



European Food Safety Authority

Minutes of the Management Board Meeting 13 September 2005 Palazzo Ducale, Parma

Members of the Management Board present

- Angeliki Assimakopoulou
- Ernst Bobek
- Giorgio Calabrese
- Carlos Escribano-Mora
- Peter Gaemelke
- Matthias Horst
- Deirdre Hutton
- Joao Machado
- Robert Madelin
- Pirkko Raunemaa
- Bart Sangster
- Stuart Slorach
- Roland Vaxelaire
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Staff of the European Food Safety Authority present

- Antoine Cuvillier
- Lucia de Luca
- Anne-Laure Gassin
- Herman Koeter
- Christine Majewski
- François Monnart
- Geoffrey Podger
- Nicole Poupart
- Lionel Rigaux
- Veerle Robberechts
- Ingela Söderlund
- Katty Verhelst

PUBLIC SESSION

Preliminary Formalities

Stuart Slorach opened the meeting by welcoming the Board members, the Authority's staff, those watching on the webstream and the live audience in the room. The Chair stated that apologies for absence had been received from Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle and Patrick Wall. No declarations of interest were made for any agenda items beyond those already made in the annual declarations of interest.

The Chair announced that Executive Director, Geoffrey Podger, had resigned to become Chief Executive with the Health and Safety Executive in London from 28 November. The Chair congratulated him on his appointment and thanked him for the excellent work he had carried out while at EFSA. The Chair announced the decision of the Board to appoint Herman Koeter as the Acting Executive Director from the time that Geoffrey Podger leaves the Authority until such time as EFSA has a new Executive Director in place at EFSA. The Chair congratulated Herman Koeter on this appointment and wished him well in his new position.

1. Adoption of Agenda (Document MB 10.03.2005 - 1)

1.1 The agenda was adopted.

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1.2 No items were added to the agenda.

2. Adoption of draft minutes of the previous meeting and matter arising from the minutes (Document MB 13.09.2005 -2)

- 2.1 The Chair pointed out that under point 4 of the minutes from the previous meeting, a request had been sent out to Member States for nominations of organisations which can form part of the Article 36 network.
- 2.2 A member of the Board raised agenda item 10.6 of the minutes from the last meeting. The member informed the Board that he had received many questions from stakeholders on the agenda and remit of the Stakeholder Platform. Many questions had been put by stakeholders trying to understand the agenda of the Platform as opposed to the agenda and remit of the Commission's Advisory Committee. Stakeholders would wish to know which types of question they could address to the Platform. The Executive Director said that guidance would be given to the members of the Platform on that point, and would be included in the papers to be sent out in advance of the first meeting of the Platform. He added that EFSA organisers of the Stakeholder Platform in fact attend the meetings of the Commission's Advisory Committee.
- 2.3 The minutes of the meeting of 21 June were adopted and would be published on the Authority's website.

3. For adoption: Meeting dates 2006 (Document MB 13.09.2005-3)

- 3.1 The Chair informed the Board that with regard to the forthcoming procedure to replace the Executive Director, it would probably be necessary to add a meeting date in February 2006, when the candidates shortlisted could be interviewed by the Board. The timing of the meeting would depend on when the Commission could provide the Board with a shortlist of candidates.
- 3.2 The Chair asked the Board for comments about the dates suggested in document 3. Deirdre Hutton expressed her delight that the Board had agreed to come to London in March, and requested that the Board provide suggestions for topics for discussion during the Away day.
- 3.3 After a brief discussion, the Board confirmed the meeting dates in document 3. The Chair asked the Secretariat to send out suggestions for a meeting date in February.

4. For adoption: Budget structure and nomenclature: amendment to the existing budget structure (Document MB 13.09.2005-4)

- 4.1 The Director of Finance introduced the document, explaining that it was based on three pillars. Firstly, changes to the numbering of the articles in the staff regulation, an introduction in title 1 of 2 new budget lines relating to the change to the rules on contract agents in the staff regulation and a new line to cover on-call duty. Secondly, the wish for a better segregation between the lines and, thirdly, because of timing. The Budget Nomenclature has to be published in all EU languages and this is a lengthy procedure. The changes to the budget structure are purely structural and are needed to introduce the new panel on Plant Health into the structure.
- 4.2 Board members wished to know if the budget lines included forthcoming costs for the Stakeholder Platform and asked for an explanation of the different categories of staff as evident from the budget document.
- 4.3 After a clarification of the on-call budget line and how it was in conformity with the staff regulations, the Board adopted the document without changes.

5. For information – Budget transfers (Document MB 13.09.2005-5)

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5.1 The Executive Director introduced the document, explaining that EFSA is required to advise the Board of budget transfers of a significant level and how they are recorded in document 5.

5.2 The Board asked for a clarification of why costs of local and auxiliary agents had increased, the cost of utilities, why Advisory Forum meetings are more expensive to hold than Management Board meetings and the growth in travel costs.

5.3 The Executive Director explained the overall increase of 4 per cent to the estimated budget following the questions from Board members. Travel costs had been extremely difficult to forecast from the inception of the agency, he added, especially after the move to Parma. The Executive Director said an explanatory note could be provided to the Board at the next meeting with a suggested expenditure figure. Board members asked for a one-page summary to be attached to future budget transfer documents.

5.4 The Chair noted the requests from the Board for information in the future on the issue of transfers.

6. For adoption – Annual Activity Report – Requirement for a declaration of assurance (Document MB 13.09.2005-6)

6.1 The Board discussed the paper on the declaration of assurance. The Chair suggested that there were two alternatives: either the present Executive Director should sign when he left his post in November 2005 or the Acting Director should sign the declaration for the whole of 2005. The Director of Legal Services explained that from the legal point of view it should be signed by the Executive Director IN PLACE.

6.2 The Board enquired what the internal audit procedure referred to in the paper actually does. The Executive Director explained that, initially, the Authority had proceeded on the basis that the Commission would provide these services, only to be told this was not the case, and that therefore an auditor had been hired. He added that EFSA was proceeding to set up an internal audit structure and this function could report regularly to the Board.

6.3 The Board asked for clarification of what it should do with the Executive Director's assurance. The Executive Director explained that it would become a matter of record.

6.4 The Board agreed that the declaration of assurance should be signed by Herman Koeter as Acting Executive Director, and thus legal representative of EFSA, at the end of the year.

7. For information and discussion: Appointment of the next Executive Director

7.1 The Chair informed the Board that as the Executive Director had resigned, an Acting Executive Director had been appointed (see above). The procedure for appointing an Executive Director is laid down in the founding Regulation. The Commission manages the initial phase of the appointment procedure and the vacancy notice for the post had been published on the Commission's website and had also been sent to the Member States.

7.2 The Chair explained how the Board would be involved in the selection procedure. The Board has the possibility to send an observer to the Commission's Pre-selection Committee. The Chair said that he hoped the Commission would complete its part of the selection procedure by January next year. The Board stressed the need to speed up the process. The Board added that the Chair may want to canvass it for views about the qualities and experience which the Board would like to see in an Executive Director. The Chair said that the Board would discuss this at its coming meetings during the autumn.

8. For information: Performance Indicators (Document MB 13.09.2005 - 7)

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- 8.1 The Executive Director introduced paper 7 which had been sent only in July. The next paper would be given to the Board at the October meeting. He explained indicator 1, which showed that 206 opinions should have been produced and in fact only 50 had been produced. This appeared to indicate a backlog in the work, but this was not correct. The delay in the delivery of opinions was related to the dossiers on food supplements, many of which had to be sent back to be completed. Table two pointed to a particular problem that was explained in a footnote.
- 8.2 Recruitment continued to be a difficult process for EFSA. He explained that current staff numbers stood at 150 and were expected to increase by the end of the year.
- 8.3 A corrected table showing the number of hits on the website was distributed and the correct figure for June was 2,46 million.
- 8.4 The Chair said that it would be valuable to have an updated document in October and added that there were some editorial changes to be incorporated into the future Performance Indicators documents. The Board enquired if there was any information about how the scientific opinions are used. The Executive Director informed the Board that a report is being written about the use of opinions and would be shared with the Board. He also explained that, in addition to the Performance Indicators, there could be other ways of informing the Board of where the stress points in the organisation are and he would produce a proposal about this.
- 8.5 The Board noted the document.

9. Geoffrey Podger: General update on developments (MB 13.09.2005-8)

- 9.1 The Executive Director introduced the document and mentioned that a meeting of Chief Veterinary Officers had been held in Parma in July. He further congratulated Herman Koeter on his award of a prestigious prize for services to the furthering of animal welfare causes and the Board added its congratulations.
- 9.2 The Chair informed the public that the Board recommendation of Viale Piacenza as the location of the permanent seat of EFSA had been forwarded to the European Parliament and that EFSA was now waiting for the opinion of the Budget Committee of the Parliament.
- 9.3 The Board enquired about whether the membership of the Stakeholder Platform had been finalised. The Executive Director said that a list of members would be circulated.
- 9.4 The Board expressed concern over staffing levels and enquired about measures taken to remedy the situation. The Executive Director stated that in addition to procedural problems, in the sense that procedures are lengthy, there is added pressure from external auditors to make the procedure even heavier. A report will be drafted by EFSA to outline the state of affairs. The Director of Human Resources added that this was one of the reasons for the increase in the use of auxiliary agents, as hiring procedures are slightly lighter when hiring auxiliaries.
- 9.5 The Chair updated the Board on the Article 36 procedure. A letter had been sent out and EFSA was waiting for replies. The Board would be updated at a forthcoming meeting.

10. Geoffrey Podger: Update on the move to Parma.

- 10.1 The Executive Director updated the Board on the progress of the move to Parma. The procedure was now almost complete and some 75 per cent of the EFSA staff were now living in Parma. The premises in Brussels would close at the end of October.
- 10.2 The Executive Director informed the Board that the new school had now opened after extensive building work carried out by the City of Parma, and some 70 children from EFSA were now attending, out of a total of some 260 pupils.
- 10.3 The Director of International and Institutional Relations updated the Board on the meeting of the Liaison Committee, convened with the objective of looking at practical issues related to EFSA's settling in Parma. The vision statement, discussed at an earlier

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Board meeting, had been discussed and received favourably. At the meeting, the Region and the Province announced the intention of opening an EFSA liaison office.

11. Any other business

- 11.1 The Chair informed the Board that two experts had resigned from the CONTAM Panel and that it had been decided to fill only one of the vacant posts. Dr Diane Benford had been offered a post and had accepted.

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