



Minutes
Management Board Meeting
20 January 2004
Diamant Center, Brussels

Members of the Management Board present

- Angeliki Assimakopoulou
- Ernst Bobek
- Giorgio Calabrese
- Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle
- Matthias Horst
- Jaana Husu-Kallio
- Deirdre Hutton
- João Pedro Machado
- Pirkko Raunemaa
- Bart Sangster
- Stuart Slorach
- Roland Vaxelaire
- Patrick Wall

Staff of the European Food Safety Authority present

- Jochen Brodersen
- Antoine Cuvillier
- Lucia De Luca
- Anne-Laure Gassin
- Marisa Giminez
- Herman Koeter
- Christine Majewski
- Geoffrey Podger
- Ingela Soderlund
- Andy Stimpson
- Anja Van Impe
- Katty Verhelst

Preliminary Formalities

Stuart Slorach opened the meeting by welcoming the Board members, the Authority's staff, and the webstreaming audience. Apologies were received from Carlos Escribano-Mora and Peter Gaemelke.

No declarations of interest regarding the agenda for this meeting were made.

1) Adoption of Agenda (Doc MB 20.01.2004 – 1)

The agenda was adopted. Additional items were added and were discussed in agenda item 10.

2) Draft minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising from the minutes (Doc MB 20.01.2004 – 2) (Adoption)

2.1 The minutes of the Management Board meeting of 3 December 2003 were adopted, subject to the changes made in the meeting regarding the role of self-

tasking and priority setting the Management Plan (point 4.10), and references to article 22 and the role of the Authority in nutritional cases (point 4.9). This document will be published on the Authority's website.

- 2.2 The Board members decided that in future minutes, the names of the Board members in relation to individual opinions or positions expressed at meetings should not be mentioned unless members specifically ask to be associated with a particular point. Names of individual staff members should likewise not appear, except references to the Executive Director in his capacity as the Authority's legal representative and given his statutory role in formally presenting proposals to the Board.
- 2.3 Some items from the Board meeting of 3 December will be further discussed during this meeting, such as the colloque and the team building day.

3) Information and update from the Executive Director on the move of EFSA to Parma

- 3.1. The Executive Director welcomed the decision by the European Council on 13 December on the Authority's permanent seat. Parma has been a popular choice and recruiting people to Parma will be rather easy.
- 3.2. A delegation of the Authority's Management Team has visited Parma on 16 January. The Executive Director informed the Board they were warmly welcomed by the national and regional authorities as well as officials from the city of Parma, and formal contacts were made. A list of issues on the building, transport, schooling, timing of the move, accommodation, links with universities and job opportunities for spouses and partners of the Authority's staff were discussed.
- 3.3. The Italian authorities proposed the Palazzo Ducale, a historic building in a recently restored park, as the Authority's representative seat. This building would be offered free of charge and would be well suited for meetings, conferences and receptions. Since the Palazzo Ducale has a limited potential for office use, the Authority is offered a working building in the center of Parma. This building, which will be airy, light and will have a modern design, is still under construction but around 3,500 m² are expected to become available before the summer 2004. The Italian authorities will provide the Authority with a proposal on the financial arrangements of the working building. The Executive Director will present the detailed discussion to the Management Board, recognizing that other options are also available. Another possibility would be to develop office space immediately behind the Palazzo Ducale. There are however substantial financial issues to be resolved before such an option could go ahead.
- 3.4. The Italian authorities are ready to start a daily Brussels/Parma air service as soon as the Authority begins to have staff in the city. Air services (Ryanair) between Parma and London are expected to start in mid-March. Although there are not specific commitments yet, the Italian authorities wish to extend

MB 10.03.2004 – 2

Adopted Minutes

the Parma airport with a view to seeking links with other European cities. In addition, the authorities propose to provide a bus service to carry the Authority's visitors to airports in Milan and Bologna, and they are looking into the possibility for high speed rail links.

- 3.5. The Board expressed its concern for the scientific experts in the Committee, the Panels and the Working Groups whose workload may become heavier by extended traveling times. The Executive Director suggested to either have less frequent but longer meetings or to meet in other EU capitals and cities as is already the case now.
- 3.6. One of the main problem areas is the provision of schooling in languages other than Italian for the children of the Authority's staff members. The Executive Director explained that it seems unlikely that the city of Parma could meet the needs and further discussions will take place between the Italian authorities and the Authority to identify the appropriate educational facilities in other areas such as Milan. In view of the schooling problem, the Executive Director stressed that staff members with school-aged children could only move to Parma between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next.
- 3.7. The city of Parma proposes to set up a helpdesk to facilitate the staff's search for accommodation. Negotiation of leases and purchases will be for individual staff but the Parma authorities will establish a control mechanism which will help the Authority's staff in negotiating by giving their view as to be a reasonable price range for a given property.
- 3.8. The Executive Director stressed the Authority's desire to build constructive links with the University of Parma and other universities and research centers in the region, in terms of both the expertise the Authority could contribute to their work and vice-versa. Herman Koeter is asked to take this forward.
- 3.9. Considering that some staff members' spouses/partners would want to continue their professional activities in Parma, the regional authorities offered to establish employment opportunities through the Parma Chamber of Commerce and the Parma private sector.
- 3.10. The Executive Director explained that a number of meetings will be held in Parma to establish the Authority's presence. The Board agreed in this respect to hold the Management Board meeting of 27 April in Parma. Once suitable working accommodation is available, the Authority's staff will gradually move. At a first stage, new recruits who will be immediately transferred to Parma and existing staff members whose personal circumstances enables them to move rather easily. The whole of the Authority is planned to have moved by the summer 2005.
- 3.11. The Board approved the general plan for the move to Parma as outlined by the Executive Director. The Authority is to provide the Board members with more information on the approach of the move and on Parma itself. Any developments on the various issues will be reported back to the Management Board for their approval.

MB 10.03.2004 – 2

Adopted Minutes

4) Geoffrey Podger – General update on developments

- 4.1 The Executive Director informed the Board that the further call for expression of interest in membership of a Scientific Panel has been launched with a closing date of 15 March 2004. This call is particularly aimed to fill some of the vacancies in the Panels and is geared towards those scientific experts with specific expertise. The Board noted that some spaces on the Panels need to be kept available in case other needs come up in the course of 2004.
- 4.2 The Advisory Forum had its meeting of 11 December in Den Haag. The Executive Director reported that the Advisory Forum has noted that much of the work in the Management Plan is routine and that there is a desire for some collective projects which could project more reaching questions, such as in the area of pesticides and microbiological risks. The Authority will work out such project with the members and introduce them in the work programme. The minutes of the Advisory Forum meeting will be circulated to the Board members.
- 4.3 The Executive Director expressed his thanks for the work and support of 3 of his senior staff members : Philippe Loopuyt, Head of IT, will be returning back to the European Commission, Jochen Brodersen, Head of Finance, will also be going back to the Commission, and Andy Stimpson, Communications, secured a post with the European Maritime Safety Authority. The Board equally wished to thank these staff members.
- 4.4 Some Board members raised the results of an American study of farmed Scottish salmon, the case of BSE in the United States in December 2004, and the issue of chicken injected with water and animal proteins. They felt that the Authority missed an opportunity to be seen as a trusted source of information for consumers and operators in the food chain. The Executive Director assured that national authorities had received advance notice of the American study on farmed salmon and the results did not give any cause for any new anxiety. The question of dioxins and PCBs in salmon will be discussed in the next Advisory Forum, although there were no new concerns. The Executive Director further explained to the Board that the farmed salmon issues concerned nutrition as well as food safety and the Authority is under the impression that advice on nutrition and diets was better provided by the national authorities because of the different dietary habits. Regarding the case of BSE, the necessary contacts with the Commission had been undertaken to see if further risk assessment in the U.S.A. was requested. The European Commission informed the Board that the risk management measures on chicken was under discussion with the Member States in the Standing Committee.
- 4.5 While some Board members felt that the Authority should have been more pro-active with forthcoming information and should have made a statement, even though the Authority felt that the Member States were providing the public and industry with correct and consistent information across the EU,

MB 10.03.2004 – 2

Adopted Minutes

other Board members felt that the issue had more to do with perception rather than with what the Authority had or had not done. It was agreed that the Authority cannot react on each and every subject, but that it should be proactive as soon as an issue is detected that could give rise to concern for large groups in society.

- 4.6 The Board raised their concern of the Authority becoming submerged in routine work and not having enough time for emerging issues. The Executive Director informed the Board that these issues are currently under discussion. The Authority does not need to do all the work itself but can commission some of it to the outside. The Executive Director is to report back to the Board on further progress.

5) Follow-up to Oostende colloque (Document MB 20.01.2004 – 4)

- 5.1 In its meeting of 3 December, the Management Board agreed in principle to the recommendations presented by the Executive Director following the colloque in Oostende in October 2003.
- 5.2 Following the Board's request to receive further information on the detailed implementation of some of the recommendations, the Executive Director proposed, with regard to the physical presence of an audience in the Management Board meeting, an advance notice will be posted on the Authority's website and those wishing to attend in person may apply. As discussed by the Board, members of the public who choose to attend Board meetings in person will have the right solely to observe. It is intended that this procedure proceeds in parallel with webstreaming and does not substitute it.
- 5.3 It was noted that Peter Gemaelke, who apologized for not being able to participate at this meeting, had made his views known to the Board that he was not in favour of opening meetings to the public unless there were to be more clarity on how this would be done. .
- 5.4 The Board encourages the Chairs of the Scientific Committee and the Scientific Panels to experiment with such participation as would seem to best suit the subject matter under discussion, recognising that the demand and most suitable method for stakeholder participation will vary.
- 5.5 The Board adopted the recommendations as proposed in document MB 20.01.2004 – 4, subject to some minor modifications made in the meeting.

6) Financial matters

Budget 2004 and 2003 carry over of budget (Doc MB 20.01.2004 – 5) (Information)

- 6.1 The Executive Director introduced this agenda item by explaining that the Authority had committed by the end of 2003, €11.1 million of its €12.6

MB 10.03.2004 – 2

Adopted Minutes

million budget authorized by the Management Board for 2003. The under-spending in 2003 was due to the difficulty in estimating initial costs rather than nay failure of the Authority to do its required tasks.

- 6.2 The European Parliament's Budgetary Committee has granted the Authority a subvention of €28.9 million for 2004. This confirmed budget is slightly higher than the budget already approved by the Management Board in its meeting of 3 December 2003, in light of the Council's decision on the permanent location of the Authority on 13 December.
- 6.3 Since it is expected that the move to Parma will have a significant impact on the budget, the Executive Director will submit a Supplementary and Amending Budget (SAB) at the Management Board meeting of 10 March when a more detailed assessment of the budgetary implications has been made.

7) Crisis papers – EFSA in house procedures and advice from the Scientific Committee – for information (Document MB 20.01.2004 –6)

- 7.1 In its meeting of 3 December, the Board commented on a draft General Crisis Management Plan put forward by the Commission. The Executive Director introduced two crisis papers, one from a Task Force of the Scientific Committee and one from the Authority's staff, which complement the Commission plan.
- 7.2 The Executive Director reminded the Board that the Authority only has around 8 people available to deal with a crisis. In addition, he stressed the need to join together the risk assessment and the risk communication part within the Authority since very often, the scientific part does not reach those responsible for communication. The Executive Director sees himself and Herman Koeter to bridge this gap.
- 7.3 The Board noted the document, subject to some changes made during the meeting, and is looking forward to receiving a development of the document. The document will be subject to revision in view of comments made by the Advisory Forum, as circumstances and staff change and in the light of experience.

8) Media Handling guidelines for the Scientific Committee and Panels – for information (Document MB 20.01.2003 – 7)

- 8.1 The Executive Director introduced this document which provides agreed guiding principles on media handling between the Authority and the Scientific Committee, the Panels and their Working Groups.
- 8.2 Following some Board members' concern that the Committee and the Panels are not viewed as being part of the Authority, the Executive Director stressed the good working relations between the Panels and the Authority. While the

MB 10.03.2004 – 2

Adopted Minutes

Committee and the Panels are part of the Authority in a legal sense, they are entitled to form independent scientific views. Unlike staff members, external independent scientific experts are not under the management of the Executive Director.

- 8.3 The members of the Scientific Panels prefer to run a system whereby someone is their spokesperson, usually the Panel Chair, and the other experts do not get involved in risk communication. The members of the Panels chose this system and it has proven over time to be an effective way of going about it.
- 8.4 The Board noted the document, subject to some changes made in the meeting. The Board wishes to point out in the document that the Authority consists of four bodies and that the requirements of transparency need to be fulfilled as stated in article 38 of Regulation EC/178/2002.

9) EFSA Management Issue

Discussion on 2004 EFSA Management Plan (Document MB 20.01.2004 – 8 plus excel annex n° IV) (Final adoption)

- 9.1 In its meeting of 3 December 2003, the Board provisionally adopted the Authority's Management Plan 2004. The Plan document has been changed according to the changes made in the last meeting and according to the comments received from the European Commission. The document has also been discussed in the Advisory Forum of 11 December.
- 9.2 The decision of the European Council at its meeting of 13 December to locate the Authority's seat in Parma, has resulted in some changes being made to the text of the Management Plan. As the year progresses it will be necessary for the Board to consider again the impact of the move to Parma and these will be reported to the Board regularly particularly where there is a potential impact on the Plan itself.
- 9.3 Following a discussion by the Board members, the Authority will amend the document, subject to the changes made in the meeting. The revised text will be sent to the Board for approval by written procedure not later than 31 January, according to Regulation EC/178/2002.

10) Any Other Business

- 10.1 The Board's Task Force on the Away Day proposed to have a full day working meeting prior to the Management Board of 10 March in Dublin. The Board agreed with the Task Force's suggestions for issues to discuss:
 - To define the respective roles of the Authority, the Commission and the national agencies. Issue papers and working documents are to be circulated prior to the meeting. The Irish member of the Advisory Forum could present a vision(s) about the role of the national agencies

MB 10.03.2004 – 2

Adopted Minutes

- To draw a balance of activities so far and look at the role of the Management Board, cast a critical eye on its operations and what the Board should evolve to in the future
- To invite a key note speaker, e.g. a representative of the European Medicines Evaluation Agency, to see how they view the Board's activities

The Task Force is to provide any further planning the Board and apologies for the Away Day should be sent to the Authority as quickly as possible. The Authority is to provide the Board members with information on hotels, timing and venue.

- 10.2 The European Consumers' Organisation, BEUC, has lodged a complaint to the European Ombudsman relating to a possible instance of maladministration by Council when appointing the Authority's Management Board. The Authority will follow the developments and is to report any new information to the Board.
- 10.3 The Authority informed the Board that the launch date for the Authority's new website early March, including the new features which have previously been discussed. The first e-zine will be published soon after the launch of the new site.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the Authority's staff for the preparatory work, the interpreters, the team responsible for the web streaming and all the members of the Board.