

COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Draft Minutes

2nd COMMUNICATIONS EXPERT NETWORK (CEN) Parma, Italy 6-7 June 2017

Chairs: Barbara Gallani and Shira Tabachnikoff

Members	
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Italy	<i>Carlotta Ferroni</i>
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Norway	<i>Ingrid Margaretha Høie</i>
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Romania	<i>Alina-Ioana Monea</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>Kristina Kristufkova</i>
Slovenia	<i>Mitja Vrdelja</i>
Spain	<i>Ana Canals</i>
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Observers	
Albania	<i>Amneris Drenofci</i>
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FYR of Macedonia	<i>Katerina Matikj</i>

Montenegro

Andreja Boskovic

Serbia

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Guest Speakers

Dr. Gaya Gamhewage, WHO

Mara Frigo, WHO

EFSA Staff

Barbara Gallani

Shira Tabachnikoff

Saba Giovannacci

Rory Harrington

Anthony Smith

Victoria Villamar

Sharon Monti

Flavio Fergnani

Hana Musinovic

Lucia de Luca

Arthur Healey

Bernd Elzer

Julia Finger

Nuru Saadi

Courtney Chew Leung

Mariya Dokova

Apologies: Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, United Kingdom, Turkey, EU- Commission.

1. Welcome from EFSA

Barbara Gallani, EFSA's Head of Communications and External Relations, welcomed all members and introduced the new representatives Kaiafa Chrystalla from **Cyprus** and Igor Grabez from **Serbia**. She extended a special welcome to the guest speakers Dr Gaya Manori Gamhewage and Dr Mara Frigo from the World Health Organization (WHO).

2. Welcome and introduction from the Executive Director, EFSA

Bernhard Url, EFSA's Executive Director, urged members to continue embarking on new initiatives in the pursuit of the three main objectives of the CEN: sharing best practices, improving coherence and preparedness and the integration of social sciences in risk communications. Development in these areas would help in the communication of science and risks guided by a deeper knowledge about societal functions.

3. Workshop | Putting Social Science into Action

Dr Gaya Gamhewage and her colleague Mara Frigo introduced the guiding principles of risk communications in a context of global health challenges and different communication channels. Gaya emphasized the need for a multi-disciplinary approach

taking into account a mix of engagement strategies, including social and behavioural change communications (SBCC). She presented a model of social sciences interventions (SSI) that involves a closer study of community practices and risky behaviours and the development of population-owned interferences.

Following her presentation, Gaya led an interactive training session with a simulation on Avian Flu. Members from Hungary, FYROM and Bulgaria volunteered to take part in a role-play exercise as interviewees on a news broadcast. They had to develop talking points and present messaging for relevant audiences. The exercise aimed at presenting the possible challenges of responding during times of uncertainty on complex issues under time pressure.

4. Update from the last Advisory Forum meeting

Barbara Gallani, EFSA, reported back from the 63rd Advisory Forum (AF) meeting (held on 7-8 March, Malta). Among the main topics discussed were: EFSA and Member States (MS) cooperation and capacity building at international level, discussion on EFSA's Scientific Cooperation Workplan 2017-2020 and on the progress of the EU Risk Assessment Agenda (EURAA).

5. Update on Risk Assessment Agenda

Hana Musinovic, EFSA, presented the EU Risk Assessment Agenda developed to identify and address common long-term needs through collaborative projects between EFSA and Member States in addition to their own national priorities. The catalogue of [EU RAA project ideas](#) includes project proposals received from the AF with the aim to initiate projects in 2017. CEN Members have the opportunity to join existing projects or propose new project under Delphi priorities. Further discussion focused on ways to align CEN activities with the EU RAA, address priority topics from a communications perspective, and support EU RAA on the national level.

6. Scientific Networks | Role of Network representatives (CEN Members)

Julia Finger, EFSA, presented the organisational changes and administrative and logistics procedures, following the move to a scientific network (from AFCWG to CEN). Members are now network representatives and need to be aware of rules regarding appointment of network members, their role, how they are related to EFSA and their national networks. A visualisation of Member States organisation and structures and how they cooperate with EFSA can be found in the [Annual Scientific Cooperation Report 2016](#).

7. Review of CEN Work Programme activities | Discussion on the EU insight project

Shira Tabachnikoff, EFSA, reminded participants of the three priority areas of the CEN (Improving Coherence and Preparedness; Sharing Best Practice and Strengthening Capacity in Risk Communications and Integrating Social Science in Risk Communications). She further presented concrete actions that have already been taken in addressing each of the topics. The utilization of communications materials provided by EFSA (e.g. AMR infographic, Risk Communications Guidelines) on the national level was discussed while Spain made a suggestion to translate the Guidelines in Spanish and hence make them usable throughout Latin America as well. Feedback was collected on possible collaborative platforms for the exchange of communication materials. Ana

Afonso, Emerging Risk group at EFSA, recommended the [Knowledge Junction](#) platform as an easy tool to share it and publicise data. Mariela Pchelinska (Bulgaria) volunteered to be part of the Task Force on social sciences announced during the first CEN meeting.

Nuru Saadi, EFSA, presented a summary of options for the upcoming EU Insights survey. Based on previous feedback, a majority opted for the topic of Emerging Risks (ER). The need to further elaborate on the definition of ER and to try close gaps in existing research was acknowledged. This definition would in turn depend on having a clear idea of what the results will be used for and who would be the main target audiences.

Other possible topics discussed during the meeting included Endocrine Disruptors (ED) and sugar. Opinions were expressed that both ED and ER might be too unfamiliar for audiences, while sugar is already a highly researched topic. The challenges of finding a topic that would be of equal concern and equally familiar in every country was recognized. A suggestion to overcome this potential shortfall was to use the EU Insights as an indicator providing an overview of a topic that can later be analysed more in-depth at national level. Another concern raised was the need to formulate questions that would provide context and capture the attitude of consumers in a way that allows for a decision to be taken quickly.

After a renewed voting, sugar received 10 votes as a possible topic while ED and ER received 3 and 8 respectively. Barbara closed the discussion reassuring CEN members the issues raised would be taken to the Advisory Forum.

8. Communicating Uncertainty

Anthony Smith, EFSA, presented the results from the multilingual online survey on Communicating Uncertainty. He provided an overview of its context and applicability, of the questions asked and responses received and of the main findings. The latter would be discussed with MS and EFSA experts to draft new practice-orientated Guidance document on developing tailored approaches at communicating. Next steps would include finalising the report and recruiting social scientists to help in the preparation of the Guidance document to be released in February 2018.

Please kindly note that the survey results contained in the PPT are confidential and won't be published until 2018 so please do not disseminate them further.

9. Feedback from EFSA's 1st Stakeholder Forum (SEA)

Victoria Villamar, EFSA, presented on the topic of stakeholder engagement and reported from the 1st Meeting of the EFSA Stakeholder Forum, held on 30-31 May 2017 at EFSA Premises. She introduced EFSA's approach to integrating stakeholders' strategic input into the work plan and in the formulation of future priorities. Interaction with stakeholders from various backgrounds involves feedback enabling EFSA to improve ways in which it communicates science and the trust in the risk assessment process. Victoria informed that the 1st meeting of the [Stakeholder Bureau](#) would be on 1 September.

10. Update on EFSA's Communications Activities

Sharon Monti, EFSA, went over EFSA's social media (SoMe) strategy with a focus on EFSA's twitter accounts. She recapped achievements from the Executive Director's account and presented statistics on tweets and re-tweets while also discussing challenges in involving staff into social media. Members had questions on targeting of messaging and audiences and the use of an editorial calendar and planning of social media activity. Karin Gustafsson, Sweden, made a suggestion to discuss at future meetings the engagement of influencers in the context of social media outreach.

Rory Harrington, head of Risk Communications Unit at EFSA, informed members about the ongoing renewal of its ten Scientific Panels and its Scientific Committee. He encouraged CEN Members to spread the word on their organizations' website and social media channels. The aim is to raise awareness among their networks, especially in light of the challenges when recruiting experts in the GMO panel. The entry point for all related materials is the [dedicated page](#) on the EFSA website where more information can be found.

Flavio Fergnani, team leader of the Media Team EFSA, provided an update on the issue of glyphosate in light of the sustained public debate on the issue. He presented recent developments as summarized by the [statement by EFSA](#) addressing stakeholders' concerns in relation to the EU assessment, especially after the publication of the internal emails by Monsanto in relation to glyphosate (the so-called "Monsanto papers").

11. Conclusions and housekeeping

Shira Tabachnikoff handed out layman's summaries for the Day 2 Workshop on Non-technical (plain language) summaries for participants to prepare.

12. Opening and Key Country Issues

Shira Tabachnikoff welcomed the Members by recapping the first day of the meeting. She opened the floor to the presentations on Key Country Issues.

The first presentation was by Ana Canals, Spain on the topic of [Ciguatera food poisoning in Europe](#). Ana reported on the ways in which awareness of toxin can be raised given the fact that it is hard to recognise the disease. She presented the [EuroCigua](#) project which unites organisations from six member states under the umbrella of EFSA to further investigate the risks and spread of ciguatoxin poisoning.

Vladimir Brychta, Czech Republic, presented the communications activities of the [Food Safety Information Centre](#) in Prague. He explained the main activities of the Centre and introduced the communication strategy for reaching out to the Centre's main stakeholders. Among the highlights were: the dedicated website and mobile apps; e-learning courses for students and educative pages on healthy consumption patterns.

13. Key Country Issues

Jane Ryder, Ireland, presented on the issue of [Allergen labelling of loose foods](#). The communication campaign has been focused on framing the accurate display of food allergen information as a legal responsibility of all food service businesses. Main outlets used were trade magazines, leaflets and online tools (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn).

The next key country issue was on [How to handle an outbreak of campylobacteriosis](#) as presented by Karin Gustafsson, Sweden. The discussion that followed focused on the exchange of best practices and ideas in handling the situation and its possible consequences from a communications point of view.

The [presentation](#) by Kristina Kristufkova, Slovakia focused on the ways in which the issues of the labelling of GMO-free food and of salmonella infected meat imported from Brazil were handled at the national level. In the discussion following the presentation, a [project](#) for clearer labelling involving countries from the Danube was mentioned as an example of existing practices taking place.

14. Key Country Issues – cont'd

The second part of key country issues presentations was opened by Dalibor Vidacak and his presentation on the Key issues and organization of [Food Safety system in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). Dalibor spoke about the research on salt quality, the 2017 monitoring of food fraud and the overall structure of the food safety system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dr Suzan Fiack, Germany, provided an [update](#) of recent and upcoming communication activities of the BfR. Suzan announced the publication of the Fourth Consumer Monitor on the perception of health risks and went over the upcoming scientific opinions to be published by the BfR.

The next key country issue concerned communication on [Avian Influenza in the Netherlands](#) and presented by Annette Lijdsman (NVWA). The discussion focused on the different ways in which the risk was communicated and the importance of cooperation between different authorities in handling the issue. In the communication campaign, a targeted social media approach was employed that could possibly be included as an example in the next Risk Communications Guidelines. While on the topic of avian influenza, Carlotta Ferroni (Italy) informed members that on October 4 2017 the conference "Avian influenza: a global threat" will be held at the headquarters of the Italian Ministry of Health in Rome.

15. Workshop | Non-technical (plain language) summaries of EFSA's work lectures and events for consumers

Arthur Healey, team leader for EFSA journal, introduced the topic of plain language summaries and the ways in which they can be used to avoid technical language and improve the accessibility of EFSA's output. He presented the project to develop Plain Language Summaries at EFSA and the future steps to completing the pilot.

At the start of the workshop, Arthur provided a list of key questions to accompany the two plain language summaries that were distributed on the topics of Vitamin B1 and benchmark dose (BMD) approach. Feedback from the workshop included: the importance of choosing topic and ways in which it is conceptualised; the need for more specificity of conclusions and the development of engaging visuals and design.

CEN Members will be kept updated on the development of the project and further comments from them are welcome.

16. AOB

Lucia de Luca, AFSCO unit EFSA, provided an update on the International Risk Communications Liaison Group (IRCLG), their planned work in the area of best practices exchange and the upcoming activities.

Shira Tabachnikoff announced that the next EFSA Scientific Conference will be taking place September 2018 in Parma. Sessions on communications that might be of interest to the group will be included.

Shira closed the meeting by reminding Members that the next CEN meeting will take place 26-27 September in Tallinn, Estonia.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	EFSA	<i>Working towards integrating social sciences in the CEN work programme with future trainings.</i>
Action 2	EFSA	<i>Finalizing the concept of the next EU Insights survey by looking into ways the topic of Emerging Risks can be integrated.</i>
Action 3	EFSA/CEN members	<i>Update the CEN Communications Campaigns DMS folder with feedback and inputs that could be of interest to Members. Keeping the Members posted on upcoming events of mutual interest.</i>
Action 4	EFSA	<i>Create a WhatsApp group and the CEN Yammer group. Inform and suggest use of notifications</i>

Document history

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