

Minutes

51st MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM COMMUNICATION WORKING GROUP Bratislava, 4-5 October 2016

Chair: Shira Tabachnikoff

Members

Austria	<i>Elisabeth Publig</i>
Croatia	<i>Sara Mikrut</i>
Cyprus	<i>Charitini Frenaritou</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Vladimir Brychta</i>
Estonia	<i>Eva Lehtla</i>
France	<i>Elena Seite</i>
Germany	<i>Suzan Fiack</i>
Hungary	<i>Luca Utassy</i>
Italy	<i>Carlotta Ferroni</i>
Netherlands	<i>Annette Lijdsman</i>
Norway	<i>Astrid Tvedt</i>
Portugal	<i>Filipa Melo de Vasconcelos</i>
Romania	<i>Alina-Ioana Monea</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>Milo Bystricky/Petra Gereková</i>
Slovenia	<i>Mitja Vrdelja</i>
Spain	<i>Carmen Garrido Garcia</i>
Sweden	<i>Sara Johansson</i>
United Kingdom	<i>Justin Everard/Christina Hammond-Aziz</i>

Observers

FYR of Macedonia	<i>Katerina Matikj</i>
Montenegro	<i>Andreja Boskovic</i>

External Speakers

Slovakia	Dipl. Ing. Zuzana Nouzovská
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EFSA Staff

Saba Giovannacci

Tony Smith

Shira Tabachnikoff

Apologies: Belgium (Jean-Sebastien Walhin), Finland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland (Katarzyna Floryanowicz-Czekalska), Greece, Bulgaria

1. OPENING OF MEETING

Shira Tabachnikoff, Communication Networks and Staff Engagement, Senior Officer and Chair of the meeting, opened the 51st AFCWG meeting.

The Chair thanked the Food and Trade Section of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic for hosting the AFCWG meeting in Bratislava and inviting the members for an evening activity.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Dipl. Ing. Zuzana Nouzovská, General Director of the Section of Food and Trade, gave an introductory welcome and a short speech regarding the value of the AFCWG and its relevance for the realm of food and feed safety. Her clear support of the importance of risk communications was expressed.

3. UPDATE FROM THE ADVISORY FORUM

Barbara Gallani, Head of the Communications and External Department, and Jeff Moon joined the meeting via teleconference to give an update from the recent meeting of the Advisory Forum in Bratislava the previous week. Jeff Moon presented the highlights of the meeting, which included an update on the EU Risk Assessment Agenda and the signing of the Declaration of Commitment by the members.

Barbara Gallani gave an overview of the feedback from the AF regarding the proposal of transitioning the AFCWG into a network of scientific agencies. She explained that the AF valued and supported the need to maintain a close network between the Member States' communications professionals. The aim was to continue the work of the AFCWG in improving best practice in risk communications, sharing experiences and expertise, increasing coherence and improving preparation when challenges such as diverging opinions arise. The outputs of the AFCWG, including the Risk Communications guide to best practice: [When Food is Cooking up a Storm](#) and the recently developed [Incident Guidelines](#), were also highly regarded.

However, the AF felt that there was still a gap in ensuring that they were well-informed regarding the AFCWG activities and at times did not understand how the AFCWG's activities were aligned with supporting the objectives of the AF. These aspects, they recommended, should be more closely addressed in the future Terms of Reference (ToR). Some suggestions to improve communication lines are to include reporting at both meetings from each group (the AF to the CEN, and the CEN to the AF). Barbara Gallani offered to be an active spokesperson for the CEN at the AF meetings. Presenting a CEN Annual Workplan to the AF would also allow an opportunity for input and

recommendations. The AF also expressed a need to focus on 'the science of communications', in which they suggest including the integration of social science and strengthening the groups' expertise in this area. As a network, a benefit is that experts may attend the meetings to help build these capacities.

In addition, there was a suggestion to consider symposiums or workshops that would accompany the regular meetings and would focus on learning from experts and social scientists. There were constructive suggestions to the ToR from the AF members and Barbara Gallani recommended that the AFCWG take these considerations on board and address them in the coming months, prior to the next meeting.

4. DISCUSSION: NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE, THE AFCWG AS A NETWORK

Shira Tabachnikoff continued the discussion of the transition to a network and the review of the new Terms of Reference. In general there was a greater understanding of the suggestions coming from the AF. There was agreement that it could benefit the network to increase their understanding of new developments in socio-economic and behavioural sciences. Several members were already integrating social science methodologies in their work and others were interested in developing their knowledge in areas such as risk perception, customising communications to various target audiences, addressing bias and activism in science and 'nudging'.

Some suggestions were to invite social scientists at meetings to offer trainings, workshops or lectures and to guide the network in developing a framework for integrating it into the work of the MS, EFSA and the network. Another suggestion was to develop, similar to the other guidelines produced by the network, guidelines for best practice in integrating social science into risk communications. It was also proposed to develop a sub-group to discuss this in more detail and help prepare for future meetings with suggestions for speakers and activities. The network was also supportive of continuing the EU Insights risk perception surveys. The suggestion of organising a symposium was of interest for the members, but they see this more for 2018. Also, the symposiums need not be on an annual basis, but rather organised as deemed useful and of value for example when there are new developments in the area of social science regarding risk communications, possibly every 2-3 years.

The ToR was updated based on the AF's feedback and shared with the members. The final ToR will be shared with the AF and the AFCWG members. The next steps are for the AFCWG to be discontinued and the AF members to nominate the members of the CEN, which will be the same members as the AFCWG.

5. HOW SFP COMMUNICATES

Milo Bystricky gave an overview of the activities of the Communications Department which works closely with scientists and experts, including activities and communications with Article 36 organisations and National Reference Laboratories. They also manage a National Group on Communications. Communication with the public includes: consultations on certain topics that are either controversial or key scientific issues (PCB, dioxine, etc.); managing Web sites, newsletters & other publications; 5 to 10 scientific events per year; more than 100 documents released on the web per year and Facebook.

6. KEY COUNTRY ISSUES

6.1 Consumer risk perception surveys in Hungary

Luca Utassy presented 'Consumer Risk Perception surveys in Hungary' and how the institute performs surveys twice a year, since 2012. The main purpose is to monitor the effectiveness of communications projects.

6.2 Social Media at BfR

Suzan Fiack gave an update on recent social media activities and their impact on issues and reputation.

6.3 Use of infographics on social media

Astrid Tvedt presented the use of infographics in social media including their experience when communicating complex subject matters. She also presented one of the most popular infographics on human contact with dogs and whether this was healthy or not.

6.4 Eat greens and be full of beans

Filipa Melo de Vasconcelos presented recent activities of the ASAE program to improve education and awareness at schools regarding healthy eating habits. The project aims at teaching good practices on reading food labels and teaching children confronted with various types of foods to make healthy choices.

6.5 FSA Voices

Christina Hammond-Aziz presented the FSA approach to engage all staff and encourage them to use social media to promote the work of the FSA, how this is being achieved and a status update on its success.

7. RECENT & UPCOMING EFSA COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

Tony Smith presented the recent EFSA communications activities regarding the risk assessment of GMO opinion on first maize containing 5 GM. The panel concluded there were no safety concerns but identified uncertainties – potential ability of a new protein to cause immune reactions of other proteins (adjuvency) in potential sub-combinations of those 5 GM. Mitigation measures to reduce uncertainties were recommended. EFSA added a topic on GMO to the website and had a proactive social media outreach, created two flash interviews with experts working on "alternatives to antibiotics" opinions and a video on AMR in the context of the UN high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance.

Tony Smith also presented the launch of EFSA's new Stakeholder approach and the promotion to encourage registration. In addition, he mentioned that EFSA's Executive Director has scheduled visits to various MS countries, often in line with the EU Presidency, and that support from the AFCWG members is greatly appreciated for national media outreach activities during these visits.

8. INTRODUCTION TO SHARING –SESSION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

9. KNOWLEDGE SHARING SESSION ON SOCIAL MEDIA (*BREAK-OUT GROUPS LED BY MEMBERS*)

9.1 Creating engaging social media

Christina Hammond-Aziz offered a hands-on workshop where participants learned how to make visually attractive content using free online tools, write effective tweets and create authentic and engaging videos to improve social media outreach.

9.2 Low-cost tricks to produce content and increase engagement

Luca Utassy created a social media game in which various cards were shared with the participants and questions were asked. The participants had to read their card aloud if it was an appropriate response and discuss the outcomes as a group. Many new techniques were discovered that provide low-cost benefits.

9.3 How to Build Trust

Annette Lijdsman led a group discussion that evaluated the way each participant managed social media at their own organisation and how successful this was. Also, she gave advice on how approaches and buy-in from senior management could be approved.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND ACTIONS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA SESSIONS

11. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS OF THE EU-INSIGHTS SURVEY AND DISCUSSION FOR COMMUNICATIONS PLANS

Shira Tabachnikoff presented the results on the **EU Insights project: Perceptions on the human health impact of AMR in animals across the EU**. This is currently the only survey we are aware of that covers the risk perceptions of consumers on this issue. The results show a lack of information and confusion in many of the countries surveyed, with some differences per country. The next phase of the EU insights survey is to review the results of the qualitative surveys for Vets and Farmers in 6 countries.

There was enthusiasm from the MS to disseminate the results from the survey, packaged in a web news story and infographic, potentially on 18 November (European Antibiotic Awareness Day). EFSA was to provide the material one week prior to the launch. The results of the Farmers and Vets would be shared at a later date.

12. OVERVIEW AND UPDATE OF AFCWG ACTIVITIES

Shira Tabachnikoff gave an update of the various activities that are being developed by the AFCWG, including the next (3rd) edition of the Risk Communications Guidelines ('When Food is Cooking up a Storm') which will include two new case studies provided by EFSA (Caffeine and Acrylamide), as well as a short chapter on communicating uncertainty and a new introduction. The timing is now foreseen for December 2016. EFSA will also further develop a shared forward-looking calendar where members can include their relevant communications activities.

13. SCIENCE MEETS COMMS 'MASTER CLASSES' – COMMUNICATING UNCERTAINTY

Tony Smith gave a presentation on Communicating Uncertainty and the results of EFSA's recent target audience research surveys. He explained that there is an upcoming draft guidance being produced by a Working Group of EFSA's scientific committee and within the guidance will be a dedicated section on communicating uncertainty. In addition, he presented the results of the survey that evaluated the effectiveness of the Clear Communications Index on communicating uncertainty.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Shira Tabachnikoff presented upcoming meetings planned including a meeting 1-2 March 2017. Cyprus was announced, but the location may still be changed. In addition there will be a meeting in June at EFSA, dates tbc. This will be combined with the launch of the International Risk Communications Liaison Group. And the final meeting of 2017 will be end of September (dates tbc) in Tallinn, Estonia as it will have the EU Presidency. The

next meeting will focus on exploring integrating social science into the network. EFSA will also continue to organise teleconferences on an as-needed basis for 'hot topics'.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	Chair/AFC WG members	Create sub-project groups to focus on specific issues of interest, including AMR and Social Sciences. Create a WhatsApp group.
Action 2	EFSA	Finalize the Risk Communications Guidelines to finalize in December, 2016 including completion of case studies, new introduction, refreshing social media section and new chapter on communication uncertainty.
Action 3	EFSA	Confirm location of first meeting in 2017.
Action 4	EFSA	Confirm dates of last meeting of 2017.
Action 4	EFSA/AFC WG members	Annette and Astrid offered to help collate various multimedia products and include in the DMA. EFSA to create a DMS folder for this purpose.
Action 5	EFSA	Finalize and share the Terms of Reference of the CEN.