – 9:00-15:30

Members of the Management Board Present	
Sue Davies (Chair)	Radu Roatiş Cheţan
Jaana Husu-Kallio (Vice-Chair)	Jiri Ruprich
Piergiuseppe Facelli (Vice-Chair)	András Székács
Iñaki Eguileor	Robert van Gorcom
Stella Michaelidou-Canna	Piet Vanthemsche
Ladislav Miko	Tadeusz Wijaszka
Jan Mousing	Michael Winter
Raymond O'Rourke	

Staff of the European Food Safety Authority	
Bernhard Url (Executive Director)	Juliane Kleiner
Gian Luca Bonduri	Alberto Spagnolli
Hubert Deluyker	Hans Verhagen
Peter De Pauw	Selomey Yamadjako
Dirk Detken	

Also attending:

Anthony Hardy, Chair of EFSA's Scientific Committee

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SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

The Management Board adopted:

- The EFSA Strategy 2020 subject to some minor changes. The Strategy will drive EFSA work towards 2020 and identifies five overarching strategic objectives. Over the next five years EFSA will:
    - Prioritise public and stakeholder engagement in the process of scientific assessment;
    - Widen its evidence base and optimize access to its data;
    - Build the EU's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community;
    - Prepare for future risk assessment challenges;
    - Create an environment and culture that reflects EFSA's values.
- The EFSA Activity Report 2015 subject to some minor changes. The Report describes the activities carried out by the organisation in 2015. Overall, the Management Board (hereinafter also "the Board") expressed appreciation and conveyed gratitude to the EFSA experts and staff for the very good results achieved. The Board highlighted in particular the achievements in the re-evaluation of food additives, EFSA's cooperation activities with the partner organisations at EU and international level, the progress in the transparency and engagement initiative, the successful second EFSA scientific conference held at EXPO 2015, the new website, the new initiatives on EFSA Journal and social media and the very good budget execution results.
- The EFSA programming document 2016-2019 subject to some minor changes. The programming document outlines the activities planned to be carried out in the years to come, including a preliminary work-programme and budget for 2017.
- The decision exceptionally waiving the provisions of Art. 1(3) and 1(4) of the 'Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operations of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and of their Working Groups' with regards to the eligibility of experts who served three consecutive terms in either the ANS or CEF Scientific Panels to serve a fourth consecutive term in the same Panel. As well, the Board decided that the short mandate given to the prospective ANS and CEF Panel members shall not be counted as a term of office in accordance with the provisions of Art. 1(3) and 1(4) of the above-mentioned decision of the Board.
- The amendment to the Art. 36 list of organisations (7 new entries) which are entitled to assist EFSA with its mission.

The Board **discussed and exchanged views on**:

- EFSA's new stakeholder engagement approach and endorsed the overall concept and way forward, which will replace the current Stakeholder Consultative Platform by moving towards an accreditation system of stakeholders and a series of permanent and targeted engagement platforms. In the weeks to come the proposed approach will be updated and a decision will be submitted to the Board for adoption.
- EFSA's independence policy, which will be renewed in 2016 in line with the implementation of the new EFSA strategy. The overall approach and timeline for the review of the policy were presented. A draft concept paper will be prepared for discussion at the next meeting in June, in view of serving as a base for a public consultation closely thereafter.

In addition, the Board noted:

- EFSA's progress report, which provided information on the activities carried out from the 15th of November 2015 to the 15th of February 2016. The Chair of the Scientific Committee (SC) complemented EFSA's report by presenting the scientific work that is being carried out in the areas of scientific uncertainty, emerging risks and Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC).
- The presentation on EFSA's quality management system, which highlighted the main achievements of the multiannual project and the next steps towards the ISO certification of EFSA's procedures by autumn 2016.
- The update on the fitness check of Regulation 178/2002 (so called "REFIT"). The European Commission explained that the exercise is close to finalisation that it is unlikely it will bring substantial changes on EFSA's legal framework.
- The feedback from the Chair of the Audit Committee (AC), who reported, among others, on audit activities by the Internal Audit Capability (IAC) on the role of the experts in the EFSA scientific decision-making process, and by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) on: (i) the use of grants; and (ii) the management of conflict of interests by EU Agencies. It also referred to the examination by the AC of organisational options regarding IAC governance.
- EFSA's 2016 budget execution and transfers, which provided an overview on the consumption of commitment and payment appropriations over the first months of the year.

Item 1: Opening of the meeting

1. The Chair opened the public session of the 68th Management Board meeting by welcoming the Board members, Executive Director (ED), Chair of the Scientific Committee, EFSA Management Team and EFSA staff members.
2. The Chair invited the Board members to declare possible interests in addition to those already declared in their Annual Declaration of Interests (ADoIs). Robert Van Gorcom informed the Board of his recent appointment as member of the Steering Committee of the Crisis Expert Team for environment and drinking water, and of the Council of State Laboratories.

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda was adopted unchanged.

Item 3: Board members' Declaration of Interests

4. In accordance with Article 13 of the Management Board Rules of Procedure adopted on 27 June 2013, the Board took note of the ED assessment of the Declarations of Interests submitted by seven of its members and confirmed it.

Item 4: EFSA progress report

5. The Chair invited the ED to introduce the report summarising the activities carried out by EFSA from the 15th of November 2015 to 15th of February 2016, including those performed until the Board meeting date. Among others, he highlighted the EU summary reports on Antimicrobial resistance and on Zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks prepared in collaboration with ECDC, the revised guidance on health claim applications, the scientific opinion refining the safety assessment of substances for food contact materials, the new software tool to carry out the exposure assessment of multiple pesticides, and the mandate EFSA received for a new evaluation of neonicotinoids. In the communication area, *inter alia*, the ED emphasised the activities around the safety assessment of glyphosate, which included a news story, a plain-language summary and an infographic describing the key steps for assessing pesticides in the EU. As well, in the field of antimicrobial resistance, he mentioned the video in collaboration with ECDC and EMA and the press release originating more than 30 articles and 5,000 views of EFSA's website. With regards to institutional relations, the ED reported on the meetings with the European Commission (strategic planning, international activities and glyphosate), the EC Internal Audit Service (upcoming audits and open recommendations) and the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Adriukaitis (peer-review process for the assessment of pesticides, with particular attention on glyphosate). The ED exchanged views with the European Parliament's ENVI Committee on glyphosate and held the annual hearing. Numerous were the activities in the fields of scientific cooperation, international and stakeholders relations. Among others, the ED mentioned the crisis simulation exercise carried out with the Member States, EC and WHO, the Memorandum of Cooperation signed with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and his visits to the food safety authorities in Portugal and Luxembourg. Meetings were also held with the Stakeholder Consultative Platform, Foodwatch Germany, the German Federation of Consumer Organisations, European Environmental Bureau, Friends of the Earth Europe and Greenpeace. A separate PowerPoint presentation is available online for a detailed description.
6. The Chair invited Antony Hardy, Chair of the SC, to bring up to date the Board on the activities that the SC executed during the reporting period. The Chair of the SC said that the draft Guidance document on Uncertainty in Scientific Assessment will be used in a trial period by the EFSA Units and Panels for a one-year period.

Training sessions on the application of the Guidance will be provided to EFSA's experts and staff. In parallel, EFSA has outsourced a research aimed to provide information on how to communicate key issues in the area of scientific uncertainty, particularly to consumer groups. The trial phase and the above-mentioned research will help to shape the final Guidance document, which is planned for completion by the end of 2017. He informed the Board on the strategic discussion the SC held around ways to increase the engagement and involvement of the SC and Scientific Panels in the area of emerging risks. Finally, he referred to the publication of the report on the outcome of a public consultation related to the conclusions and recommendations of the EFSA-WHO workshop on TTC held in December 2014. As a follow-up, a new working group has been set up with the aim to check the impact of these recommendations and decide whether the Guidance currently in place needs to be updated and revised.

7. Questions and comments were received on:

- The relatively low number of visits to the new video on antimicrobial resistance (AMR - approx. 2,000) and EFSA's plans to promote additional communication activities to increase the dissemination of information in this area.
  - The ED noted that despite the wide coverage by media on AMR, this subject still keeps attracting mostly expert groups and interested people, being the attention of the general public substantially lower. He acknowledged that communication can improve on this subject, but that overall 2,000 visits to the video on AMR should probably be considered a satisfactory number. He stressed the importance of the scientific collaboration between EFSA, ECDC and EMA in this area.
- An update on the implementation of the scientific Data Warehouse project.
  - In 2015, EFSA provided open access to the database in relation to chemical occurrence and food consumption data. Member States are often the owners of the data in the Data Warehouse, and their collaboration is essential for the implementation of the project. Data originating from industry is also available, which was provided to EFSA in response to calls for data (e.g. for the safety assessment of Acrylamide). The Data Warehouse is a multiannual project, which will gradually expand the public access to the data of other scientific areas in the coming future.
- Information on EFSA's plans to improve the recruitment execution rate, which currently stands at 95%.
  - EFSA is working to improve the recruitment execution rate, in particular through the implementation of the talent management project. The ED stressed that a recruitment level of 100% is virtually impossible to be achieved due to the natural turnover of staff. In addition, underlining the continuous evolution of the scientific matters pertaining to the mandate of EFSA, he noted that EFSA needs some margin of manoeuvre to ensure the recruitment of the most needed talents at certain points in time.
- Additional information on the new procedure for the screening of experts' Declarations of Interests (DoIs), which now sees the validation of DoIs assessment centralised within the Legal & Regulatory Affairs (LRA) Unit.
  - The new system aims at increasing impartiality in the management of competing interests of EFSA's scientific experts and, more broadly, in preventing conflicts of interests. This level of centralisation in the LRA Unit addresses the recommendations

received from the European Parliament to reassign the DoI screening functions to EFSA staff members not directly involved in collaboration activities with the experts.

- Additional information in relation to the Court case concerning the pesticide active substance Diflubenzuron.
  - Upon recourse submitted by the company producing the active substance, which claimed that the publication of EFSA's conclusion damaged its business and contravened its right of confidentiality, as an interim measure EFSA was ordered to remove that conclusion from the website, pending verifications by the Court. Subsequently, the measure was withdrawn and EFSA re-published the conclusion, but only for few days, since the company instructed the appeal against the Court decision. The case is currently on-going.
- Whether EFSA provides scientific advice to the EC or to the Member States in relation to the immigration crisis.
  - EFSA adopted the scientific opinions on lumpy skin disease, on "*peste des petits ruminantes*" and on sheep and goat pox, where a modelling approach for the geographical spread of the disease also via human migration was described, as well as risk mitigation options.
- With reference to the crisis simulation exercise carried out at the end of 2015, whether follow-up actions had been carried out.
  - EFSA crisis simulation programme ended in 2015. A final report was published and guidelines on 'Best practices for crisis communicators: How to communicate during food or feed safety incidents' were developed and test-driven during the crisis simulation exercise.

8. The Board noted the progress report and thanked the ED, the Chair of the SC, EFSA's scientific experts and staff for the work carried out during the reference period.

Item 5: EFSA activity report 2015

9. Among the key achievements of the year, the ED highlighted the efficiency and resource gains through the Step 2018 project, the Talent Management project aimed at attracting, developing and rewarding staff and experts, the Matrix project to implement the electronic management of applications, the Transparency and Engagement in Risk Assessment (TERA) project, the opening of data to the public via the Data Warehouse, the innovation and collaboration on machine learning, the new EFSA website, the second scientific conference at EXPO and the opening of the Brussels office. Concerning scientific outputs, EFSA provided advice to risk managers, *inter alia*, on Xylella fastidiosa, caffeine and Isoflavones, the latter applying the Prometheus approach as a pilot. 96% of the target outputs were reached and 95% were published on time. Questions in 'stop-the-clock' status had slightly increased because of insufficient data submission by applicants, especially in the area of pesticides and FEED. The staff occupancy rate reached the level of 95% with a 7% turnover, whilst the budget execution reached 99.81% in commitments and 90.11% in payments. A separate PowerPoint presentation is available online for a detailed description.
10. Questions and comments were received on:
    - Whether for the future the report can be conceived as a shorter and leaner document, and who's the final receiver of this.

- EFSA's Founding Regulation foresees that by the end of March of each year the Board adopts the Activity Report of the previous financial year. This is then passed onto the EU Institutions, hence triggering the procedure for the discharge for the concerned financial year and it is also published for public scrutiny. The report is currently drafted using a template that was developed by the Network of EU Agencies.

- Additional information on the reduction of MRLs in the backlog in 2015.
  - In 2015, the backlog was reduced by 15 MRLs, which were submitted under Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005. Additional staff members have been hired with the primary task to support EFSA in reducing the backlog in the years to come.
- Additional information on the costs associated to the EFSA Journal.
  - EFSA has concluded a contract with a professional scientific publisher for an overall amount of € 3.5 million in six years. The collaboration with the publisher will bring greater outreach and visibility, as well as savings in terms of human resources.
- Clarify better that the TERA project is an overarching initiative contributing to all scientific areas pertaining to EFSA.
- The section dedicated to the evaluation of regulated products should describe more prominently the activities aimed at issuing scientific opinions and advice.
- As far as the Board activities are concerned, it should be clarified with what bodies the Chair and Vice-Chairs engaged in the reference period.

11. The Board adopted the EFSA Activity Report 2015 subject to the changes suggested during the discussion. In addition, the Board adopted the assessment of the report, which was prepared by the AC.

Item 6: EFSA Strategy 2020

12. The ED highlighted the progress made since the December meeting of the Management Board and presented the changes made to the draft Strategy in line with the comments received through the public consultation held in autumn 2015, the contributions from the Advisory Forum, Scientific Committee and stakeholders, the inputs from EFSA's Second Scientific Conference and those received from the Board in February via a written consultation. The Strategy had been revised with a view to streamline its content and make it more focussed on strategic elements. A revised Implementation Plan was added as an annex to the Strategy to describe the key implementing activities and their related milestones. The Implementation Plan will guide the development of the multiannual plans in the future Programming Documents, where a set of indicators and target measurements will be developed. A separate PowerPoint presentation is available online for a detailed description.

13. Questions and comments were received on:

    - The Board found that the Implementation Plan improved substantially compared to the previous version.
    - With reference to the strategic objective on engagement, from a communication point of view it would be worth emphasising the difference between 'scientific methodologies' and 'guidance documents': the former being an issue pertaining to the scientific community, the latter also involving exchange and dialogue with risk managers and stakeholders.

- The Board agreed with the tiered approach proposed by EFSA with regards to the Authority's scientific cooperation approach.
- The Strategy highlights the role of EFSA in contributing to the overall achievement of the European Commission's political objectives. However, it should be made clearer that EFSA can contribute to those objectives only within the limits of its mandate.
- The Strategy uses the phrase "food safety" as shorthand for "food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, plant health, nutrition, and environmental issues". This information should be stated more prominently.
- In the Implementation Plan, the part related to the TERA project should better reflect the fact that certain actions are already in place, whilst others are going to be gradually put in place in the short- and medium-term, until the full implementation of the project.

14. The Board adopted the EFSA Strategy 2020 subject to the changes suggested during the discussion.

Item 7: EFSA programming document: extension until 2019

15. Compared to the Programming Document 2016-2018 adopted by the Board in December 2015, the Programming Document 2016-2019: (i) Revised the framing of the planned activities in view of the strategic objectives of EFSA's new Strategy 2020, (ii) Further elaborated the plan 2017 also including the 2017 plan for grants and procurements, and (iii) Added the provisional activity plan for the year 2019. With regards to the year 2017, Selomey Yamadjako (Resources and Support) provided an overview on the resource allocation among the EFSA activities, whilst the ED highlighted the key elements characterising the expected work of the scientific and communication departments. A separate PowerPoint presentation is available online for a detailed description.
16. Questions and comments were received on:
    - The need to distinguish between the part of the Programming Document related to the work-plan, budget and establishment plan of the year 2016 (which the Board was called to adopt as 'final') from the part related to the work-plan, budget and establishment plan of the year 2017 (which the Board was called to adopt as 'preliminary'). In the following months the European Commission and the EU budgetary authority will provide comments to the work-plan 2017 that will have to be addressed before its final adoption by the Board at the end of 2016.
    - With reference to the area of regulated products, in 2016 EFSA will maintain the allocation of staff at the same level of 2015. However, the figures in the document would not entirely reflect this.
        - Juliane Kleiner (Scientific Evaluation of Regulated Products) clarified that certain projects contribute, for their horizontal and cross-cutting nature, to a plurality of activities. Nonetheless, from a formal point of view, they need to be framed under a certain activity. This explains the apparent mismatch between the figures and the *de facto* maintenance of the work force allocation to Activity 2 compared to the previous year.
    - The text introducing the work programme for the year 2017 might highlight more prominently the activities that EFSA plans to carry out to implement the engagement approach embedded in the Strategy 2020.
        - The text will be revised in order to address the comment.

- The cost of support activities is planned to remain stable until 2019. Is there room for their reduction instead?
  - The ED explained that the implementation of the IT strategy will substantially support the achievement of efficiency gains in the area of support activities. However, these will become visible once the strategy has reached a certain level of implementation, meaning towards 2019.
- With regards to the reduction of the MRL backlog, in 2018 and 2019 there will be a considerable acceleration of EFSA's activities. A Board member asked if the plan was feasible and by when EFSA plans to achieve the full absorption of the backlog.
  - Juliane Kleiner said that EFSA is working to address the issue with a view to absorb the backlog of MRLs in the shortest possible time. However, in consideration of the high workload on the Pesticide Unit and despite the fact that recently it had been reinforced with additional staff, it is likely that the phase out of the backlog will be achieved around 2020.
- What is meant by "digitalisation"?
  - The ED clarified that "digitalisation" includes the concept of automation of the support activities (e.g. in the financial area), but also the aspiration to a different way of carrying out activities within the risk assessment processes. For example, with the use of artificial intelligence software able to collect, process, assemble and analyse data with a lower intervention of human beings in the elaboration and assessment phase. "Digitalisation" might have a potentially revolutionary impact on the way risk assessment is currently carried out. However, this should be seen as a possible evolution in the medium- or long-term.

17. The Board adopted the EFSA programming document 2016-2019 subject to the changes suggested during the discussion.

Item 8: EFSA independence policy update

18. The current Policy was adopted by the Board in 2011. It was conceived as a document describing holistically the steps that EFSA had put in place to ensure the independence of the scientific decision-making processes. The Strategy 2020 identifies openness, independence, scientific excellence, innovation and cooperation as the values that EFSA applies when performing its tasks. Each of these values should be transposed into specific policies able to translate them into tangible outcomes, e.g.: aspiration, breadth, scope and remit. EFSA's Independence Policy should address the concepts of 'transparency' (stakeholders and the general public shall have the capacity to see how EFSA ensures its independence), 'cost-effectiveness' (EFSA cannot invest unlimited resources), "reproducibility' (the use of the same methodologies and evidences shall bring to the same result) and 'impartiality' (meaning objective assessment of interests). Upon the agreement of the Board, for the Board June meeting EFSA will prepare a concept paper structuring the review of the Independence Policy around the values of the Strategy 2020. If endorsed, that paper would be subject to public consultation, with a view to submit the new Independence Policy for adoption by the Board in December 2016. The adoption of a new Independence Policy would consequently trigger the revision of the current implementing rules on the declarations of interests.
19. Questions and comments were received on:

- Whether the timeline for the revision of the Independence Policy and the rules on the declarations of interests could be shortened.
  - The revised Independence Policy is foreseen to be adopted by the end of 2016. Part of the work related to the revision of the implementing rules might be carried out in parallel, but since these need to be elaborated around the elements to assess the individual independence of experts, part of the work can be carried out only after the adoption of the Policy itself. The aim is to have the new decision on declarations of interests adopted in time for the renewal of the Scientific Committee and Scientific Panels in 2018.
- Will the implementing rules of the revised Independence Policy be subject to public consultation too?
  - The plan would foresee the engagement of stakeholders at the Policy level. The implementing rules enter into quite technical details, which include, among others, the processes for the actual application of the independence principles and the development of the IT tool for the implementation of the Policy.
- Whether the elaboration of policies for each value of the Strategy 2020 is included in the Strategy Implementation Plan.
  - The elaboration of these policies would be framed in the context of "Creating an environment and culture that reflects EFSA's values".
- Once EFSA has elaborated a more concrete proposal for the revision of the Independence Policy, the Board might think to organise a 'deep-dive' session on this issue.
  - Upon request of the Board, EFSA will organise a session on independence in the format that they prefer.

20. The Board noted the presentation on the update of the EFSA Independence Policy and agreed with the suggested way forward.

Item 9: EFSA stakeholder engagement approach

21. Alberto Spagnolli (Communications & External Relations) introduced the item recalling the milestones that brought to the review, and following revision, of the collaboration activities between EFSA and its stakeholders. He stressed that the 'Target audience survey' and the consultation with the Stakeholder Consultative Platform (SHP) highly contributed to the elaboration of the different options for the revision of EFSA's approach towards its stakeholders. Following up the indications provided by the Board at the meeting held on the 1st of Oct. 2015, EFSA worked to design a new stakeholder engagement approach around the following principles: be authentic, inclusive and targeted. The new approach identifies seven stakeholder categories: Consumers, Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups; Farmers and primary producers; Business and food industry; Distributors and food service industry preparing and serving food and beverages (so called "HORECA"); Practitioners' associations and Academia. The approach foresees the establishment of two new permanent platforms (i.e. the Accredited Stakeholder Forum and the Stakeholder Bureau) which would replace the current Stakeholder Consultative Platform, as well as the creation of targeted platforms (e.g. Discussion groups, Scientific colloquia, Roundtables, etc.). Concluding, Alberto Spagnolli invited the Board to consider the adoption of a decision identifying the main elements of the new stakeholder engagement approach, which would guide EFSA in the following elaboration of the procedures of accreditation and selection of stakeholders. A separate PowerPoint presentation is available online for a detailed description.

22. Questions and comments were received on:

- The draft decision submitted to the Board should include the description of the procedures for the accreditation of stakeholders and the selection of the members of the Bureau. In addition, it does not include elements that are stated in the SHP's Terms of Reference, e.g. the accredited stakeholders' capacity to represent a wide group of organisations, their capability to represent interests in more EU Member States, the number of years they operated in pursuing the stakeholders' interests, etc. As well, the draft decision does not make reference to the length of the mandate of the Bureau's members.
- What is the Management Board role in the implementation of the new approach?
    - Alberto Spagnolli said that the approach proposed by EFSA aimed to involve the Management Board in the definition of the overall framework and main elements (e.g. the introduction of an accreditation approach, the identification of the accreditation criteria, the replacement of the SHP with new permanent platforms) without entering into technical details similar to those included in the SHP's Terms of Reference, since these were perceived as pertaining to an operational area perhaps closer to the functions carried out by the ED.
- The new Bureau would meet once a year, whilst the SHP currently meets three times a year. Is the frequency of the Bureau meetings sufficient?
- With the new approach EFSA should guarantee equal opportunities to all stakeholders regardless their economic capacity.
- The new approach should ensure a balanced representation of interests in all discussion/cooperation fora with EFSA. Hence, the new approach should prevent potential situations where certain interests are better positioned than others. Perhaps, 'balance of interests' should be added among the engagement principles, as well as 'transparency'.
    - Alberto Spagnolli clarified that the creation of the Stakeholder Bureau was meant precisely to guarantee a balanced representation of interests. He added that, in line with the principles promoted by the 'Open EFSA', the Authority should allow any interested organisation respecting the accreditation criteria to become member of the Forum, whilst the balance of interests should be pursued at the level of Bureau.
- Has EFSA sufficient resources (both in terms of budget and personnel) to carry out activities in the different permanent and targeted platforms?
    - The ED stressed that the approach proposes a different way to engage with stakeholders, but that collaboration activities and dialogue with them is already being carried out with the use of a certain amount of resources. EFSA will continue allocating those resources for the implementation of activities in line with the new approach.
- The document prepared by EFSA describes the 'accreditation' as not being an absolute requirement for the engagement with EFSA. Does this represent an exception to the general principle?
- Within the stakeholder group of practitioners, space should be provided to paediatricians, since children are amongst the most vulnerable categories of consumers.
- What feedback have the members of the SHP given to EFSA with regards to the new approach?

- The Chair informed the Board that Piergiuseppe Facelli and herself took part in the SHP meeting held in January 2016. She said that the SHP members expressed general support to the new approach, although wanted greater clarity about what this would mean in practice. They also emphasised the importance of balanced participation.

- The identification of individuals able to fully represent the identified categories of stakeholders might be particularly challenging, especially for 'practitioners' and 'academia'.
- The criterion on the 'not-for-profit organisation' might represent a limit for stakeholders representing interests in the food production areas.
- Additional information on the 'EU transparency register' was requested.
- How many stakeholders EFSA expects to accredit?
- Should also national authorities be considered as a category of stakeholders?
- The accreditation system should foresee procedures aimed to avoid that the same organisation represents interests pertaining to different stakeholder categories.

23. The Chair summarised the comments made and said that overall the Board endorsed the new engagement approach with stakeholders, but more detail on implementation was needed. Concluding the discussion, the Board agreed that EFSA will revise the decision in the following weeks, hence circulating it for adoption by written procedure. Should the Board members have reservations or feel uncomfortable with the adoption of the decision via written procedure, the issue will be brought to the attention of the Board in occasion of the June meeting.

Item 10: Renewal of ANS and CEF scientific Panels

24. Juliane Kleiner (Scientific Evaluation of Regulated Products) introduced the item saying that the mandates of the ANS, CEF and NDA scientific Panels would need revision in order to maintain fit-for-purpose and improve the efficiency of the Panels. Such a revision shall be made via amendments to the current legislation. The European Commission has already provided availability to trigger the process in time to have the new legislation in place for the renewal of EFSA's scientific Panels in 2018. EFSA would seize this opportunity to also align the terms of the ANS and CEF Panels with that of the Scientific Committee and the other Scientific Panels. Such an alignment would result in an overall saving of approximately 4.5 FTEs and € 500,000 in ten years. However, since the mandates of the ANS and CEF Panels expire in June 2017 and the new legislation would not be in place before 2018, these need to be renewed with the perspective of a term no longer than one year. This circumstance implies potential drawbacks, e.g. the low attractiveness of the call for new experts. To prevent the problem, EFSA suggested to the Board to exceptionally wave the requirements of Art. 1(3) and 1(4) of the 'Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operations of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and of their Working Groups'[1] making candidates ineligible to serve a fourth consecutive term in the same Scientific Panel.

[1] Decision of the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority concerning the establishment and operations of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and of their Working Groups: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/paneloperation.pdf

25. The Board agreed with the proposal submitted by EFSA and underlined that this approach has to be intended as an *ad hoc* exception suggested by the specific circumstances. Upon the proposal of a member, the Board also decided that the short mandate given to the prospective ANS and CEF Panel members shall not be counted as a term of office in accordance with the provisions of Art. 1(3) and 1(4) of the above-mentioned decision of the Management Board.

26. The call for expression of interest to become a member of the ANS and CEF Scientific Panels will have to mention explicitly the decision adopted by the Board to exceptionally wave the Art. 1(3) and 1(4) of the 'Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operations of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and of their Working Groups'.

Item 11: EFSA quality management system

27. Hans Verhagen (Risk Assessment & Scientific Assistance) introduced the item describing EFSA's quality management system, which is built in order to drive continuous improvement aiming at excellence. EFSA has fully implemented the seven ISO quality management principles i.e.: customer focus, leadership, engagement of people, process approach, improvement, evidence-based decision-making and relationship management. Quality management is among the multiannual transformational projects that EFSA plans to implement in the years to come and that, by autumn 2016, aims to achieve the full ISO certification. A separate PowerPoint presentation is available online for a detailed description.

28. Questions and comments were received on:

- The way EFSA checks the satisfaction of its customers.
  - EFSA has established its customers to be the European Commission, European Parliament and Member States. EFSA has successfully carried out two rounds of customer feedback exercises with the European Commission (2014 and 2015) and will repeat the exercise in 2016.
- With regards to the objective of the ISO certification, is there a common approach among the EU agencies?
  - In 2014 EFSA carried out a benchmarking exercise and verified that the majority of EU agencies have either already certified their quality systems with the ISO standard, or are working to achieve that certification.
- A Board member noted that once reached the ISO certification, EFSA will have to continue allocating sufficient resources for the continuous update of the procedures in accordance with developing criteria.
- The Chair of the AC suggested that, once EFSA is certified, the audit report of the certifying body will be brought for discussion at the AC.

29. The Board noted the presentation on EFSA's quality management system and asked to receive, in a future meeting, information on the practical implementation of the quality management system in the scientific decision-making processes.

Item 12: Update on the fitness-check of Regulation 178/2002

30. The European Commission representative informed the Board that the so called "REFIT" exercise is planned to reach conclusions by summer 2016. He said that at this stage it is unlikely that this exercise will bring substantial changes on EFSA's legal framework.

31. The Board noted the update of the European Commission on the on-going fitness-check of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Item 13: Amendments to Art. 36 list of organisations

32. Mr Ladislav Miko left the meeting at 15.15 and gave his proxy for the vote on the amendments of the Art. 36 list of organisations to Ms Sue Davies.

33. Alberto Spagnolli (Communications and External Relations) informed the meeting of EFSA's proposal to add 7 new organisations, based in Czech Republic (1), Greece (1), Ireland (1), Lithuania (1), Slovenia (1) and Spain (2) to the list of organisations capable of assisting the Authority in performing its tasks.

34. The Board adopted the amended Art. 36 list of organisations.

Item 14: 2016 budget execution and transfers

35. Ilias Papatryfon (Planning, Transformation & Technology) informed the Board that, at the end of February, EFSA commitment and payment levels were respectively 5% above and 4% below the target for this time of the year. Despite the delay, compared to the previous year the consumption of payment appropriations improved and in absolute terms of approx. € 500,000. No budget transfer was carried out in the first two months of the year.

36. The Board noted the presentation on EFSA's 2016 budget execution and transfers.

Item 15: Feedback from the Audit Committee

37. The Chair of the AC updated the Board on the outcomes of the meeting held on the 15th of March. He briefly reported on the discussion held around IAC annual audit report 2015, which was adopted, and the IAC Corporate Governance audit on the role of experts in the EFSA scientific decision-making processes, which was adopted too. The latter report includes the following recommendations: (i) improve the disclosure and transparency of the scientific decision-making processes; (ii) strengthen the identification and evaluation of external experts for working groups; and (iii) define guidance and feedback mechanisms for external experts. The AC also discussed the Internal Audit System (IAS) conclusions on the follow up of outstanding recommendations and noted EFSA's update on the activities that are being carried out to address them. As well, the AC discussed around the special audit of the ECA on the use of grants by five EU agencies, including EFSA. Overall, the audit report is quite positive for EFSA, although it includes some recommendations for further improvement. In addition, the AC discussed the ECA report on the follow up of recommendations included in its audit on the "Management of conflict of interests in selected EU agencies" (2012). Out of eleven recommendations, three remain open, of which one is being addressed with activities adopted in the recent past and two result for many aspects outside EFSA's competence, since one relates to the screening of conflict of interests prior to the appointment of the Board members and the other one relates to the adoption of a cooling-off period for Board members after the termination of their term of office. Finally, the AC had a lengthy discussion around the internal control and assurance organisational options. This issue will be object of further discussion in the following weeks, with a view of bringing it to the attention of the whole Board in June 2016.

38. The Board noted the feedback from the AC.

Item 12: Any other business

39. Before leaving the meeting, the European Commission representative provided a short update with regards to the on-going procedure for the partial renewal of the Management Board. He said that in May 2015 the European Commission had launched a public call for interest to draw a list of candidates eligible to become members of the EFSA Management Board, since the term of office of seven of the current members will expire on the 30th of June 2016. Of the 54 applications received, 33 respected all formal requirements. These were assessed by the European Commission, which drew a list of 24 eligible candidates. The list, which is available online on the DG SANTE website[2], was notified to the European Parliament. Since then, a candidate had withdrawn, hence the overall number of candidates is presently 23. The EU Parliament will provide the Council of the EU with their proposal, which is not binding. The Council is expected to adopt the decision for the nomination of the seven members of the EFSA Board in June 2016.

40. The Chair asked the ED to update the Board on the latest developments with regards to the communication and cooperation activities between EFSA and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) following EFSA's safety assessment of glyphosate. The ED informed the Board that the meeting planned to be held on 17 February was cancelled by IARC because EFSA did not address their request to withdraw from the website certain statements ahead of that meeting. EFSA's position is that information on the website will be possibly amended or withdrawn based on the results of the meeting, which was supposed to be the forum for discussion around possible divergences in the methodological approaches and/or on the use of scientific evidence. EFSA will continue to look for opportunities of meeting with IARC in the future.
    For the time being, EFSA had the opportunity to have an indirect exchange with the IARC experts only within the framework of the workshop organised by the EU Parliament precisely around the issue of glyphosate, which was held in Brussels on the 2nd of March.
    Juliane Kleiner clarified that the scientific cooperation with IARC is still going-on on other dossiers. As an example, she mentioned the participation of IARC in the EFSA working group on epidemiology where experts assess on how the use of epidemiology can be increased for risk assessment activities.
    A Board member suggested that EFSA keeps monitored the scientific activities carried out globally on the assessment of glyphosate, in a manner to possibly establish a global network of scientific organisations which could hopefully reach coherent conclusions.

END

Actions Arising

Action reference	Action	Deadline	Status
March 16, 2016 - 1	EFSA to revise the Activity Report 2015 in accordance with the comments received.	March 2016	DONE
March 16, 2016 - 2	EFSA to revise the Strategy 2020 in accordance with the comments	March 2016	DONE

[2] http://ec.europa.eu/food/efsa/efsa_management_board_en.htm

	received.		
March 16, 2016 - 3	EFSA to revise the Programming Document 2016-2019 in accordance with the comments received.	March 2016	DONE
March 16, 2016 - 4	EFSA to draft a concept paper on the update of its independence Policy.	June 2016	DONE
March 16, 2016 - 5	EFSA to revise the decision on the new Stakeholder Engagement Approach and provide it to the Board for adoption by written procedure.	April 2016	DONE
March 16, 2016 - 6	In the call for interest to become a member of the ANS and CEF scientific Panels (2017 renewal), EFSA shall make explicit reference to the decision of the Board to exceptionally wave the Art. 1(3) and 1(4) of the 'Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operations of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and of their Working Groups'.	May 2016	DONE
March 16, 2016 - 7	Once achieved the ISO certification of its quality management system, EFSA shall submit the audit report of the certifying body to the Audit Committee.	As soon as available	OPEN
March 16, 2016 - 8	EFSA to provide the Board with an update on the QM system highlighting the practical impact it has in the scientific decision-making processes.	2017	OPEN