

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY FORUM UNIT

Parma, 08 September 2008  
EFSA/AF/M/2008/162/PUB/FIN

**Minutes**

**TWENTY SEVENTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM  
OSLO (NORWAY), 12-13 JUNE 2008**

**MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM**

**Chair:** *Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle*, Executive Director, EFSA

Austria	<i>Roland Grossgut</i>	Latvia	<i>Dace Šantare</i>
Belgium	<i>Charles Crémer</i>	Lithuania	<i>Ingrida Miliute</i>
Cyprus	<i>Stella Canna-Michaelidou</i>	Luxembourg	<i>Felix Wildschutz</i>
Denmark	<i>Arne Büchert</i>	Netherlands	<i>Evert Schouten</i>
Estonia	<i>Hendrik Kuusk</i>	Poland	<i>Jan Krzysztof Ludwicki</i>
Finland	<i>Jaana Husu-Kallio</i>	Portugal	<i>Manuel Barreto Dias</i>
France	<i>Lilian Puech</i>	Romania	<i>Liviu Rusu</i>
Germany	<i>Andreas Hensel</i>	Slovakia	<i>Ján Štulc</i>
Greece	<i>Vassilios Krestos</i>	Slovenia	<i>Ada Hočevar Grom</i>
Hungary	<i>Maria Szeitzné Szabó</i>	Spain	<i>José Ignacio Arranz</i>
Ireland	<i>Alan Reilly</i>	United Kingdom	<i>Nick Tomlinson</i>
Italy	<i>Agostino Macri</i>		

**Observers and Invitees of the Executive Director**

Norway	<i>Kirstin Færden</i>	European Commission	<i>Jeannie Vergnettes</i>
Switzerland	<i>Roger Meuwly</i>	European Parliament	<i>Kartika Liotard</i>
FYROM	<i>Dusica Saveska</i>	European Parliament	<i>Thomas Gijsselaers</i>

## Staff of the European Food Safety Authority

<i>Bernhard Berger</i>	<i>Georgi Grigorov</i>
<i>Gian Luca Bonduri</i>	<i>Djien Liem</i>
<i>Lucia De Luca</i>	<i>Elena Marani</i>
<i>Hubert Deluyker</i>	<i>Torben Nilsson</i>
<i>Dirk Detken</i>	<i>Ilias Papatryfon</i>
<i>Anne-Laure Gassin</i>	

### **1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING**

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, Executive Director of EFSA, opened the meeting and passed the word to Anne Kari Lande Hasle, Secretary General of the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services, who welcomed the participants and said that Norway looks forward to contributing to EFSA when the new food law regulation formalising EEA-EFTA participation in EFSA comes into force. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked Norway for its already active support through the Advisory Forum (AF) and its experts contributing to the work of EFSA. She added that she would be happy to sign the focal point agreement with Norway and include Norwegian institutions in the article 36 list, as soon as this becomes legally possible. She also thanked Norway for hosting the AF meeting. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle then welcomed the AF member of Finland and the AF alternates of Denmark and Spain attending an AF meeting for the first time, as well as the representatives from France, Lithuania and United Kingdom replacing the AF member at this meeting. She also welcomed the new representative from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and the representatives of the European Parliament. Finally, she mentioned that apologies were received from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Malta, Sweden, Croatia and Turkey.

### **2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted without changes.

### **3 ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 26<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM**

Germany suggested a minor correction to the minutes. The AF took note of this correction and adopted the minutes with no further comments.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING SINCE THE 26<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM**

#### **4.1 Composition of the new ANS and CEF Panels**

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle informed the AF about the composition of EFSA's new Food Additives and Nutrient Sources (ANS) and Food Contact Materials,

Enzymes, Flavourings and Processing Aids (CEF) Panels. Their inaugural meetings would take place in Parma on 10 July 2008.

#### **4.2 Scientific Committee meeting in Parma on 21-22 April 2008**

Djien Liem informed the AF about the key issues of the Scientific Committee (SC) meeting in Parma on 21-22 April 2008. The SC had adopted the guidance document on the safety assessment of botanicals that would now be tested by the ESCO working group on botanicals. The animal cloning opinion was expected to be adopted by the SC at its meeting on 15-16 July 2008. The SC would be supplemented by a few external experts in the future.

Ireland asked if the conclusions of the animal cloning opinion would be modified as compared to the draft version published for public consultation. Djien Liem informed that the comments received during the public consultation would be thoroughly considered by the drafting team that would meet again on 17 June 2008. A document on how the comments from the public consultation were addressed would be published together with the final opinion.

The Netherlands asked for an update on the status of the nanotechnology opinion. Djien Liem said that the opinion is expected to be adopted for public consultation in September 2008 and finalised before the end of 2008. Germany said that nanotechnology is very important and suggested that many Member States would like to join the discussions, also on communication aspects. Djien Liem informed that the Steering Group on Cooperation (SGC) had agreed to discuss nanotechnology at its next meeting on 23 October 2008 when the draft opinion is ready. Belgium, Ireland and United Kingdom expressed support to the German request for a discussion on nanotechnology. The United Kingdom said that public perception is an issue in relation with nanotechnology and also as regards animal cloning and other emerging technologies and therefore suggested broadening the discussion to cover emerging technologies. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded that nanotechnology would be addressed in a dedicated session at an AF meeting.

#### **4.3 Special AF meeting on animal health in Parma on 27-28 May 2008**

Torben Nilsson briefed the AF on the outcomes of the first meeting of the AF representatives on animal health in Parma on 27-28 May 2008. The meeting had been characterised by a good participation from the Member States and a pleasant atmosphere. EFSA's role in animal health, the EC animal health policy, and the work of EFSA's Animal Health and Animal Welfare (AHAW) Panel were presented. Subsequently, the participants discussed areas of particular interest to the Member States, *e.g.* institutions and networking, experts, data exchange, and risk assessment guidelines and methodologies, which were identified through a questionnaire sent to the Member states prior to the meeting. It was agreed to organise special AF meetings on animal health annually.

Italy and France shared information on an existing project related with animal health, suggesting that EFSA could become involved in its continuation. Hubert Deluyker agreed on the importance of identifying existing projects, but said that EFSA's funding for such activities is more limited than that of DG Research. He suggested that EFSA would meet the project leaders to discuss further. Germany mentioned the urgency of following up, since the project was ending soon. Germany mentioned that animal health is covered by a different institution in many Member States and asked how this is taken into account. Torben Nilsson explained that the nomination of special AF representatives on animal health, as stipulated in EFSA's Founding Regulation, aims at addressing this issue. He further said that the focal points would play a role in information sharing and coordination also within the area of animal health.

#### **4.4 AFCWG meeting in Dublin on 17 April 2008**

Anne-Laure Gassin briefed the AF on the outcomes of the AFCWG meeting in Dublin on 17 April 2008. The meeting had focussed on implementing the revised terms of reference of the AFCWG, discussing the role of focal points, exchanging views on communication perspectives of the issues discussed by the AF, and involving communication aspects in a future crisis exercise.

#### **Other matters arising since the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Advisory Forum**

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle informed the AF that focal point agreements had now been signed with twenty six Member States, that the recent visit of the European Parliament to EFSA had been very useful and that a similar meeting would be organised in Brussels. She also mentioned the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Hungarian Food Safety Office in Budapest on 21-22 May 2008 and the very useful workshop on future challenges to microbial food safety jointly organised with the Dutch VWA on 9-12 June 2008. Finally, she informed the AF that the European Commissioner for Health, Androulla Vassiliou, would visit EFSA on 17-18 July 2008.

*Action 1: Share the report of the workshop on future challenges to microbial food safety with the Member States through their focal points.*

### **5 MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2009 AND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2009-2013**

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle introduced the discussion on EFSA's management plan for 2009 by informing the AF that the present draft document had been provisionally adopted by EFSA's Management Board at its meeting in Pafos on 27 March 2008 and submitted to the European Commission as the basis for the budgeting. She said that the cooperation with the Member States will remain a top priority for EFSA and that the aim is to build on work developed by EFSA in cooperation with the Member States. In order to ensure a good quality of EFSA's scientific outputs, a standard operating procedure system is being established and external reviews of scientific outputs are foreseen in 2009. Communication will

continue to be important. A major challenge for EFSA will be the increasing workload. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle also mentioned that most of EFSA's Panels and the SC are up for renewal in 2009, and that EFSA is presently elaborating its international strategy for discussion in the autumn 2008. She invited the AF to comment on EFSA's draft management plan for 2009 and to share information on national top priorities.

Ireland found that EFSA's draft management plan for 2009 was much better than in previous years, appreciated the performance indicators, and asked for clarification regarding activity-based budgeting as well as the stakeholder and international strategies. Irish priorities comprise emerging technologies, emerging risks, and antimicrobial resistance. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked for the encouraging comments. She explained that the activity-based budget is a way to plan and present the work of EFSA with reference to its key areas. It shows that 70 % of EFSA's resources are allocated to scientific activities. Only input and output indicators have been defined so far, but impact indicators will follow in the context of EFSA's strategic plan for 2009-2013 that is presently being drafted. The intention is to share the draft document for consultation over the summer and for discussion at the next AF meeting. It will also be shared with the European Parliament, the European Commission and stakeholders before submission to EFSA's Management Board for approval in December 2008.

Germany complimented the document, but said that the role of national institutions should be defined, that EFSA should invest more in communications, and that the possible overlap of EFSA's role with that of other institutions should be considered, *e.g.* in the area of plastic materials. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that EFSA's relations with other European agencies/institutions would be further emphasised in the document, *e.g.* the memorandum of understanding signed with the ECDC, and she agreed with the suggestion to further strengthen communications. In this regard, she invited the Member States to share their ideas.

United Kingdom said that it is good that the document has been shortened as compared to previous years, but that there is still scope for improving further the clarity, *i.e.* the link between objectives and activities, for example regarding concrete activities conducted in the framework of the strategy on cooperation and networking. United Kingdom agreed that the identification of emerging risks is important, but also how to address the risks when they are identified. United Kingdom further suggested that the strategic plan should identify areas for international cooperation, that climate change should be considered, that EFSA could assist in capacity building in developing countries, and that EFSA should be more proactive in communications. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that these comments would be taken into consideration.

The Netherlands shared its top priorities (emerging risks, zoonoses, nanotechnology, food consumption and chemical occurrence databases,

contaminants, microbial resistance) and asked how the relation between EFSA's and national work plans should ideally be, *i.e.* if overlap is good? Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle replied that overlap can be good, since it opens a scope for cooperation, but that it should not lead to duplication of efforts. Hence, one would need to carefully examine what would actually be done under the same headings.

Italy said that EFSA's draft management plan for 2009 is excellent, but suggested to strengthen the consideration of allergens and to consider possible future challenges such as food security in the event of hunger and increased food contamination. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle replied that future challenges would be addressed in EFSA's strategic plan for 2009-2013.

Finland complimented EFSA by saying that EFSA's concrete work and results are seen in the document, but said that the linkage to the strategy papers is crucial, that the strategic key approaches should be highlighted in the otherwise excellent executive summary, and that the plan should be put into its context in order to be understandable for a broader audience. Finland also said that quality assurance is a core issue, that an evaluation of how EFSA works, including its cooperation with the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Member States in 2009 or later would be valuable, that it would be interesting to assess how food safety communications have increased in Europe, and, finally, that the document should be more balanced, *i.e.* omitting routine tasks and strengthening the presentation of for example plant health. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked for comments and explained that the general context is described in the strategic plan, but agreed that it should also be reflected in the annual management plan. She mentioned that the strategy on cooperation and networking would be reviewed in 2008. She agreed with the suggestion to omit routine tasks and to ensure a balanced presentation of the different tasks of EFSA.

Norway supported the previous comments and said that the management plan is getting better every year. Norwegian priorities comprise nanotechnology and fish. Other challenges were exposure models under the new CEF Panel and GMOs. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that EFSA follows the political debate on GMOs carefully to provide scientific advice whenever this is needed. EFSA's GMO Panel has worked on methodological and statistical approaches, long-term effects and environmental aspects as self-tasking, and a dedicated meeting on the risk assessment of GMOs was organised with national experts in November 2007. It remains a challenge to develop better ownership of the opinions of EFSA's GMO Panel by the Member States at risk manager level.

Belgium supported the previous comments, added that the efficient handling of EFSA's work load would be a determining factor, and suggested to strengthen the efforts within nutrition. Belgium also suggested to postpone the review of the strategy on cooperation and networking to 2009 and warned against using science to justify other aspects of GMOs. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle agreed on prioritising nutrition and mentioned that the staff of the NDA unit will have

tripled from 2006 to 2009. She referred the discussion on the review of the strategy on cooperation and networking to agenda item 6.4.

Denmark agreed on prioritising nutrition and said that also the data collection on food consumption should be a priority, since it would be a help for all EFSA's Panels. Hubert Deluyker agreed on the need to prioritise the data collection work and referred that this is also the conclusion of EFSA's database strategy paper.

Germany emphasised the importance of cooperation with other international institutions in the area of data collection and said that EFSA should do more within plant health. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that EFSA's activities within plant health would be clarified in the document and discussed at the meeting of AF representatives on plant health in Parma on 8-9 October 2008.

Spain said that its general comments had been covered already and agreed on prioritising nutrition and communications.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded by inviting the Member States to share their possible additional comments on EFSA's draft management plan for 2009 and information on their top priorities for 2009 before the end of August 2008.

*Action 2: Member States to share their national work programmes through the Extranet.*

*Action 3: EFSA to share its draft strategic plan for 2009-2013 for discussion at the next AF meeting.*

*Action 4: Member States to share their possible additional comments on EFSA's draft management plan for 2009 and information on their top priorities for 2009 before the end of August 2008.*

## **6 UPDATE ON SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION**

### **6.1 Focal point meeting in Parma on 4-5 June 2008**

Bernhard Berger presented the outcomes of the second focal point meeting in Parma on 4-5 June 2008 as well as the first meeting of the focal point working group on information sharing in Parma on 23 May 2008. The focal points discussed activities undertaken in the Member States, endorsed the proposal from the focal point working group on the Information Exchange Platform (IEP), brainstormed on possible subjects for scientific projects and events, and assisted in connection with two questionnaires to the Member States on bees and risk assessment approaches, respectively.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle asked if the IEP would be on the Extranet. Denmark expressed appreciation of the work of the focal points and said that three annual focal point meetings were adequate. France thanked for the assistance in collecting information on bees from other Member States, requested more

information on the scientific subjects considered for the IEP, and asked for feedback on replies to article 36 calls. Germany said that, even though EFSA's Management Board had agreed on the focal points, the resources were still insufficient, and asked how the focal point activities would be funded in the future. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle referred the later question to agenda item 6.4. Bernhard Berger confirmed that the IEP would be on the Extranet with access for the AF members and focal points. He also said that the IEP would not contain confidential documents.

*Action 5: EFSA to share the IEP document and the overview of scientific subjects resulting from the brainstorming of the focal points with the AF members by the end of June 2008.*

Finland presented its initial focal point activities and said that the focal points and their actions at national level are very important. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked for the presentation and concluded that the focal point activities are of mutual benefit and a long-term process.

## **6.2 SGC meeting in Copenhagen on 26 May 2008**

Hubert Deluyker briefed the AF on the outcomes of the SGC meeting in Copenhagen on 26 May 2008 and thanked Denmark for hosting the meeting. For an update on the ESCOs, he referred to agenda item 6.3. At its next meeting in October 2008, the SGC will assess the progress of the ESCOs against their mandates, consider whether to expand their mandates, and discuss new ideas for ESCO projects.

## **6.3 ESCOs**

Bernhard Berger reported that the ESCO working group on setting up a European expert database has completed its work successfully. The SGC had therefore decided to close this ESCO working group.

Alan Reilly (Ireland), Chair of the ESCO working group on risks and benefits of fortification of foods with folic acid, updated the AF on the progress of the work. The word cancer had been omitted from the terms of reference, an update on the national situation on folic acid food fortification in Member States was being drafted, an interim report of the ESCO would be available in July 2008, a workshop with invited experts would be organised in Sweden in early 2009, and the ESCO working group expected to complete its work by June 2009. Germany considered this project as one of the most important of EFSA and suggested to expand the cooperation beyond the EU after the ESCO working group.

Djien Liem updated the AF on the status of the ESCO working groups on botanicals and emerging risks. Nick Tomlinson (United Kingdom), Chair of the ESCO working group on emerging risks, provided some further information on

the work and challenges of the ESCO. Hubert Deluyker said that EFSA is grateful for the work of the ESCO in setting standards for the work on emerging risks.

Hubert Deluyker said that the data collection networks are not ESCO working groups and will therefore exist beyond their present mandates. The Netherlands asked who would have access to the databases, and added that the original intention was that the Member States would have access. Hubert Deluyker replied that the networks would decide who should be granted access.

Roland Grossgut (Austria), Chair of the ESCO working group on fostering harmonised risk assessment approaches, updated the AF on the work. A questionnaire had been sent to the Member States through their focal points after discussion at the SGC meeting in Copenhagen on 26 May 2008. The ESCO working group would meet again in Parma on 26-27 June 2008 to discuss the structure of its report based on the replies to the questionnaire. The report comprising recommendations on further harmonisation work would be submitted for consideration by the SGC at its meeting in October 2008. Germany asked when the work of the ESCO would be finalised. Belgium said that the deadline for replying to the questionnaire was too short. Bernhard Berger said that an extension of the deadline had been agreed with the focal points already. Torben Nilsson explained that the ESCO report would respond to the terms of reference of the ESCO by identifying areas in need of further harmonisation with recommendations on ways to address these and related timelines.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded the discussion of the ESCOs by requesting a status report from each ESCO by the end of September 2008. The reports would be considered by the SGC at its next meeting in October 2008 and subsequently discussed by the AF at its meeting in November 2008. Hubert Deluyker said that 1 ½ days may be needed for the next SGC meeting.

*Action 6: Each ESCO working group (supported by its secretariat) to provide a status report to the Executive Director of EFSA by the end of September 2008.*

#### **6.4 Review of the implementation of the strategy on cooperation and networking**

Hubert Deluyker presented the background and suggested approach for reviewing the implementation of the strategy on cooperation and networking. EFSA would provide an overview of activities implemented in the context of the strategy on cooperation and networking and send a questionnaire to the AF members in July 2008. The results from the questionnaire would then be discussed by the SGC in October 2008 and a document for discussion and possible endorsement by the AF would be ready in November 2008. The review would focus on areas in which the cooperation has been successful and areas in which there is a need to do more. The review would also consider whether the four priority areas are still relevant and sufficient.

United Kingdom said that it is good to review the strategy on cooperation and networking and recalled that the rationale behind the strategy was the need to take onboard the capacity in the Member States to undertake work in addition to EFSA's Panels due to their increasing workload. Germany recalled its question on focal point funding raised under agenda item 6.1. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle replied that the focal points will be considered by the review, even though it is very early to review them. The results will be used to make adjustments to the focal point agreements for 2009, if needed, based on the initial experiences. She also said that the first draft of the questionnaire would be shared to ensure that all appropriate questions are asked. Anne-Laure Gassin said that the review would also offer an opportunity to assess if there are more precise processes that can be used for communications. Germany agreed and suggested that the AF should meet EFSA's Management Board to discuss the support for the focal points. Finland warned against being too ambitious and suggested that some aspects could be covered in more detail at a later stage. Finland also agreed that EFSA's Management Board should be heard on its expectations. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle emphasised that it would not be a full review, but that the aim was to take stock in order to adjust and improve wherever possible. Belgium found the review to be premature at this stage, but acknowledged that the strategy on cooperation and networking explicitly states that a review should be conducted after two years of implementation. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded that the review would be considered as an interim progress review with a focus on the issues presented by Hubert Deluyker.

*Action 7: EFSA to provide an overview of activities implemented in the context of the strategy on cooperation and networking and share the draft questionnaire with the AF members for comments.*

## **6.5 Article 36 calls**

Hubert Deluyker informed the AF that EFSA would launch the procedure for updating the list of article 36 institutions in June 2008 through the permanent representations with a deadline for receiving new nominations by the end of September 2008 in order for EFSA's Management Board to adopt the updated list in December 2008. Ilias Papatryfon updated the AF on the work under article 36 and drew the attention to the comprehensive European food consumption database for which designated organisations in the Member states will be invited to provide EFSA with national food consumption data. The data would remain the property of the national institutions that would receive financial support from EFSA for this task.

Germany found that it would be less expensive to use the national systems for data collection and suggested reflecting with the focal points to define the procedure. Finland said that updating the list of article 36 institutions is urgent, but acknowledged that EFSA needs to follow the correct formal procedure. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that EFSA will seek the views of the AF on the

draft programme of article 36 calls for 2009 in the autumn 2008 in order to launch the calls earlier than this year. Italy suggested involving the focal points in defining consortia, since a more flexible approach would be desirable to involve more laboratories than those on the article 36 list. Norway raised the question how to ensure that the institutions would have access to information available in the Member States. Cyprus requested advice from EFSA on how to collect food consumption data. The European Commission said that EFSA should focus on non-laboratory activities to avoid duplication of the community reference laboratory network. Latvia suggested that EFSA could cooperate with Euronet projects and the European Technologies Platform in the area of data collection. Latvia also proposed combining data collection on food composition and food consumption. Hungary asked for clarification on how to include the Hungarian Food Safety Office in the article 36 list. United Kingdom wanted to know if institutions in third countries can take part in the work under article 36. Hubert Deluyker explained that the philosophy behind the article 36 list is that it should be broad, based on all the relevant institutions, while the filtering would take place later in connection with the evaluation of proposals. The article 36 nominations need to go through the permanent representations, so it is up to the national authorities to decide which institutions should be nominated. The procurement is still high, since the article 36 list does not always comprise the required expertise. Hubert Deluyker also said that it is the task of the network to define the approaches for food consumption data collection approaches. He confirmed that the Euronet projects are important and took note of the suggestion to discuss further with the European Technologies Platform. Finally, he said that the involvement of third countries would be addressed in the international strategy. Germany said that it would be important to create a quality assurance system to ensure that the article 36 projects are performed well. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle agreed on the need to share outcomes of the work, but said that potential applicants could not be involved in the selection procedure. Dirk Detken mentioned that being on the article 36 list is no guarantee for being assigned an article 36 project. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded that EFSA would continue to discuss its article 36 strategy and projects with the AF, but not the project assignment.

*Action 8: Member States to update their nominations of institutions for the article 36 list through their permanent representations before the end of September 2008.*

*Action 9: EFSA to share its draft programme of article 36 calls for 2009 with the AF for discussion in the autumn 2008.*

## **7 UPDATE AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON MATTERS RAISED BY THE MEMBER STATES**

### **7.1 Germany: Collaboration between EFSA and the Member States in cases of food crisis**

Referring to the crisis exercise at the AF meeting in Rome on 10-11 April 2008, Germany said that there would be a need to strengthen the collaboration between EFSA, the European Commission, and national and local authorities in cases of food crisis. Spain emphasised the importance of avoiding diverging risk communications between Member States in a crisis situation and asked for guidelines. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle referred to the conclusions of the discussion at the last AF meeting and said that EFSA would finalise its revised crisis handling procedures in July 2008, since its present procedures were no longer adequate. However, it would be useful to focus on the cooperation between EFSA and the Member States when preparing a new crisis exercise next year to review the manual on the aspects raised by Germany and Spain. Ireland said that what is needed from EFSA in a crisis situation is a rapid risk assessment, so that the European Commission and Member States can make risk management. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle agreed that this is the aim and suggested the establishment of an ESCO working group on collaboration in food crisis handling with support from EFSA's Emerging Risks Unit. Germany welcomed this proposal.

## **7.2 Other issues raised by the Member States**

Cyprus mentioned that its recent problem with aflatoxins was a good example of the need for close cooperation with EFSA. The situation was now under control.

# **8 UPDATE AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON MATTERS RAISED BY EFSA**

## **8.1 EFSA workshops on food safety methods and procedures**

Hubert Deluyker presented EFSA's intention to organise workshops in Member States to increase the awareness of its scientific work and attract experts to register in its expert database and to reply to the calls for renewal of EFSA's Panels and SC in 2009. Two workshops are foreseen in 2008 and one in 2009 with a focus on newer Member States with few experts involved in EFSA's activities and clustering of Member States, *e.g.* the Baltic countries. Poland and Cyprus welcomed the initiative and volunteered to host workshops, possibly also involving neighbouring countries. Finland suggested organising a workshop with the Baltic and Nordic countries. The Netherlands suggested clarifying the title to better reflect the aim of the workshops.

## **8.2 Other issues raised by EFSA**

Djien Liem briefed the AF on EFSA's work regarding the decontamination of carcasses and referred to the web story published by EFSA on 12 June 2008. Italy said that the real problem is not the safety, but rather the negative impact on the European system based on prevention of bacteria. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that EFSA's Panel would finalise its scientific advice on 8-9 July 2008, taking into account information received from Health Canada.

Djien Liem updated the AF on the work of the aspartame organising team that is preparing a meeting of national aspartame experts. The organising team is presently screening the aspartame literature published after the opinion of the Scientific Committee on Food in 2002. United Kingdom appreciated the initiative, but would like it to progress faster. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle ensured that EFSA would continue putting its efforts into this issue.

Bernhard Berger mentioned that EFSA had organised a scientific colloquium on acrylamide in Tabiano on 22-23 May 2008. The draft report is available on the web and the final report is expected before the end of 2008. A scientific colloquium on campylobacter will take place in Rome on 4-5 December 2008.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle informed that EFSA's draft opinion on bisphenol-A would soon be ready for public consultation.

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **9.1 AF meeting dates and venues in 2009**

Torben Nilsson and the host countries informed the AF about the AF meeting dates and venues in 2009:

- 18-19 February 2009, Ljubljana (Slovenia).
- 22-23 April 2009, Bucharest (Romania).
- 24-25 June 2009, Prague (Czech Republic).
- 23-24 September 2009, Uppsala (Sweden).
- 25-26 November 2009, Athens (Greece).

### **9.2 Other issues**

Torben Nilsson informed the AF that the IT tool for declaration of interests is now ready and invited the AF members to check their annual declaration of interests in the system. He also informed the AF that the revised AF Extranet workspace (in accordance with the agreement reached at the last AF meeting) would be launched in September 2008, and that it is already possible to personalise passwords.

## **10 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the Norwegian hosts, the AF members, the interpreters and EFSA staff.