

Minutes

68th MEETING OF THE EFSA ADVISORY FORUM

Meeting location:	Marinela Hotel Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
Meeting date:	6-7 June 2018
Meeting hours:	09:00 – 18:00 on 6 June 2018 09:00 – 12:30 on 7 June 2018
Chair:	Barbara Gallani
Co-chair	Hans Verhagen
Co-chair	Guilhem de Seze

Members	
Austria	<i>Klemens Fuchs</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Boyko Likov</i>
Croatia	<i>Andrea Gross- Bošković</i>
Cyprus	<i>Stelios Yiannopoulos</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Jitka Götzová</i>
Denmark	<i>Flemming Bager</i>
Estonia	<i>Martin Minjajev</i>
Finland	<i>Matti Aho</i>
France	<i>Charlotte Grastilleur</i>
Germany	<i>Andreas Hensel</i>
Greece	<i>Eirini Tsigarida</i>
Hungary	<i>Ákos Bernard Józwiak</i>
Ireland	<i>Pamela Byrne</i>
Italy	<i>Alessandra Perrella</i>
Latvia	<i>Vadims Bartkevičs</i>
Lithuania	<i>Jurgita Bakasénienė</i>
Luxembourg	<i>Nathalie Welschbillig</i>
Malta	<i>Ingrid Borg</i>
Netherlands	<i>Antoon Opperhuizen</i>
Norway	<i>Danica Grahek-Ogden</i>
Poland	<i>Jacek Postupolski</i>
Portugal	<i>Pedro Portugal Gaspar</i>
Romania	<i>Cristian Duicu</i>
Slovenia	<i>Urška Blaznik</i>

Slovak Republic	<i>Petra Vanková</i>
Spain	<i>Ana Canals Caballero</i>
Sweden	<i>Per Bergman</i>
United Kingdom	<i>Jesus Alvarez-Pinera</i>

Observers

Albania	<i>Pamela Radovani</i>
Bosnia-Herzegovina	<i>Dzemil Hajric</i>
FYR of Macedonia	<i>Zoran Atanasov</i>
Montenegro	<i>Vesna Dakovic</i>
Serbia	<i>Tamara Bošković</i>
Turkey	<i>Serap Hancı</i>
European Commission	<i>Luis Vivas Alegre</i>

EFSA Representatives

AF Secretariat: Sérgio Potier Rodeia	
<i>Barbara Gallani</i>	<i>Gisele Gizzi</i>
<i>Hans Verhagen</i>	<i>Giuseppe Stancanelli (VC)</i>
<i>Guilhem de Seze</i>	<i>George Kass (VC)</i>
<i>Marta Hugas</i>	<i>Stef Bronzwaer (VC)</i>
<i>Juliane Kleiner</i>	<i>Olaf Mosbach-Schulz (VC)</i>
<i>Didier Verloo</i>	<i>Stylianos Koulouris (VC)</i>
<i>Mary Gilsenan</i>	<i>Marco Binaglia (VC)</i>
<i>Jose Cortinas Abrahantes</i>	<i>Valentina Rizzi (VC)</i>
<i>Ilias Papatryfon</i>	

DAY 1

1. Welcome and Opening of the Meeting

Barbara Gallani, Chair of the meeting, welcomed participants to the 68th Advisory Forum (AF) meeting. Apologies were noted from BE, IS and Kosovo¹, as well from EFSA's ED, who had to attend a public hearing of the PEST Committee at the European Parliament in Brussels. The Chair informed that the meeting would be co-chaired with Guilhem de Seze and Hans Verhagen.

The Chair welcomed the new members of the AF - Jurgita Bakaseniene, from LT; and Cristian Duicu from RO – and as well Luis Vivas-Alegre from DG-SANTE (EC). The floor was then given to the Bulgarian Deputy-Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Tzvetan Dimitrov, for a welcome speech.

¹ *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair asked the plenary whether participants wished to raise any point under AOB. IE expressed the wish to make a brief reference to the newly published [FSAI report](#) on the safety of vitamins and minerals in food supplements.

3. Matters Arising

a. Action Points from last meeting

The Chair informed that two items from the previous AF meeting were ongoing: (1) MS interested to cooperate on chemical mixtures to confirm interest (to be further discussed under Agenda item 10b); (2) EFSA to consider the setting up of a Discussion Group on Total Diet Studies under the Scientific Network on Chemical Occurrence Data – issue under consideration. France expressed interest in participating in such Discussion Group.

b. ED visit to Rome: SETAC Conference, ISS; FAO

Marta Hugas provided an oral report on the recent ED visit to Rome, in particular the attendance to the SETAC Europe 28th Annual Meeting and visits to the *Istituto Superiore di Sanità* (ISS) and FAO. Among other topics discussed with ISS, reference to the implementation of a One Health approach on certain activities within the organisation; and the use of advocacy initiatives for increased consumer engagement and trust. The meeting with FAO focused on collaborative initiatives on pesticide MRLs, capacity building initiatives in risk assessment and data sharing opportunities on Ciguatera and climate change.

c. Paris Conference on “*The impact of global change on the emergence of plant diseases and pests in Europe*”

Giuseppe Stanganelli (by VC) updated members on the main outcomes of this conference, in particular the effects of global changes in plant pests, the EFSA work presented at the conference, and main conclusions. A key message conveyed was that EFSA is contributing to predict and prepare for new plant pests at EU level in line with the principles of the new EU Plant Health Law among other initiatives.

FR asked whether there were ideas for joint collaborative projects under H2020 on this domain. FI advised the implementation of models aimed at mapping the geographical spread and occurrence of plant pests. IE asked whether presentations from the conference were available on any public website. EFSA confirmed to be working on this domain and noted the idea for possibly exploring H2020 and FP9 as a funding tool for joint projects. The EC representative recalled that H2020 has a call for proposals under Societal Challenge 2 on “New and emerging risks to plant health”, for which more information is available on this [link](#). All presentations of the conference are available on ANSES website on this [link](#).

4. Strategic Issues

a. EC proposal on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain

Luis Vivas-Alegre provided an update to AF members on the state-of-play of the proposals for a targeted amendment of the General Food Law as well as next steps and respective calendar. The Chair thanked participants for input provided to date.

SE welcomed the EC proposals, in particular the additional funding to be provided for new staff with the aim to improve the quality and reliability of studies. However, concerns were raised on the timeframe envisaged to operate the recruitment procedure. A

question was raised on the scope of the audit to be implemented to laboratories (EU or wider scale). As the roles and tasks of the MB and the AF are clearly defined and separated according to the existing Founding Regulation, DE asked whether a proportional representation of the MB would have an impact on the future, science based work of the AF. ES expressed a positive opinion about the EC proposals but is not supportive of the idea that MS nominate experts to the Scientific Committee and Panels since MS will not be in a position to force experts to work with EFSA. Concerns were also raised on the independence of MB members should they be appointed by MS.

Luis further clarified that transitional period is provided and the plan foresees successive introduction of new posts. Proposals are far from suggesting that EFSA staff will have the ownership of scientific opinions. The proposal stresses the possibility for EFSA staff to carry out preparatory work for scientific opinions, while the final scrutiny and decision on their adoption remains a competence of the Panels. The draft provisions aim instead at ensuring that EFSA communicates more explicitly with MS the areas where expertise is needed, and that MS engage in the process of providing and building the capacity to provide such expertise. The extra financial budget aims to cover potential needs that EFSA might have in the delivery of preparatory work also including support from MS. With regards to IPR and confidentiality of data, the proposal does not challenge the existence of IPR and data exclusivity rights where applicable. Thus, it should be noted that data received by EFSA may only be disclosed and used by third parties under certain conditions. On risk communication, the specific objectives will be developed jointly by the EC and EFSA in consultation with MS, taking also into account the views of stakeholders and citizens in order to ensure that risk communication is fit for purpose.

FR questioned about the targets set in the risk communication domain, and, in particular, if these are aiming stakeholders or citizens at large. A point was also made on intellectual property rights (IPR) and how confidentiality of data will be taken into account. IT expressed that clear procedures (for example transparency, DoI management, working times) need to be set for nominating experts to the Scientific Panels; FI noted that transparency should also be sought on the risk management domain and questioned whether the choice being made aims to boost risk assessment capacity in the entire EU system or if it is more focused in EFSA; DK asked whether the proposal is sufficiently balanced between funding and new obligations/tasks; DE asked who will retain ownership of scientific opinions prepared by the Panels given the implementation of a system that draws mostly from MS expertise.

Luis further clarified that the proposals are far from suggesting that EFSA staff will need to develop scientific opinions. The draft provisions aim instead at ensuring that EFSA communicates more explicitly with MS the areas where expertise is needed. Preparatory work for scientific opinions will be carried out by EFSA while the final decision on their adoption remains a competence of the Panels. The extra financial budget aims to cover the potential needs that EFSA might have in the delivery of such preparatory work. With regards to IPR and confidentiality of data, the system will ensure the existence of IPR and data exclusivity rights where applicable. It should be noted that data received by EFSA can only be disclosed and used by third parties under certain conditions. On risk communication, the specific objectives will be developed jointly by the EC and EFSA in consultation with MS, taking also into account the views of stakeholders and citizens in order to ensure that scientific opinions are explained and fit for purpose.

The Chair added that the process through which EFSA contributed for the development of the proposals has been very open. Some risks have been identified, as the sustainability of the Panel system. Regarding transparency, it was highlighted that the balance achieved and the measures being implemented by EFSA are already very strict.

b. EP PEST Committee meetings

Guilhem de Seze provided an oral update on the EP PEST Committee meetings as well as next steps and respective calendar. Members were informed about relevant activities and the ongoing process of the REFIT of the pesticides Regulation. Very recently the Chair of the EP Pest Committee visited EFSA.

c. French action plan on pesticides

FR presented the French Plant Protection Product (PPP) reduction plan established by the French Government². The key objective set for 2025 is a reduction by 50% on the national use of pesticides. The plan is a joint Governmental initiative involving the Ministries of Environment, Health, Research and Agriculture.

Marta Hugas noted that this is a topic being discussed at EU level. Particular reference was made to the AgriResearch Conference, held in Brussels at the beginning of May. The final programme and presentations are available on [this EC website](#). Topics discussed focused on similar areas to those of the French plan, namely healthy plants, animals and ecosystems for healthy people, and how to address societal concerns and lower the use of chemicals. Guilhem de Seze mentioned that EFSA expects to receive by the end of the year a mandate to start using the Endocrine Disruption criteria in the assessment of pesticides active substances, applicable to new and on-going cases.

5. Final Report on EFSA's External Evaluation

Juliane Kleiner provided AF members with the key elements of the final draft report on EFSA's External Evaluation, with reference to main findings, key conclusions and next steps. The final report, received on 05.06.2018, will be presented and discussed with EFSA's Management Board on 19.06.2018. The main outcome is positive, acknowledging that EFSA matured considerably since 2011 and that EFSA has successfully and continuously delivered high quality and fit-for-purpose scientific advice. EFSA, together with the EC services, will ensure that the final report considers the outcome of the GFL fitness check and the EC proposals.

The Chair highlighted that members are asked for suggestions/ideas on enhanced risk assessment cooperation initiatives with MS, to be submitted for consideration by the MB when approving the recommendations based on the outcome of this report (to occur on 09.10.2018).

ES noted difficulties in making recommendations without having a look into the context of the report. The audit methodology used seems very descriptive but not analytical, thus concerns were raised on how far the audit will be taken. Juliane Kleiner clarified that EFSA's financial investment has doubled (up to 400K) and that questions raised during the process covered the whole EFSA systems, including sustainability of the scientific production system. DE raised the question on how this input can feed into quality management systems and advised drawing conclusions in order to improve them. Hans Verhagen replied that EFSA is in constant process of improvement (through e.g. its annual planning and customer satisfaction surveys).

6. EFSA Scientific Panels

a. Panel renewal outcome

Juliane Kleiner provided members with an overview of the process leading to the new Panel composition. Reference was made to the timeline, process and criteria used, as well as an analysis of appointed experts based on age, gender, nationality and affiliation.

DE congratulated EFSA for the highly complex decision-making process, observing that the key point is to achieve expertise and not gender or country-of-origin balance. Since most Panels have been completely renewed, clarification was sought on this matter. SE noted that the number of Panel members was reduced (from 21 to 17) and asked if availability of expertise was an issue. It was also noted that number of experts from uni-

² *ANSES is therefore not liable for the wording of the document presented

versities increased while from national authorities decreased, thus raising the question on what can be drawn from such shifts. Juliane Kleiner acknowledged that expertise is the most important criteria, followed by consideration of gender and age, admitted that for certain Panels availability of experts was limited. Reference was also made to the fact that half of selected experts are coming from working groups, which ensures continuity and, at the same time, new experts at Panel level. IE congratulated EFSA and expressed a positive opinion for the raise on the number of experts from academia since the majority of research is carried up at that level. ES acknowledged the work and added value of the Focal Point network during the promotion of the call for the Panel renewal; DE asked how many people declined due to the conflict of interest. Juliane Kleiner clarified that 10% of experts were refused due to conflicts of interest.

b. Outgoing Panels views on future research needs

Georges Kass and Stef Bronzwaer (both on VC) shared with AF members the key outcomes of a consultation process with outgoing Panels on future research needs. Input from AF members will be sought to feed into the final report and subsequently to EFSA input for H2020 and FP9. By mid-June, a short draft report will be circulated for consultation to the AF, for input by early September. During summer, in-house consultation will also take place, to be collated jointly with MS input in September. IE suggested identifying in the report the topics of upcoming research funding activities for 2020.

Action 1: EFSA to circulate to AF members the report on "Outgoing Panels views on future research needs" once ready; AF members to comment by early September 2018.

7. Communications update

The Chair presented an update on recent communication activities, in particular on the Communications Expert Network (CEN), the EU Insights project, recent communication outputs and products, current consultation on the guidance on communicating uncertainty, and stakeholder engagement. It was noted that the CEN meeting scheduled for end November (back-to-back with the 70th AF meeting) has been cancelled due to budgetary restrictions and agreed decision to reduce scientific network meetings. On the latter, alternative scenarios to compensate for this reduction are being considered, such as virtual meetings or meetings held in Parma, to be held on a need basis.

FR enquired if the draft guidance on communicating uncertainties was tested and which were the results of such testing; CY requested to be included in the next EU Insights on chemical mixtures; DE expressed the view that the CEN could play a role in developing and bringing EFSA's ideas to the MS, especially when strategic direction is missing; and FI enquired why the media monitoring emails previously sent to AF members and FPs have stopped. The Chair replied that all available material on the guidance on communicating uncertainty was tested within the CEN network with the aim to assess how much of the material could be used in real-case scenarios, highlighting also the importance of the feedback to be received in the context of the current public consultation. It was explained that the EU Insights initiative was originally targeted for 25 instead of 28 countries (with CY, LU and MT not included) but that it has been agreed to find a way to cover also these three countries with national support. On the main objectives of the CEN network, it was clarified that the network focuses mainly on explaining controversial issues that EU and MS are dealing with, as well as provide support to FPs in engaging with the scientific community. As to media monitoring, this activity was discontinued due to the need to prioritise resources in the EFSA communications domain.

8. EU-Risk Assessment Agenda (EU-RAA) and Capacity Building

a. Update on EFSA-BfR FPA

Didier Verloo provided an update on projects currently running under the EFSA-BfR FPA on risk assessment tools for global safety of the food and feed safety chains, focusing on the current status and upcoming activities in the four areas of the FPA.

On Area 1 and specifically on the training on FoodChainLab held in Berlin last year, IT welcomes a cooperative application of the tool; on Area 3, regarding uncertainty analysis, IT asked for more details on the adoption process of guidance documents and if other regional crisis preparedness trainings are foreseen. Didier Verloo clarified that guidance documents on uncertainty have already been adopted and that piloting their implementation is ongoing, with a final meeting foreseen in 2019 for gathering feedback on lessons learned. Olaf Mosbach-Schulz further mentioned on FoodChainLab that initiatives for a cooperative application of the tool in IT are welcome, the issue will be addressed in the next step of the FPA, and that crisis preparedness trainings are currently available at BfR although other regional trainings can be considered (format to be defined). The Chair highlighted that information will be shared with members on currently planned exercises on crisis preparedness.

ES expressed interest on the FoodChainLab tool and informed that the EC was developing an outbreak investigation tool within the RASFF Working Group. The tool, to be developed by BfR (and supported by EFSA), will be tested and customized by different MS. On crisis preparedness, ES asked the EC representative whether the FoodChainLab tool was to be considered as the tool "endorsed" by the EC. Luis Vivas-Alegre informed to take note and to come back to the AF with more details on this question. The Chair ended discussions mentioning that crisis communication and preparedness will be a key topic at the 70th AF meeting end of November 2018.

Action 2: EFSA (SCER Unit) to share with AF members any upcoming training initiatives on crisis preparedness.

b. AFDG on Capacity Building

Danica Grahek-Ogden (from NO) presented a status update on the work of the AFDG on Capacity Building (CB) led by DE, highlighting that the draft reflection paper shared as background document aims to deliver a vision for building food safety risk assessment capacity by 2030.

Given that an important focus has been placed on developing standard curricula, the Chair advised identifying first possible sources of funding before developing curricular materials. She also mentioned the importance of exploring coordination with other international capacity building initiatives which do not necessarily focus on curricula. NO replied that some work has already been done on funding sources and that the development of standard curricula is a natural subsequent step.

ES, DE, DK, FI and IT acknowledged the good work towards a systematic approach to CB and expressed interest to be part of a future standing CB Working Group. ES stated that a harmonised approach for post-graduate risk assessment courses is missing at EU level and advised finding a way to support their creation. Jeff Moon thanked DE for the work done and NO for presenting it, highlighting that the current plan is very ambitious and that it might be difficult to achieve by November the anticipated milestones.

The Chair concluded that expressions of interest for a standing CB WG and for providing comments on the CB reflection paper should be sent to EFSA by 15.07.2018.

Action 3: AF members to express interest to join a standing Capacity Building Working Group and / or provide comments on the Capacity Building reflection paper by Friday 13.07.2018.

c. EU-FORA update

Stylianos Koulouris (by VC) provided an update on the currently running EU-FORA programme, highlighting that the process for selecting fellows, hosting sites and matching shortlisted fellows and hosting organisations has been completed with success. The matching exercise was more difficult this year since fewer eligible candidates applied. No applications were received for Central Europe and part of Balkans; while very few were received from Baltic countries. It was emphasised the need to develop a more efficient communication campaign for the next calls in order to attract more candidates (fellows and hosting organisations) from more EU countries.

The Chair noted that the fellowship programme comprises a significant investment in terms of resources from countries involved, namely as hosting sites, and that this is very much appreciated. The participation of fellows in the Scientific Conference and at satellite events will help to raise awareness to the programme. Additional communication and outreach activities will be considered in future calls of the programme.

d. Partnering grants

Sérgio Potier Rodeia provided an update on the running pilot on Partnering grants, highlighting the launch of a new call by end of June / early July 2018. It was noted that the approach of the upcoming call will slightly change, favouring CB project proposals that also focus on MS and/or EFSA priorities (i.e. Delphi study, EFSA Strategy 2020, among other reference documents to be identified in the call).

IE asked if it is possible to share general information (or a summary) of each partnering grant awarded through EFSA's website (including the value awarded per project), so to make MS aware that these activities are ongoing. SE asked for further details on the revised scope of the call and DE about the usefulness of these projects. Sérgio clarified that some information is already available on EFSA's website ([here](#)) but fully agrees with the added value of providing more information at an earlier stage (to be checked with EFSA's Finance Unit if possible). The revised scope of the new call derives from EFSA internal reflections aimed at making the best use of these initiatives, aligning them, as far as possible, with MS and EFSA priorities. On the usefulness of the projects and their respective CB impact, this will only be possible after the end of project activities (i.e. around early 2020). To this end, project teams have been requested, at the time of signature of the grant agreements, to include on their final reports information about the sustainability of the CB initiatives during and after project activities.

9. Demo on Database (DB) on MS planned RA activities

José Cortinas Abrahantes delivered a short demo on the new database on MS planned RA activities. The database replaces the former Excel file used to compile this information and adds several new features and functionalities from a data management and reporting perspective. Members appreciated the new tool and will be sent a specific email explaining the procedure to register and use the database.

Action 4: EFSA to send email to AF members with the link to access the new database on MS planned risk assessment activities and explaining the main procedures for registration and use of the database; AF members to coordinate input into the new database jointly with FPs.

10. Risk Assessment

a. Update on titanium dioxide

Guilhem de Seze briefed members on recent EFSA activities on titanium dioxide presented recently at the PAFF Committee. Regarding future activities from the EC after the adoption of EFSA's Scientific Opinion (estimated end of June 2018), there is no identified

way forward as these will depend on the outcome of the opinion, the extra data expected to be submitted by applicants / interested parties as well as on other initiatives under way in MS (e.g. FR).

b. Cumulative risks of plant protection product residues

Guilhem de Seze (with Luc Mohimont on VC) shared an update on the ongoing EFSA work on risks posed to consumers by multiple pesticides. Reference was made to past and current collaborative work with external organisations (RIVM, ICPS, ANSES, and DTU) and, in particular, on the development of a data model for probabilistic cumulative dietary exposure assessment of pesticides.

SE congratulated EFSA for the progress made so far and raised concerns on the feasibility of the ambitious work planned for the coming years. DE asked for more details on the data used to feed the models. In reply to SE, Guilhem de Seze informed that most of the past work aimed at establishing the foundation, methodologies, data model and software for the work ahead. Luc Mohimont further clarified that the toxicological data used in the models are data generated from laboratory animals by pesticide manufacturers and that the current model does not include individual toxicological sensitivity and does not envisage non-monotonic dose-response relationships. The contribution of chemicals other than pesticides to the cumulative risk is currently not being considered; instead, only cumulative risks of pesticides from dietary exposure are being looked at. Also, the current model faces restrictions deriving from the limits of quantification in laboratories. Guilhem de Seze noted that the contributions of very low doses (lower than detection limits) will only be considered once more data on pesticide use will become available. LV asked whether EFSA's approach has been compared with the one used by other Agencies active in this domain. Luc Mohimont confirmed that differences in approaches have been detected and that the EFSA approach is driven by the EU legislation which provides risk managers the possibility to apply the precautionary principle in case of scientific uncertainties.

c. EFSA opinion on PFOA and PFOS in food – ongoing consultation on potential divergence

Marco Binaglia updated members (by VC) on the current consultation on a potential scientific divergence on EFSA's draft scientific opinion on PFOA and PFOS in food. An overview of the draft opinion, the rationale for basing the assessment on human epidemiological data instead of laboratory animal studies, a description of identified scientific divergences and the bodies being consulted to resolve divergence were presented. DK took the floor to inform members of the Danish views of this EFSA's scientific opinion.

DE noted the lack of a fully functional mechanism for addressing scientific divergence, recommending a more harmonised process of communication among EU institutions and MS organisations. NL noted that potential divergences on scientific opinions are more a communication issue and that there is a need to discuss more diverging communication messages rather than discussing the details of scientific opinions. A suggestion was made for dedicating more time on the Agenda for such communication issues and less time to scientific details. The Chair clarified that EFSA is in the middle of an Article 30 process aiming precisely to address a potential divergence. This procedure should allow for an understanding of the relevant differences and ensure a joint statement shared by EFSA and national competent authorities acknowledging or not the existence of divergence (as per the agreed AF Good Practice available on EFSA's website [here](#)). The Chair noted that EFSA's scientific opinion will not be published until the divergence is clarified and that information shared during the meeting should not be disseminated further.

d. Joint EFSA-ECDC ROA on multi-country outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes*

Valentina Rizzi (on VC) informed participants on a new mandate received from the EC requesting EFSA and ECDC to update the previous Rapid Outbreak Assessment (ROA) on a multi-country outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes*. Competent authorities are asked to report new human cases associated with this event and to continue sharing information on epidemiological, microbiological and environmental investigations.

e. New model for exposure assessment of microbiological and chemical hazards (BIKE)

FI informed members about a new statistical model (BIKE) for probabilistic exposure assessment of both microbiological and chemical hazards. In addition to its applicability to two different types of foodborne hazards, the novelty of the model relies on its approach to occurrence data containing results below the limit of quantification. The model is open source and uses the R and OpenBUGS programmes.

Didier Verloo asked FI to share this model via the Knowledge Junction along with the appropriate metadata. IE asked whether it has been considered communicating the outcome of this project to Finnish consumers. FI informed that the group that created the models and ran the pilot risk assessments are also responsible for risk management, enabling proper communication initiatives.

f. MS Mandates

From the list of MS mandates collected during the period 26.01.2018-20.05.2018, Hans Verhagen noted the entry from CY on dioxins, highlighting that in June 2018 EFSA will adopt an opinion on dioxins. Reference was also made to input from IE on the work of the International Microbiological Food Safety Liaison Group on VTEC/STEC, an activity not captured in the new database.

Guilhem de Seze noted EFSA's interest in many on-going MS mandates included in the database (e.g. food contact materials, food additives, nutrition). Specific reference was made to NO on EFSA's work on BHT; and to UK on EFSA's work on the appropriate age for introduction of complementary feeding to infants.

DE provided highlights on recent BfR planned risk assessment activities. Reference was made to 2 recently published opinions, one on *Campylobacter* in hen's eggs; and another on prediction of disease-causing STEC strains. DE also noted the ongoing work on two scientific opinions: one on modelling intervention strategies in pork production at post-harvest level for reduction of *Salmonella* exposure in humans; and another on the derivation of an oral TDI for nickel. FR informed that similar work on *Campylobacter* was carried out by ANSES a year ago and that the new MS database will be a useful tool for linking both activities.

g. EFSA Mandates

No major items were raised.

h. Upcoming public consultations

Hans Verhagen highlighted [two public consultations](#) endorsed in May 2018 by EFSA's Scientific Committee: one on the draft guidance document on harmonisation of human and ecological risk assessment of combined exposure to multiple chemicals; and another on a draft statement on genotoxicity assessment of chemical mixtures.

In the field of regulated products, Guilhem de Seze noted the consultations on the draft EFSA scientific report on the "FOCUS surface water repair action" and on the EFSA Guidance Document on completing risk assessment for active substances of plant protection products that have isomers and for transformation products of active substances that may have isomers. Upon question from FR, Guilhem de Seze clarified that work is ongoing on planning the assessment of enzymes dossiers. EFSA will come back to this item although no date has been set yet for the list to be published by the EC. On the particular dossier raised by FR, there is a need to look closer on a bilateral basis so as to avoid divergences. Luis Vivas-Alegre underlined that bilateral meetings take place on a regular basis between DG-SANTE and the REPRO Directorate of EFSA, where an update on ongoing work is discussed. Regarding the status of the enzymes dossier, the EC will provide an update at the next AF meeting.

DAY 2

11. Data Collection

a. Concept paper on the future of data in EFSA

Mary Gilsenan informed members on the concept paper on the future of data in EFSA and its implementation plan, a document prepared in 2017 following, among other, two internal brainstorm workshops on the subject. The paper is a high level reflection paper and looks beyond the EFSA Strategy 2020. It describes four thematic areas where EFSA could advance its scientific assessments by applying developments in information technology. Thematic areas will be further developed and prioritised, and feed into the EFSA Programming Document 2019-2021 as well as the EFSA strategy 2027. Didier Verloo presented some examples of crowdsourcing challenges that are already running. Members were invited to provide comments on the concept paper by Friday 27.07.2018.

Action 5: AF members to provide comments on the concept paper on the future of scientific data in EFSA by Friday 27.07.2018.

b. AF Task Force on DATA: next steps

Mary Gilsenan introduced the agenda item, explaining the work done to date for setting up a Data Collection and Data Modelling Task Force, for which six countries have already expressed interest in joining (AT, HR, FR, DK, HU, NO). Ákos (HU), proposed Chair of the Task Force, gave an overview of the draft ToR, including overarching and specific objectives, ways of working, timeline and deliverables. Three additional countries expressed an interest in joining the Task Force (IT, SK (TBC), SE). Ákos further clarified that final input on the draft ToR will be possible through written procedure. In general, the draft ToR were agreed by the AF.

c. Update on pilot on data quality

Mary Gilsenan presented a top line overview of the background and objectives of this pilot project with five MS, as well what has been achieved to date. The scope concerns four main monitoring data collection areas reported annually by MS to EFSA: pesticide residues, contaminants, zoonoses and veterinary medicinal product residues. The pilot is still ongoing and EFSA will only be able to fully evaluate the project upon its completion (including its impact on next year's data collections).

Stelios Yiannopoulos (CY) provided feedback to participants on the experiences from CY in this pilot. The Chair thanked CY for sharing experiences and for the willingness to share the tool that was developed.

During discussion of the three above points, NO expressed concerns on possible duplication of information using machine learning techniques on unstructured data, welcoming ideas for preventing/overcoming such duplication to be included on the concept paper on the future of data in EFSA. SE noted overlaps between accuracy and completeness of data quality indicators reported on the example concerning the pilot on data quality and asked for additional explanations on indicators used. IE highlighted aspects related to data governance and asked for these to be looked into by the new Data Collection and Data Modelling Task Force. ES asked for additional information on what will happen regarding funding beyond the pilot on data quality.

The Chair noted the specific comments raised by NO, SE, IE and ES, and informed that these will be taken into account as far as possible. On the data quality pilot, Mary Gilsenan emphasised that graphics presented in the table are examples and that more information can be made available. Regarding the question on funding, a cost-benefit analysis is needed to complete the project and further discuss outcomes with project partners and network members.

On food authenticity, Marta Hugas informed about the Knowledge Centre on food quality launched by the EC and operated by JRC. The Knowledge Centre, a network made up by experts in and outside the EC, will support EU policy-makers and national authorities by providing access to, and sharing of, up-to-date scientific knowledge on food fraud and food quality issues. Marta further informed that EFSA participates in the Knowledge Centre.

12. Updates

a. Review of Focal Point (FP) Agreements

Sérgio Potier Rodeia provided an update on the current status of the review process of FP Agreements for 2019-2022. Progress to date has focused on the review of the key priority areas for FP activities. As next steps, the EFSA internal FP Task Force will aim to set KPIs for monitoring FP performance and as well define an improved flexible framework for the new FP lump sum grant agreements. The Chair acknowledged the importance of the FP network and that EFSA's Management Board is very supportive of the continuation of FP agreements under the same budgetary ceiling. The Chair highlighted that, in 2018, EFSA and MS are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the FP network.

FR agreed with the Chair on the importance of the FP network raising concerns on a possible increase of FP activities under the new grant agreements. If extra tasks are flagged as mandatory, FR might not be able to support them. IT noted concerns on support activities to be provided by FPs on the data and capacity building domains, requesting for a consultation through written procedure after the AF meeting. SE expressed appreciation for a flexible framework, requesting a comparison between current and future FP activities. ES informed to provide feedback in writing and asked for more details on what "flexibility" means in the context of future tasks. GR welcomed the proposed new FP activities and asked for alignment between tasks and anticipated budget. CZ suggested avoiding activities of a more "political" nature and asked if it would be possible to share the yearly annual reports of the different countries in order to allow FPs to draw experiences from each other. DE noted that FPs started originally as an "operational arm" of the AF (and less for supporting EFSA activities), asking for a clearer definition of duties and for prioritisation of tasks. The Chair highlighted to see no contradiction on FPs supporting AF and EFSA activities at the same time, and noted that a written procedure will be launched to clarify differences between current and future FP activities, ahead of the discussion of the new agreements, to occur at the next AF meeting.

Action 6: EFSA to send to AF and FP members a summary document comparing current and future FP activities; and as well the final draft list of activities for the new FP agreements, for endorsement via written procedure.

b. Task Force on Article 36

Sérgio Potier Rodeia provided an update on the work of the Task Force preparing the new Art36 approach, with reference to new developments and timelines. The Chair stated that the aim of this exercise is to improve collaboration and highlighted the organisation of training workshops for which there is EFSA budget assigned.

IE advised to go back to the funding model for building collaboration among Art36 organisations, noting difficulties on the engagement of organisations to submit proposals due to the small available budgets. ES acknowledged the work of the Task Force, suggesting the sharing of experiences among MS on the use of criteria for entering the list. FR noted a legal question raised at national level on whether being on the list is seen as an open access to EFSA grants and to EFSA funds. The Chair highlighted that the added value of the list goes beyond the grant money that EFSA can offer. Luis Vivas-Alegre reminded that, out of the package of the GFL proposals, there is an incentive to support preparatory work and MS collaboration with EFSA doubling the current budget.

13. AF input into EFSA's Work Planning and Strategy setting cycles

Ilias Papatryfon provided participants, in one single presentation, the key highlights of the 2017 Annual Activities Report; a draft summary of the Customer – Stakeholder Satisfaction survey; and the consultation procedure with members on the draft Programming Document 2019-2021. ES suggested prolonging the reply time for one month. Ilias Papatryfon replied that timing could be prolonged for two weeks maximum, since by middle of October the document needs to be finalised.

Action 7: EFSA to launch the consultation procedure with the AF on the draft Programming Document 2019-2022; AF members to provide feedback by Friday 14.09.2018.

14. Any Other Business

a. Update on Artificial Intelligence activities

Danica Grahek-Ogden (NO) presented the ongoing project "Watson to Sherlock" concerning automation of literature search and screening. Reference was made to the setting up of a group that will start working on project ideas established to date.

PL asked for the sharing of the material discussed during the first meeting; and NO replied that they will seek permission from the project group members and then forward information to the AF. FI noted that a different platform is being used at national level for the same purpose (literature search) and that, once concluded, the respective report will be shared with AF members. SE expressed interest to participate on the new group.

b. Single Scientific Network on Chemical Monitoring Data Collection

Mary Gilsenan provided a brief summary of the proposal to create a single scientific network on chemical monitoring data collection, merging three existing scientific data networks (chemical occurrence, veterinary medicinal products residues and pesticide residues). Key drivers for the merge are (1) the need for a more holistic approach to chemical monitoring of data reporting; and (2) the adoption of SSD2 (standard sample description) and the joint EFSA/MS work towards harmonised data reporting across all three data domains. Draft ToR for the new network are currently under consultation with the relevant scientific data networks. The plan is that, by 2019, at least the chemical occurrence and veterinary medicinal products residues scientific data networks will be merged. The Chair noted that AF members will be contacted by network representatives for endorsement of the proposal.

Preliminary feedback from BE was received by email, raising concerns on the choice of organisation to be appointed and securing experts for the different fields to be covered by the new single network. LU noted that it will be difficult to join three data collection systems in one single database and that currently it would be only possible to merge the pesticides residues and chemical occurrence networks, but not the veterinary medicinal products residues one. SE, DK and ES saw added value and efficiency gains on the proposal, suggesting the appointment of members and alternates from different national organisations. GR noted that legislative requirements state that for certain scientific data networks (namely the pesticides and veterinary medicinal product residues) MS are asked to appoint a competent authority individually. In GR, there are three different authorities nominated, thus there may be difficulties to nominate one single expert to attend meetings. FR asked for clarification on which pesticides scientific network is being considered for the merge; Mary Gilsenan informed that the proposal concerns the Networking Group on Pesticide Monitoring. The Chair closed discussions informing that further consultation with the scientific networks will take place, with final endorsement to be sought at one of the next AF meetings.

Action 8: EFSA to carry out further consultations with the Scientific Networks and bring back the proposal for a single scientific network on chemical monitoring data collection at an upcoming AF meeting.

c. Meetings 2018

Sérgio Potier Rodeia informed participants on the current plans for the upcoming AF meetings. Specific reference was made to the 69th AF meeting, to take place in Parma on the 17.09.2018, just before EFSA's Scientific Conference; and to the last meeting of the year, scheduled for 28-29.11.2018, to take place in Vienna, Austria.

d. FSAI Scientific Committee Report on the safety of vitamins and minerals in food supplements

IE shared information on a recent FSAI Scientific Committee report on the safety of vitamins and minerals in food supplements. A press release has recently been published and is available on the FSAI website [here](#). FR reported to support the IE conclusions and noted the lack of harmonisation in this domain. ES expressed interest in the publication.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting, thanking Prof. Boyko Likov and the Bulgarian Risk Assessment Centre on the Food Chain for hosting the 68th AF meeting, as well AF members, guest speakers and EFSA colleagues who contributed to the meeting.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS	
Action Number	Action
1	<i>EFSA to circulate to AF members the report on "Outgoing Panels views on future research needs" once ready; AF members to comment by Friday (28.09.2018)</i>
2	<i>EFSA (SCER Unit) to share with AF members any upcoming training initiatives on crisis preparedness</i>
3	<i>AF members to express interest to join a standing Capacity Building Working Group and / or provide comments on the Capacity Building reflection paper by Friday 13.07.2018</i>
4	<i>EFSA to send email to AF members with the link to access the new database on MS planned risk assessment activities and explaining the main procedures for registration and use of the database; AF members to coordinate input into the new database jointly with FPs</i>
5	<i>AF members to provide comments on the concept paper on the future of scientific data in EFSA by Friday 27.07.2018</i>
6	<i>EFSA to send to AF and FP members a summary document comparing current and future FP activities; and as well the final draft list of activities for the new FP agreements, for approval via written procedure</i>
7	<i>EFSA to launch the consultation procedure with the AF on the draft Programming Document 2019-2022; AF members to provide feedback by Friday 14.09.2018</i>
8	<i>Action 8: EFSA to carry out further consultations with the Scientific Networks and bring back the proposal for a single scientific network on chemical monitoring data collection at an upcoming AF meeting</i>

Document history	
Document reference	V1
Prepared by	Deimante Bikneryte
Reviewed by	Sérgio Potier Rodeia
Last date modified	20 July 2018