



European Food Safety Authority

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## DECLARATION OF INTENT OF MEMBERS OF THE EFSA ADVISORY FORUM

### CONCERNING ENHANCEMENT OF THE EXCHANGE OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AMONGST THE ADVISORY FORUM MEMBERS AND EFSA

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, establishing the European Food Safety Authority, describes in Article 27 the role of the Advisory Forum and the main link between EFSA and the national authorities with a similar remit to EFSA.
2. One of the main tasks of the Advisory Forum is to forge close links between the Member States' food safety institutes, working in the fields of risk assessment and communication, with the aim to maximise the sharing of scientific information in order to collaborate whenever possible, prevent and avoid diverging opinions and identify emerging risks as early as possible.
3. In May 2005 the Advisory Forum established an *ad hoc* Working Group on the Input of National Authorities into the work of EFSA's Scientific Committee, Panels and other Expert Groups, consisting of representatives from the Advisory Forum, EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels and EFSA staff. This Working Group (WG) was asked to consider the manner in which exchanges on scientific issues, information and data could be facilitated and stimulated in order for scientific groups in EFSA and Member States to be fully aware of relevant work being undertaken by others. The WG was requested to deliver its report and recommendations within one year.
4. In its deliberations the WG particularly discussed: what information would be of interest to be exchanged, when in the risk assessment process this optimally should be done and, finally, by whom (or which means) this would be the most appropriate.
5. The WG submitted its final report (AF 19.05.2006-5) to the Advisory Forum for discussion in time for the AF meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> May in Vienna. The Advisory Forum noted with appreciation the level of detail of the document and the considerable list of practical recommendations which, once implemented, would facilitate considerably the work of EFSA as well as of national authorities. The Advisory Forum was also well aware that implementation of the recommendations would be

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very much in line with the Management Board recommendations following the independent evaluation of EFSA under Article 61 of EFSA's Founding Regulation: these highlighted that as a matter of priority EFSA should develop further networking and increased cooperation with Member States.

6. Following the discussion the Advisory Forum decided that the report of the WG should be revised taking into account all modifications that were agreed and all other comments made at the meeting. The Advisory Forum further agreed that the intention of the Advisory Forum members to adhere to the recommendations, modified as agreed, should be put in writing to make their commitment more formal.
7. Attached to this document is the revised Report of the WG on 'Recommendations to enhance the exchange of scientific information in order to facilitate and improve risk assessments of feed and food, EU wide' (19.05.2006-5-REVISED), in which all comments and suggestions for changes have been taken into account. Below is the proposal for a Declaration of Intent to be signed, once agreed, by the Advisory Forum.

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8. The Advisory Forum of the European Food Safety Authority and its Chair,

--- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety and in particular to Chapter III and Article 27 thereof,

--- having regard to the EFSA Management Board conclusions of the independent external evaluation of EFSA as carried out in conformity with Article 61 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and recommendations arising from the evaluation (MB 20.06.2006-4),

declare that they intent to commit themselves to:

- Continue in developing the relationship between the Member States' national food safety agencies or equivalent authority (and via them the national institutions) and EFSA and to do this as appropriate via more formalised channels of communication;
- Mutually inform AF Members and EFSA on the starting time of a risk assessment and for EFSA to invite AF Members to contribute to the risk assessment process by way of notification of a new question, requesting for relevant information and identification of appropriate experts;
- Where appropriate and on request, share amongst AF Members and EFSA both published and unpublished data that would be useful for risk assessments

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considered by other Member States or EFSA. As regards unpublished data, exchange also uncertainties, if possible, with respect to the absence of peer reviews and data quality and validity.

- Maintain the status quo as regards the sharing and publication of agendas and minutes of meetings of scientific Panels and (ad hoc) Working Groups.
- Exchange working programmes of EFSA and of risk assessments at national level and update these regularly through the AF.
- Consider the creation of ad hoc liaison groups, as needed, between AF Members focused on risk assessments which are about to be started, in order to seek relevant national data and identification of national experts who could contribute to the work of the Panel.
- Create the possibility for concerned AF Members to be kept closely informed on request on the details of progress of risk assessments in EFSA and in MS. This information should be open for other interested AF Members as well.
- Give scientific panels the possibility to propose during the process to organise a meeting with experts or a hearing with all stakeholders, in order to inform them on the progress and for themselves to be sure to have access to all data available.
- Establish procedures to share under embargo, as appropriate, particular opinions of importance for Member States and/or EFSA prior to their publication. This holds true for opinions developed by EFSA and at national level and would provide AF Members and EFSA with the opportunity to be prepared for questions which may arise and to discuss and fine-tune accompanying press material.
- Give experts, participating in EFSA and in national panels, and panel secretariats the possibility to exchange certain information.
- Encourage contacts and exchange of information between scientific staff of EFSA and of scientific panels at national level.
- Continue the development of the Extranet and Videoconferences in consultation with the AF, in order to further facilitate the exchange of (scientific) data and information and to avoid physical meetings thus achieving savings when possible.

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**THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM ENDORSE  
THE ABOVEMENTIONED DECLARATION OF INTENT:**

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**Marusa Adamic** National Institute of Public Health Slovenia

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**Pascale Briand**, Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments  
(Afssa), France

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**Leif Busk**, National Food Administration, Sweden

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**Charles Cremer**, Service Public Federal Santé Publique,  
Sécurité de la Chaîne Alimentaire et Environnement, Belgium

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**Barreto Dias**, Autoridade de Segurança Alimentar e Económica, Portugal

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**Enrico Garaci**, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy

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**Roland Grossgut**, Österreichische Agentur für Gesundheit und  
Ernährungssicherheit, Austria

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**Andreas Hensel**, Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung, Germany

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**Jorma Hirn**, National Food Agency, Finland

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**Hans Peter Jensen**, Danish Institute for Food and Veterinary Research,  
Denmark

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**Hendrik Kuusk**, Veterinary and Food Department,  
Ministry of Agriculture, Estonia

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**Felix Lobo**, Agencia Española de Seguridad Alimentaria, Spain

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**Jan Krzysztof Ludwicki**, National Institute of Hygiene– Ministry of Health,  
Poland

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**Constantinos Michael**, State General Laboratory, Ministry of Health, Cyprus

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**Alan Reilly**, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Ireland

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**Darius Remeika**, Lithuanian State Food and Veterinary Service, Lithuania

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**Evert Schouten**, Voedsel en Waren Autoriteit (VWA), The Netherlands

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**Ján Štulc**, State Veterinary and Food Administration of the SR, Slovakia

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**Maria Szeitzne Szabo**, Hungarian Food Safety Office (MEBiH), Hungary

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**Vinets Veldre**, General Director of the Food & Veterinary Service, Latvia

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**Milena Vicenova**, Food Safety and Agriculture and Food Engineering  
Department, Ministry of Agriculture Czech Republic

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**Ioannis Vlemmas**, Hellenic Food Authority (EFET), Greece

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**Andrew Wadge**, Food Standards Agency, United Kingdom

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**Felix Wildschutz**, Ministère de l'Agriculture, Luxembourg

**For EFSA:**

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**Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle**, EFSA Executive Director,  
Chair of the Advisory Forum

**In the presence of:**

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**Michael Beer**, Swiss Federal Office of Public Health, Switzerland

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**Kirstin Faerden**, Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety, Norway

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**Elin Gudmundsdottir**, National Environment Agency of Iceland, Iceland

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**Galya Kostadinova**, Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry, Bulgaria

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**Liviu Rusu**, National Sanitary Veterinary Authority, Romania

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**Jeannie Vergnettes**, European Commission, Belgium

**Berne, Switzerland, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006**