AF–08.04.2005 – 2
Adopted minutes

European Food Safety Authority

ADOPTED Minutes

ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM
LISBON

3&4 FEBRUARY 2005

Members of the Advisory Forum

Chair: *Geoffrey Podger*, Executive Director, EFSA

Austria	*Roland Grossgut*	Latvia	*Dace Santare*
Belgium	*Charles Crémer*	Lithuania	*Rolanas Kliucinskas*
Cyprus	*Constantinos Michael*	Luxembourg	*Patrick Hau*
Czech Republic	*Jitka Kocurkova*	Malta	*Ingrid Borg*
Denmark	*Hans Peter Jensen*	Netherlands	*Evert Schouten*
Estonia	*Hendrik Kuusk*	Poland	*Jan Krzysztof Ludwicki*
Finland	*Jorma Hirn*	Portugal	*Isabel Meirelles Teixeira*
France	*Monique Eloit*	Slovakia	*Jan Stulc*
Germany	*Andreas Hensel*	Slovenia	*Marusa Adamic*
Greece	*Nikolaos Katsaros*	Spain	*José Ignacio Arranz*
Hungary	*Maria Szeitze Szabo*	Sweden	*Leif Busk*
Ireland	*Alan Reilly*		*Pernilla Homström*
Italy	*Paolo Aureli*	UK	*Andrew Wadge*

Observers and Invitees of the Executive Director

Iceland	*Elin Gudmundsdottir*	Switzerland	*Michael Beer*
Norway	*Kristin Faerden*	European Commission	*Jeannie Vergnettes* *Klaus-Günther Barthell*

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Staff of the European Food Safety Authority

Thierry Beniflah	*Christine Majewski*
Jan Bloemendal	*Veerle Robberechts*
Lucia de Luca	*Ingela Soderlund*
Anne-Laure Gassin	*Anja Van Impe*
Bart Goossens	*Katty Verhelst*
Anita Janelm	*Victoria Villamar*
Herman Koeter	

1. Welcome by the Portuguese Authorities

1.1 Secretary of State, Mr Machado, welcomed colleagues in Lisbon. He thanked Isabel Meirelles for the creation of the Portuguese Agency for Quality and Food Safety (AQSA), responsible for risk assessment and risk communication. AQSA will be the source of risk communication and dialogue between consumers, industry and consumers. Mr Machado further stated that it was the member states' and EFSA's collective responsibility to achieve excellence in risk assessment and to face the new emerging risks.

1.2 The Chair thanked the Portuguese authorities for opening the meeting, their words of welcome and their support for their national agency.

2. Introduction by Geoffrey Podger and the adoption of the agenda (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 1)

2.1 The agenda was adopted.

3. Minutes of the meeting 1 October in Rome and matters arising (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 2)

3.1 The minutes of the Advisory Forum meeting of 1 October in Rome were approved.

3.2 The minutes would be published on the Authority's website.

4. Update by Geoffrey Podger on progress at EFSA including move to Parma

4.1 The Chair updated the meeting on the Authority's move to Parma. Thanks to the good progress made by the Authority and the Italian authorities, the move was taking place as scheduled and would finish by mid-October 2005.

4.2 The information systems were running parallel in Brussels and in Parma so correspondence would always be forwarded to the right site.

4.3 The Chair informed the meeting that the Authority was likely to be inaugurated in Parma during a ceremonial event on 21-22 June.

4.4 A direct air link between Brussels and Parma had been in place since 24 January. This link would be convenient for the Authority's staff members, but most importantly for scientific experts and others travelling to participate in EFSA meetings.

5. State of play regarding the Authority's review to be conducted in 2005

5.1 According to Article 61 of the Authority's Founding Regulation 178/2002, the Authority would commission an external evaluation of its achievements. The Executive Director reported that the Terms of Reference had been drawn up in collaboration with the Commission and had been approved by the Management Board. This review would take into account the views of the stakeholders at Community and national level.

5.2 The meeting was informed that the consultants to carry out the review would be appointed shortly at which point the review would start. The exercise would end in December 2005 with the results handed over to the Management Board and the Commission and eventually published. Members of the Advisory Forum may be approached before the summer.

6. Follow-up crisis preparedness exercises. Report of the 30 Sept crisis scenario exercise to be agreed and next steps (Doc 3/4.02.2005 – 5)

6.1 Christine Majewski updated the Forum on the outcome of the crisis exercise held on 30 September in Rome.

6.2 Following a discussion by the Forum, it was concluded that:

- The exercise was highly appreciated by all members involved
- A full scale exercise organised by the Commission and the Authority would be very useful and should be more elaborate then the exercise in Rome. The Advisory Forum, Commission and the Standing Committee experts in crisis co-ordination should participate in this exercise.
- The Rome exercise had pinpointed the need for the Authority to review its in house procedures for handling crises regularly during the move of staff to Parma.
- All participants supported the further development of the Extranet and the Videoconference facilities as they agreed that both seem important communication tools especially during crises.
- Such crises should following their conclusion be assessed by an external evaluator to draw lessons for the future. The resulting report should be reviewed by all directly concerned in the crisis and made public.
- The Authority would of course meet its legal obligation to join the Commission's Crisis Unit even if the Authority would not have a particular role, (e.g. where the crisis is due to a failing in the food control system). In general the paper would be revised to clarify certain drafting issues following comments made by the Commission.
- During a crisis the Authority would work together with the Commission and Member States on risk communication. The Authority would retain the right to communicate independently.

- Confidentiality issues needed to be further explored before the next exercise.

The report of the Rome exercise would be revised in light of the comments made by the Commission and the Member States, and published on the Authority's website

7. Current state of advancement of the 6th Framework Programme and preparations of the 7th Framework Programme – presentation by DG Research

7.1 Dr Klaus-Günther Barthel from the Commission's DG Research presented the Forum with the current state of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP) and the preparation for the Seventh.

7.2 Dr Barthel introduced the Forum to the architecture of the 6th FP, whereby he especially focussed on the roadmap of the 5th Priority thematic area: 'Food Quality and Safety. The Members were in this respect informed about the contribution and participation of SMEs onto the different calls.

7.3 For the seventh FP the Members were informed about the foreseen timetable as well the 6 major objectives of this Framework Programme:

- To create European centres of excellence through collaboration between laboratories:
- The launching of European technological initiatives:
- To stimulate the creativity of basic research through competition between teams at European level**:**
- To make Europe more attractive to the best researchers**:**
- To develop research infrastructure of European interest and by
- Improving the coordination of national research programmes.

7.4 The Chair thanked the colleagues in DG Research for their cooperation with the Authority and Dr Barthel for having taken the time to present the work on the Framework Programme to the Forum. The Forum indicated that it would like to ensure that there was good co-ordination between DG Research and EFSA including the Advisory Forum on the development of the Programmes.

8. State of play regarding the feasibility study with respect to the risks of BSE contaminated goat products (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 4)

8.1 Following a high suspicion of BSE in a French goat that was slaughtered in 2002, Bart Goossens, Scientific Coordinator for the BIOHAZ Panel, informed the Forum that the goat has been confirmed as likely to have BSE. The Authority had received a formal mandate from the Commission requesting advice from the BIOHAZ Panel and update of the Opinions related to the **"**Assessment of safety with respect to consumption of goat products in relation to BSE/TSE". The opinion was expected to be delivered before the end of June 2005. In the meantime a statement had been sent to the Commission related to the safety of milk and milk products in relation to TSE in goats.

8.2 Bart Goossens explained that there was concern that there could be insufficient data available to have a quantitative risk assessment as requested by the Commission. If the data were to be considered as insufficient, the BIOHAZ Panel would proceed to make the best opinion with the data available. The Forum was requested to send all available in-

formation and data related to consumption of goat milk, age of goats, number of goats slaughtered, etc. to the Authority. The Members were informed that they could expect to receive soon a second letter from the Authority asking for more specific information.

8.3 The Chair thanked the national authorities for their contribution in this work thus far and stressed the importance of keeping in close contact to meet the need for scientific data. The Authority would also keep the Forum abreast on the communication activities regarding this issue which would be discussed in the WG on Communication on 16 February.

9. Briefing on the progress of Videoconferencing and the Advisory Forum extranet (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 5)

9.1 Thierry Beniflah, Head of IT at the Authority, introduced the item by informing the Forum that the *experimental* extranet had been made available on July 20 to all members of the Advisory Forum, the WG Communications and the WG IT. So far, the extranet had been used at least once by 117 people for publishing and downloading documents, discussing meeting agenda and project documents, and responding to online surveys such as the videoconference equipment survey.

9.2 In addition to the extranet, the Authority established a videoconferencing capability between the Authority, national agencies, and the Commission in order to facilitate communication among senior staff, especially in situations of emerging food risk. The videoconferencing network should be available for full before the summer.

10. Introduction to the Authority's Work Programme 2005. (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 6)

10.1 In the Forum meeting of 1 October in Rome, the Executive Director and his staff had introduced the Work Programme 2005, highlighting the four main areas of science:

- Opinions in response to questions
- Assessment of regulated substances and risk-related factors
- Monitoring of specific risk factors and diseases
- Investment in food science

10.2 In that same meeting, the Advisory Forum had expressed its support for the outline, main themes and targets of the Work Programme 2005.

10.3 Herman Koëter, Anne-Laure Gassin and Christine Majewski introduced the revised Work Programme 2005 which included the suggestions and comments from the national authorities and the Commission. The programme has been agreed by EFSA's Management Board at its January-meeting.

10.4 Following a discussion by the Forum, the following matters were concluded:

- The Authority would circulate a note to the national authorities with more details on the advisory group of risk communication

- According to its Founding Regulation, the Authority's remit on nutrition is restricted. The issue would undoubtedly be raised in the Article 61 Review during 2005.
- The Authority would need to ensure that data collection activities carried out by EFSA were done so in a coherent and harmonious manner. A Working Group of the Forum would therefore be established including members of the Scientific Committee and other experts to discuss this (Terms of Reference discussed under Agenda item 15). The Authority would keep the Forum informed about the development of this Group.
- Following the requirements of the Founding Regulation, the Authority would present a skeleton outline of the Work Programme 2006 to the Board at its meeting in early March. The Authority would ask the Forum in March for its input on this provisional document following the Board meeting in order to develop the more definitive Work Programme for 2006 (to be adopted by the Board ultimately in January 2006).

11. Scientific Committee and Panels encouraging candidature from all Member States (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 7)

11.1 The Chair introduced this agenda item by stressing the point that it is necessary for scientists in the Member States to nominate themselves for selection otherwise they cannot be considered. Following the Calls for Membership undertaken so far by EFSA it has become clear that scientists are more active in putting themselves forward in some Member States than in others. In line with the Regulation all Panels need to be reconstituted in 2006, and as in 2003, a shortlist would be sent to the Forum for feedback on those listed.

11.2 The Forum was informed that as soon as the call for expression of interest for membership of the Committee or a Panel is published, the Forum members would be contacted to enable them if they wished to contact any suitable candidates to encourage them to apply. The call would be published in the Official Journal, the Authority's website and scientific magazines and journals.

11.3 The Chair especially invited the new Member States to give adequate publicity in relation to the call at national level.

12. Actions to be taken according to the new EU Regulation on maximum residue levels of pesticides in products of plant and animal origin (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 8)

12.1 Anita Janelm introduced the agenda item by updating the Forum on important pieces of legislation as listed in document 8.

12.2 The new Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) of pesticides in products of plant and animal origin would streamline European pesticides legislation by replacing four existing Council Directives with a single Regulation. The aim would be to ensure a consistent level of consumer protection across the Community and also facilitate trade within the Union and with third countries.

12.3 Since the Authority would need to elaborate its tasks in relation to MRLs, the Authority would need to recruit between more experts staff although the approved list of posts (establishment plan) would need to plan for this with its other priorities. It was particularly interested in the engagement of seconded national experts (ENDs) in this field. The Fo-

rum was requested to give the names of such potential experts to the Authority and make suggestions for outsourcing.

13. Making risk assessment more transparent (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 9)

13.1 Due to time constraints, the Chair suggested to postpone this agenda item to the next Advisory Forum meeting.

14. Actions arising from the adoption of the Commission Regulation implementing Article 36 of the Authority's Founding Regulation (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 10)

14.1 Herman Koëter introduced Commission Regulation 2230/2004, which implements Article 36 of the Authority's Founding Regulation, by explaining that the Authority should promote the European networking of organisations working within the fields of the Authority's remit. The aim of such networking would be to facilitate a scientific cooperation framework by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects, the exchange of expertise and best practices in the fields of the Authority's mission.

14.2 The Authority would prepare a letter to circulate to the Member for onward distribution so that all scientific centres are aware of this call for networks The Executive Director would then propose a list of organisations to the Management Board. Upon approval by the Board, the Authority could engage in framework agreements with the organisations.

15. Terms of Reference for the Working Group on MS's input into the work of the Scientific Committee and Panels (see chapter 9 of the Rome minutes) (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 11)

15.1 Herman Koëter introduced the paper outlining the Authority's ad-hoc working group established to consider the manner in which exchanges on scientific issues, information and data can be facilitated in the context of the work of the Authority's Scientific Committee, Panels and other Expert Groups. The outline of the terms of reference of this WG, agreed by the Forum, and its mandate was presented in document 11.

15.2 The Authority would circulate an invitation to the Forum and nominations should be sent back to the Authority within the deadline.

16. The Authority's Science Colloquia: outcome of the 2nd colloquium in December on QPS and suggestions for future colloquia (Doc AF 03/04.02.2005 – 12)

16.1 Herman Koëter updated the Forum on the Authority's 2nd scientific colloquium on micro-organisms in food and feed: qualified presumption of safety (QPS) on 13 and 14 December in Brussels. The objectives of the colloquium were to have an open scientific debate on the scientific principles behind the QPS approach and to explore options on how the concept could be further developed for possible implementation by the Authority to safety assessments within the framework of current and proposed legislation.

16.2 The Authority was planning to organise 3 to 4 colloquia each year. Ideas for subjects that have been brought to the table by the Scientific Committee and some of the Panels were: simultaneous exposure of chemicals, animal welfare, risk assessment approaches, amongst others. The Forum was invited to provide the Authority with possible topics or issues for a colloquium that may be emerging in Member States.

17. Exchange of experiences on the Advisory Forum event, the Stakeholder Colloque and dissemination of reports

17.1 Christine Majewski thanked Germany for the use of the facilities in the Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (BfR) in Berlin for the both the Forum event and Stakeholder colloque in November 2004.

17.2 Based on the outcome of an evaluation, conducted during the Advisory Forum event, it appeared that the participants had found the event informative about EFSA and about the Forum in particular.

17.2 Feed back from the Stakeholder Colloque indicated that participants had found this beneficial and would like to ensure that EFSA engages in such events in future. The participant informed EFSA that they would like to have even more ability to discuss matters in opens sessions at future events.

17.3 The most supported part of the Colloque had been the 'metaplan' exercise where participant could actively discuss ideas with EFSA and vice versa. In particular participants encouraged EFSA to put in place its plans for a stakeholder liaison committee as soon as possible. The terms of reference for such a committee would be presented for approval to the Management Board prior to implementation.

18. Standing matters

18.1 Anne-Laure Gassin informed the Forum on the 5th meeting of the Working Group on Communications which had taken place on 7 October in Vienna. The Working Group had covered an analysis of the communication activities on semicarbazide in Europe, an exchange of information on key issues regarding risk communication and forward planning at national level. The WG had also been updated on the Extranet and videoconference projects, the Advisory Forum and stakeholder events and the outcome of the crisis scenario exercise.

18.2 Thierry Beniflah reported on the meeting of the WG on IT on 22 November held in Parma. The meeting was mostly spent on a presentation and discussion of the Extranet and the Videoconferencing project. Thierry Beniflah also introduced the idea and objectives of a project steering committee (PSC) to be set up early 2005.

18.3 In the Forum meeting of 1 October in Rome, Djien Liem from the Authority introduced a discussion paper of the Scientific Committee on botanicals and botanical preparations widely used as food supplements and related products. The Scientific Committee expressed concerns about quality and safety issues of botanicals and botanical preparations that had become widely available to consumers through several distribution channels in the EU. Herman Koëter reported that a response had been received from most Member States. Those Member States who had not yet replied, were still welcome to do so. Following the suggestion from Belgium and Italy to access information on their databases, the Authority agreed that it would be important to co-ordinate with them on their data-

bases.

18.4 France reported that there had been a couple of cases of Enterobacter sakazakii. The UK also reported that after the EFSA opinion had been some interest had been raised in the press with certain matters being used out of context. France further informed the meeting that a report on the matter would be ready by the end of March. The UK reported that research was done on powder milk.

18.5 The Authority updated the Forum on the furan case of late last year. A note and report on furan was circulated around Christmas 2004 and indicated that the Authority would need to monitor the furan issue closely. Since there was a need for further work, the Panel would be asked to look again at the issue and would seek further information from the Forum. Sweden reported that a programme on furan was being drafted and would be sent to the Forum as soon as it had been finalised.

18.6 Austria reported that phthalates had been found at unsafe levels in some products packed in glass jars. Austria was interested to know if other Member States had had the same problem and if so, if any initiatives had been put in place to remove the problem with the industry. A note on the matter would be circulated to the Forum.

18.8 Hungary reported that the Hungarian Food Safety Office had moved from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Health as of 1 January 2005. In addition, the national institute for food safety and nutrition had become legally independent.

18.9 Slovakia reported that, as of 1 January 2005, a food safety committee consisting of 8 panels had been created, headed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

18.10 France reported that the mandate of the present AFSSA's Director would expire in March.

19. Any other business

19.1 The Chair updated the meeting that the Authority had already had discussion with the European Centre for Disease Control in Stockholm. Some areas covered by EFSA could possibly overlap with the new agency and therefore EFSA had opened discussions to seek collaborative working practices, sharing of information and the avoidance of overlap.

19.2 At the Forum meeting in Rome, Herman Koëter had given an update on coccidiostats for which the Authority has finalised all assessments. EMEA has also addressed coccidiostats independently from the Authority and coordination with EMEA was progressing. The regulations under which EMEA and the Authority work are not the same and describe different operational methods so it is important to ensure that information between the two agencies is shared in order to have harmonised opinions.

20. Close of the meeting

20.1 The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the members and observers for their positive and constructive approach, the interpreters, the Authority's team for having organised the meeting and the Portuguese Agency for Quality and Food Safety for their kind hospitality.

20.2 The next meeting would take place on 8 April in Stockholm; the details for this meeting would be communicated as soon as possible.