

Draft Minutes

50th MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM COMMUNICATION WORKING GROUP NVWA, UTRECHT 7-8 Jun 2016

Chair: Shira Tabachnikoff

Members

Austria	<i>Roland Achatz</i>
Belgium	<i>Jean-Sébastien Walhin</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Mariela Pchelinska</i>
Croatia	<i>Vlatka Buzjak</i>
Cyprus	<i>Charitini Frenaritou</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Vladimir Brychta</i>
Estonia	<i>Eva Lehtla</i>
Finland	<i>Jussi Koivisto</i>
Germany	<i>Suzan Fiack</i>
Greece	<i>Eirini Tsigarida</i>
Hungary	<i>Luca Utassy</i>
Italy	<i>Carlotta Ferroni</i>
Lithuania	<i>Svetlana Kneziauskaite</i>
Netherlands	<i>Annette Lijdsman</i>
Norway	<i>Ingrid Margaretha Høie</i>
Poland	<i>Katarzyna Floryanowicz</i>
Portugal	<i>Filipa De Vasconcelos Melo</i>
Romania	<i>Alina- Ioana Monea</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>Milo Bystricky</i>
Slovenia	<i>Mitja Vrdelja</i>
Spain	<i>Ana Canals</i>
Sweden	<i>Karin Gustafsson</i>

Observers

Albania	<i>Isuf Shehu</i>
FYR of Macedonia	<i>Anushka Cvetkovska</i>
Turkey	<i>Fatma Nevra Özcan</i>

NVWA Staff

Antoon Opperhuizen

Anita Douven

EFSA Staff

Barbara Gallani

Sharon Monti

Shira Tabachnikoff

Baptiste Alfano-Giacometti

Apologies: Denmark, France, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the UK.

1. [OPENING OF MEETING](#)

Shira Tabachnikoff International Cooperation Adviser in the EFSA's Advisory Forum & Scientific Cooperation Unit (AFSCO) and Chair of the meeting opened the 50th AFCWG meeting.

The Chair thanked NVWA for their invitation and welcomed the new AFCWG alternate from Austria to the meeting, Roland Achatz. She also presented the new observers from the pre-accession countries: Isuf Shehu from Albania, Anushka Cvetkovska from the FYR of Macedonia and Fatma Nevra Özcan from Turkey and provided background on the IPA programme and goals.

2. Introduction from EFSA's new Head of Communications and External Relations

Barbara Gallani, the new EFSA Head of Communications and External Relations, introduced herself to the group as an Italian national, but a European citizen through and through, having spent the past 17 years in the UK. She underlined the significance of our work as Food safety agencies, and insisted on our role not only to try to align but also communicate and explain diverging views. She concluded by mentioning that she was at the meeting to get to know the AFCWG members and observers and understand how to improve our collaboration with food safety communicators from Members states.

3. Key Country issues

3.1 [The official product testing series of the Nébih](#)

Luca Utassy, AFCWG member from Hungary, presented the product testing project she currently carries on at her organisation. The aim of this project is to raise consumer's awareness of the authority's work and inform on safe and high quality food. Two times a month the National Food chain Safety Office of Hungary perform a thorough product testing and issues several articles about selected product groups. They then issue a final ranking of the tested products. Luca insisted on the dialogue the initiative entailed both with the consumers and with the companies. Luca's presentation triggered very interesting comments and discussions amongst the group. Some of the members

highlighted that this initiative, even though very interesting in terms of visibility, would not be possible in their national environment due to: conflict of interest, tasty vs healthy, how difficult to convince the journalists that there is no money involved, etc... It highlighted the various approaches agencies can take to promote their work to consumers.

3.2 Microbial resistance - Communication in Slovak republic

Milo Bystricky introduced a report on AMR issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic. Milo mentioned that AMR was a topic that was one of the priorities of Slovakia for the next EU presidency. He then described the communication strategy concerning the diffusion of the AMR report at the national level: with experts through the database of national experts National Expert Scientific Groups and the National focal point web page; with broad public through social media and Mass media experts; with consumer associations.

3.3 Endocrine Disruptors, Consumer Monitor 2016 and Comms on Glyphosate

Suzan Fiack the AFCWG members from Germany presented her Key country issues on Endocrine disruptors and gave some update on Glyphosate. She opened her presentation by mentioning the current discussions on the definition of endocrine disruptors. Many scientists have different views on the foundations of the assessment of harmful endocrine substances. Therefore, BfR organised a conference with 23 internationally renowned scientists and observers from EU bodies to clarify all the questions on endocrine disruptors. Videos of the presentations given during the meeting as well as a conclusion are available on the BfR website. Suzan also informed the group that a BfR Twitter account in English has been launched and an Instagram account will soon be launched. Concerning glyphosate Suzan introduced to the AFCWG a BfR-Consumer-Monitor that showed that consumers were not that wrong when it came to risk perceptions. Regarding glyphosate the challenges in risk communication were the "Zero tolerance" linked with GMO and "Agroindustry", the diverging view of experts, the different stakeholders' agenda and the discussion about lack of transparency or independence. Suzan added that the anti-glyphosate campaign used a lot of images, which is really hard to counter argument with just science because the visual has a way greater impact on the minds of people. She concluded with the four main lessons learnt out of the Glyphosate campaign: Openness, transparency, Independence and Responsiveness/timeliness.

3.4 The Public discussion on a package of 3 new/renovated food related laws in Bulgaria

Mariela Pchelinska AFCWG member from Bulgaria presented her key country issue on the Public discussion on a package of 3 new/renovated food related laws in Bulgaria. Mariela

explained to the group the various steps they used during the campaign: the first step was to focus on proactively debating with the stakeholders, public and media the drafts of the laws. The second step was to receive feedback from the discussions and understand the reactions to expect when the law is adopted and implemented. Based on those reactions they drafted the potential communicational risks in order to improve the communication goals, messages and tools use in the communication strategy.

4. [How NVWA communicates](#)

Anita Douven, Head of the Communications Department at the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority presented insights on how NVWA communicates. After giving a quick background on the history of the NVWA, Anita mentioned the fact that NVWA is working for two ministries: Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. NVWA has its own Intelligence and Investigation service which gives to NVWA the same authority as the Police. Anita stressed the important exposition of the authority in the Dutch media, this is mainly due to the very broad scope of activity of NVWA. The Communications Department always seek to find the most appropriate tools and the best way to communicate depending on the issue and the situation. Anita elaborated on the different tools NVWA uses to communicate but also to have a direct contact with the society: Infographics, youtube videos, website, social media and a call centre opened 24/7. She then focused on the significant use of the social media in NVWA based on four levels of interactions: monitor (listen), send info, dialogue, and collaboration. Finally Anita briefly introduced us to the way the communication unit was organised and how the teams were divided.

Following Anita's intervention several members had questions regarding the innovative and responsive social media approach NVWA has. Anita highlighted the procedures in place and the high level of trust on the NVWA staff, she also mentioned that mistakes could not be avoided, when something goes wrong they debrief to avoid to repeat those mistakes.

5. [Discussion on AFCWG governance](#)

To conclude the morning session, Shira Tabachnikoff opened the floor for a discussion with the members regarding the future of the AFCWG. Throughout the past year there have been discussions and feedback regarding the alignment of the AFCWG with the AF and the objectives of the group to serve the needs of the AF. Shira opened the discussion with a proposal to consider transitioning the governance model of the group from the Advisory Forum Working Group to a [European Network of scientific organisations](#). This model could potentially allow for greater autonomy, a stronger focus on 'the science of risk communications', more flexibility to invite experts to present and greater clarity regarding its role with regard to the AF. In the form of a Network there could continue to be strong alliances with the Advisory Forum. Shira's presentation was followed by a lively discussion amongst the AFCWG members: some members being supportive of the potential change while others were concerned. In some cases the concerns were related to the new appellation and the objective to give the group a more scientific focus and the impact this may have on the nature of the discussions and the membership. There were also concerns regarding the liaison with the AF and the need to continue to strengthen our link with the AF priorities.

6. Presentation of the EU insights survey

To begin the afternoon AF/AFCWG joint session, Shira presented the EU insights survey on the risk perception of AMR in Animals and its impact on Human Health. An online survey of consumers will be conducted in 12 selected EU countries (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and UK). The criteria for selecting the countries were: Consumer perceptions in relation to antibiotics in meat, Population corrected sales of veterinary antibiotics, GDP/capita. In parallel qualitative interviews will be conducted with farmers and veterinarians in six countries (Denmark, Poland, Spain, Romania, and the UK). The final report is due early October 2016 and will be presented at the next AFCWG meeting in Bratislava. Communications plans will be developed with the Member States and EFSA.

7. Latest knowledge in science of risk communications in non-crisis situation

Antoon Opperhuizen, AF member from The Netherlands, launched the joint workshop of the AF and AFCWG with a presentation on Risk Perception/Risk Communication and the methodology developed and implemented by the NVWA. NVWA has implemented a risk communication assessment frame. In mixed meetings the participants experimented with recent “cases” on how to deal with risk, risk assessment, risk perception, targeted groups and the type of communication strategy to choose. The used schemes are available in the EFSA DMS.

8. Science meets Comms “Master Classes”

Suzan Fiack presented the recent research on Insects’ Risk Perception conducted by BfR. Insect consumption was clearly an emerging topic of interest for further discussion and sharing messaging and experiences.

9. Bernhard’s intervention

Bernhard Url, EFSA Executive Director, joined the group to underline the relevance of the AFCWG within EFSA’s mandate. Bernhard’s intervention continued with another discussion on the AFCWG governance initiated the day before. Bernhard highlighted the developments of the AFCWG and understood the concerns of some of the Members. He underlined that EFSA seeks to provide the best possible platform for collaboration and adding value in Risk Communications and that innovation may require change. He would fully support the views of the Advisory Forum, which had a discussion the following day. The main concerns are to ensure an alignment with the priorities of the AF and to build on the past successes of the AFCWG.

10. Recent EFSA communication highlights

Shira gave the floor to Sharon Monti who introduced the recent EFSA communication highlights. Sharon informed the members about the new platform used for the EFSA journal. The Wiley platform offers many benefits for instance it gives access to a wide community of knowledge, more visibility but also nice features such as exporting citations and the altmetrics index. Sharon then mentioned the upcoming innovations

prizes lunch at EFSA and concluded a quick update on recent opinion of the CONTAM Panel opinion on process contaminants in palm oil.

11. Social media strategy

Sharon gave a second presentation on EFSA's social media strategy. Although EFSA has been on social media for a while, a more dynamic strategy is currently being set up. At the moment EFSA is active on Youtube, Twitter and LinkedIn, the other platforms are only used as repository. When we compare the EFSA's current social media strategy with the other EU agencies we can consider EFSA as being quite conservative. She highlighted few points of the new EFSA 2020 strategy currently being implemented, for instance the new flash interviews that are shot after important meetings in order to provide information on a timely manner. Another point raised by Sharon was the involvement of the scientists in the 2020 social media strategy, they are the experts therefore they should be at the frontline, especially in the social media. High level managers and other EFSA staff will also use their personal twitter account; corporate account will be developed to create a synergy with all the EFSA linked accounts. Sharon underlined that the added value is not only for EFSA but also for the scientists (gain of recognition, more citations, etc...). Sharon's intervention finished with members sharing their ideas on Social media. There was clearly great interest in this topic which will be further explored at future meetings.

11.2 Social media campaign with low budget

Karin Gustafsson AFCWG member from Sweden initiated her presentation by underlining the fact that when you do not have a lot of money for a campaign you have to be creative. It is therefore important to work with Social media tools and build effective campaigns using less costly channels, or targeted campaigns. As an example Karin mentioned their last campaign where they used some Facebook features allowing you to have geographically targeted adds in order to target certain communities. Karin displayed as an example another successful campaign on Dietary advice based on videos sharing using different channels, for which they spent 30K and managed to have more than 2.5 million views on their videos. To conclude her intervention Karin raised questions on effects of the use social media for a campaign (what we can/ cannot do? Is the anonymity respected when needed? etc...)

11.3 Infographics in social media

Ingrid Margaretha Høie, the AFCWG member from Norway, introduced the infographics on AMR produced by VKR and their use in the social media. She explained that last December VKR published three opinions on AMR, following these publications they discovered the lack of understanding about AMR therefore they decided to create several infographics. As Ingrid mentioned, one of the advantages of an infographics is that it can be used and reused through various channels (social media, powerpoint, blogspots, etc...). Ingrid showed the top tweets in March and the Instagram posts with the AMR infographics, and highlights the fact that the infographics were not directly shared

entirely but rather in different bits. The infographics are available in both English and Norwegian and everyone interested is free to use them, Ingrid can provide the original file if needed.

12. Overview of AFCWG activities

Shira gave a presentation focused on an update of the various AFCWG activities. The Risk Communications Guidelines 3rd edition will contain cases on Glyphosate (tbd), Caffeine and Acrylamide. The Glossary is now available for translations and implementations. Developments in the EU Insights will be shared in the coming weeks, with the final survey results presented in Bratislava, at the next AFCWG meeting. If there is interest in participating in an Expert Exchange, EFSA can support. The crisis communications guidelines were also completed in March and available for translations and dissemination. In addition, EFSA is in discussions to launch an International Liaison Group on Risk Communications. There may be an event in June 2017 in Parma which would be adjacent to an AFCWG meeting to allow for attendance of members if there is interest.

13. Any other business

Shira Tabachnikoff concluded the meetings thanking NVWA for hosting the 50th AFCWG meeting and reminded the group that a quarterly calendar of communications activities will be implemented and shared among the AFCWG. Shira stressed the importance of sharing media monitoring amongst and reminded that new LTTs on Process contaminants in vegetable oils and foods have been shared on the DMS. Finally the 51st AFCWG meeting will be organised in Bratislava in October.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	AFCWG members	Share LTTs with EFSA and others members by sending to the Secretariat or putting on the DMS
Action 2	AFCWG members	Share media monitoring with EFSA and others members when relevant
Action 3	EFSA	Organise the drafting of a case study on Glyphosate by some AFCWG members
Action 4	EFSA	Share EFSA comms activities calendar for Q3
Action 4	AFCWG members	Send to EFSA upcoming comms activities that are relevant to share every month to be included in the overall communications calendar
Action 5	EFSA	Consider organising a practical workshop on Social media for AFCWG members at a future meeting
Action 6	EFSA	Contact members stages included in the EU insights on AMR to develop communications plans
Action 7	EFSA	Feedback on AF discussion regarding future governance of AFCWG and next steps