

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE

HIGHLIGHTS

Risk Assessment

The **AFC** Panel adopted an opinion on bisphenol A (BPA), complementary to the EFSA opinion on BPA of 2006. The Panel also adopted opinions on selenium yeasts, lysinates, pyridoxal-5'-phosphate and coumarin as well as five other opinions on Flavour Group Evaluations. The **ANS** and **CEF** Panels held their inaugural meetings in July and elected Chairs and Vice-Chairs. **AHAW** adopted opinions on vectors and disinfectants in Bluetongue and on salmon welfare. The second meeting of the EFSA Microbiological Risk Assessment network and the third meeting of the BSE-TSE network were organised by **BIOHAZ** and four opinions were adopted at its plenary meeting in July. **CONTAM** adopted four opinions and published two Art. 36 calls. **FEEDAP** held 23 working group and two plenary meetings at which 11 opinions were adopted. In addition, the Panel published an Art. 36 call on trace elements. **GMO** adopted six opinions and launched three public consultations on draft guidance for applicants, statistical analysis of data and risk assessment of GM plants for non-feed purposes, respectively. **NDA** adopted three Art. 14 risk reduction claims, five Art. 14 claims on child health, and one Art. 13 claim. It also adopted three novel food opinions. **PLH** held 2 plenary and 16 working group meetings, published the report of the 10th EFSA Scientific Colloquium and participated in the June meeting of the CPHS. **PPR** adopted an opinion on risk assessment for birds and mammals with an accompanying news article on EFSA's website. The Panel also launched two Art. 36 calls related to toxicology.

In **Scientific Cooperation**, the Focal Point agreements were completed and the second and third meetings of Focal Points took place in Parma. Discussions took place on scientific topics for Scientific Colloquia in 2009 and preparations were started for two workshops in Budapest and Warsaw to encourage the participation of experts from new Member States. The "Information Exchange Platform" to exchange scientific information with Member States was launched on 8 September. A questionnaire for the review of the strategy on cooperation and networking was developed and the strategy to raise EFSA's scientific visibility was discussed in the Scientific Committee.

The **Scientific Committee** had its 31st Plenary meeting and working group meetings were held on animal cloning, the welfare of experimental animals and nanotechnology. The ESCO Working Group on Botanicals held its first two subgroup meetings. The opinion "Food safety, animal health and welfare and environmental impact on animals derived from cloning by somatic cell nucleus transfer (SCNT) and their offspring and product obtained from those animals" was adopted. The 27th **Advisory Forum** plenary meeting discussed EFSA's draft management plan for 2009, the progress of the ESCO projects, the review of the implementation of the strategy on cooperation and networking, Art. 36 calls, and collaboration between EFSA and Member States during food crises.

Communications carried out a wide range of activities to raise EFSA's visibility including a series of media lunches involving the Executive Director in Brussels and the press briefing on animal cloning. Numerous press releases and web news items were issued. On the EFSA website, improvements had been implemented in content, system administration, web metrics management, and internal processes. In addition, several scientific and corporate publications were launched, including a new range of thematic electronic newsletters.

In **Administration**, the European Commissioner for Health, Androulla Vassiliou, visited EFSA in Parma on July 17-18 and held wide ranging discussions. The visit concluded with the Commissioner's address to EFSA staff. EFSA representatives followed parliamentary developments on a series of dossiers of EFSA interest while participating in several Parliamentary Committees. Representatives of the Japanese Food Safety Commission visited EFSA in June to discuss risk assessment issues and the relationship between the two agencies. In the Legal area, the Court of First Instance declared inadmissible three actions brought against EFSA in 2006 aimed at the annulment of some scientific opinions. The ruling endorsed the defence provided by the Legal Unit and the Legal Services.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Panel on additives, flavourings, processing aids and materials in contact with food (AFC)

The AFC Panel held its last meeting on 8-9 July 2008 in Parma. Three working group (WG) meetings were held in the period 9 June to 9 July: One for food additives, one for flavourings and one for food contact materials. A meeting was held with representatives of the flavourings industry (EFFA) on the methodology to be followed for the testing of flavourings belonging to group FGE 19 for which EFSA has asked more data.

In the field of nutrient sources, opinions on selenium yeasts, lysinates and pyridoxal-5'-phosphate were adopted, corresponding to 6, 3 and 2 nutrient sources applications, respectively. It has to be noted that the deadline of July 2008 has been respected for the two opinions for nutrient sources for food for particular nutritional purposes which were given the highest priority by the European Commission (bisglycinates adopted in May 2008 and selenium yeasts adopted in July 2008).

In the field of flavourings an opinion on coumarin was adopted confirming the Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) set in 2004 and concluding that a temporary exposure resulting in an intake 3 times higher than the TDI for one to two weeks is not of safety concern. In addition four more opinions on Flavouring Group Evaluations (FGEs) were adopted and one more opinion on FGEs of substances evaluated by JEFCA in the past and considered by AFC.

In the field of food contact materials, an opinion on bisphenol A (BPA) was adopted complementary to the opinion of 2006 following a mandate from the Commission after publication of a National Toxicology Program (NTP) draft risk assessment report and a risk assessment report and risk management measures taken by the Canadian government. The conclusion of EFSA was that differences in age-dependent toxicokinetics of BPA in animals and humans would have no implication for the EFSA 2006 risk assessment of BPA.

The meeting of the 8-9 July was the final one for the AFC Panel. Its mandate and the remaining open questions were taken over by the 2 new Panels which succeeded it, namely the ANS and CEF Panel.

Panel on food additives and nutrient sources added to food (ANS)

The inauguration meeting of the ANS Panel has taken place on 10 July 2008. The first session of the meeting was held in common with the new CEF Panel and was chaired by the Executive Director. In the second and specific session, the Panel elected its Chair, Dr John Christian Larsen and its Vice Chairs (Prof. Ivonne Rietjens and Dr. Iona Pratt). The Scientific Secretariat informed the Panel about its agenda, the roadmap 2008 - 2011 and the organisation. In order to speed up the preparatory work, the Panel decided the creation of two standing working groups on additives and nutrient sources. The two standing working groups have both had their first meeting in Parma from 2 to 4 September 2008.

Three meetings have been organised on 17 September: two with the relevant Units in DG SANCO and one with the European trade association of food additives manufacturers (ELC-EU). As there has only been an inauguration meeting of the Panel, no documents have been yet adopted. Two Plenary meetings of the Panel are planned in 2008 in September and November. The adoption of 19 opinions corresponding to 51 application dossiers is foreseen for this period.

In addition to the highest priority work on the evaluation of the nutrient sources for the food supplements (deadline of May 2009), preparatory work will be done on the re-evaluation of food colours in order to speed up the process.

Panel on animal health and welfare (AHAW)

Between June and September 2008, the AHAW unit held 2 plenary meetings (June 17-19 and September 11-12). In June 2 opinions were adopted: one on Vectors and Disinfectants in the Blue Tongue and the second one on Salmon Welfare. The panel proposed to split the Blue Tongue opinion into a second mandate because of a request from the Commission (received on the day of the plenary) to include another scenario in the "risk of transit" assessment. Consequently, this second mandate was postponed for discussion in the September plenary. The Salmon Welfare opinion was adopted including a minority opinion based on Prof. Donald Broom's (panel and WG member) statement

that the introductory chapters on the welfare, biological functioning and farming of fish should be included. In September the AHAW presented 5 opinions for adoption: Susceptible Aquatic Species, Blue Tongue (risk of transit – discussed above) and 3 opinions concerning the welfare of the following species: trout, sea bass and sea bream, European eel and carp (to be confirmed)

AHAW received 2 new mandates from SANCO: one on Brucella Suis and second one on Stunning and Killing of 8 different fish species. In order to better structure the final outcome of the Stunning and Killing of Fish mandate, in October 2008 a letter was sent to the Commission to split the question in 7 scientific opinions corresponding to the following areas i) salmon ii) tuna iii) trout iv) sea bass & sea bream v) turbot vi) vii) carp. This distribution of tasks will allow specific risk assessments for each one of the identified species in order to provide better support to the EU Commission.

Representatives of the AHAW Unit gave presentations on the activities of the Panel at the following events:

CVO meeting in BXL - June 10, SCOFCAH (Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health) Meeting in BXL - June 30-July -1, IFAH (International Federation for Animal Health) Conference in Brussels - June 12, EAAP (EU Association for Animal Production) in Vilnius - August 24-27 (presentation + 2 posters), The Nosove Meeting (Epidemiology) in Denmark - August 25-29, OIE – conference commodities derived from Aquatic Animals in Paris - August 27-29, Conference on Bird Flu in Oxford – September 10-11 (poster), WAFL – Intl. Workshop on Assessment of Animal Welfare at Farm Level – Ghent – Sept 10-13 (poster), EU Influenza Conference in Vilamoura – September 15

Representatives of the AHAW submitted five scientific articles/publications to the following journals: i) Development in Biologicals, “Rabies by non-commercial movement of pets” ii) Preventive Veterinary Medicine, “: Brucellosis” iii) Preventive Veterinary Medicine, “: BT Freedom”, iv) Acta Veterinaria Scandinavica, “: Calf Welfare” v) Trends in Food Science and Technology, (EFSA in press) “Impact of Animal Welfare on the food chain”

Panel on biological hazards (BIOHAZ)

The second meeting of the EFSA Microbiological Risk Assessment (MRA) network was held on 18 June in Parma, and the third meeting of the EFSA BSE-TSE network was held on 26-27 June in Limassol, Cyprus. The deadline for the call for data on Salmonella in pigs was extended to 30 September 2008.

The following opinions were adopted at the BIOHAZ Plenary of 9-10 July:

- Overview of methods for source attribution for human illness from food-borne microbiological hazards
- Risk for Human and Animal Health related to the revision of the BSE Monitoring regime in some Member States
- Further consideration of age-related parameters on the Risk for Human and Animal Health related to the revision of the BSE
- Foodborne antimicrobial resistance as a biological hazard

A Panel Statement on “Prospective challenges facing the EFSA BIOHAZ Panel during the next 10 years” is expected to be adopted by written procedure following the Plenary of 9-10 September.

Ad hoc Working Groups were established for the following mandates: Quantitative estimation of the public health impact of setting a new target for the reduction of Salmonella in certain poultry productions: breeding hens, laying hens and broilers; Technical assistance on the link between Salmonella criteria at different stages of the poultry production chain; Use and mode of bacteriophages in food production; Risk posed by Campylobacter in broiler meat production; Food irradiation, Assessment of equivalence of Australian monitoring

Panel on food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings and processing aids (CEF)

The CEF Panel held its introductory meeting on 9 July 2010. The first session of the meeting was held in common with the new ANS Panel and was chaired by the Executive Director. In a second session, the CEF Panel elected its Chair, Prof Klaus Dieter Jany and its Vice Chairs (Pr. Karl-Heinz Engel and Dr. Wim Mennes). The Scientific Secretariat informed the Panel about its agenda, its roadmap for 2008-2011 and the organisation. The Panel decided

the creation of a new standing working group on evaluation of enzymes. Experts retrieving the experience of Member States having performed risk assessment of enzymes have been invited to this WG.

The working groups of the former AFC Panel on Food Contact Materials, on Flavourings and on Smoke Flavourings continued their activities. Three WG meetings have taken place as follows: 9 September in Brussels for Enzymes, 9-11 September for Flavourings and 10-12 September in Athens for Food Contact Materials. A meeting was organised with the Scientific Officers of DG SANCO on 5 September in Copenhagen on Flavourings. No documents have been adopted yet. A call for an update of scientific literature on risk assessment linked to irradiation was launched in July 2008. The Max Rübner Institute answered the call and the project started in September 2008.

Two Plenary meetings of the Panel are planned in 2008 in September and November. Enzymes: A first draft of guidelines for evaluation of enzymes is planned to be presented in the November Plenary. Flavourings: The Panel should adopt in September the data needed for the evaluation of FGE.19 substances. The programme of evaluations of flavouring substances currently on the market should be completed in 2009. The preparation of guidelines for evaluation of new substances has been initiated. A first draft is planned to be presented to the Panel in January. Food Contact Materials: The evaluation of substances used for manufacture of plastics FCM is ongoing. Around 15 substances in total are expected to be adopted in the next 2 Plenaries. A draft of the guidelines on evaluation of Active and Intelligent packaging is planned for the November Plenary. The Panel is also following the developments on bisphenol A. The first opinions on Smoke Flavourings are scheduled for the November Plenary.

Panel on contaminants in the food chain (CONTAM)

The CONTAM Panel met twice in plenary (9 to 10 June 2008 and 9 to 11 September 2008). In addition, ten working group meetings were held related to requests on undesirable substances in animal feed – section natural plant products (2 meetings), undesirable substances in animal feed – section nitrite (1 meeting), marine biotoxins (1 meeting) and heavy metals (cadmium) in food (6 meetings). The following opinions were adopted in the above mentioned period:

- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in food (EFSA-Q-2007-136)
- Azaspiracids group toxin (EFSA-Q-2006-065B)
- Ricin as undesirable substance in animal feed (EFSA-Q-2003-62)
- Theobromine as undesirable substance in animal feed (EFSA-Q-2005-223)

Two Article 36 calls were published in order to facilitate the work of the CONTAM Panel:

CFP/EFSA/CONTAM/2008/01 – Scientific information on mycotoxins and natural plant toxicants. Closing date for submission of applications is 10 October 2008; CFP/EFSA/CONTAM/2008/02 – Survey on the use of veterinary medicinal products in third countries. Closing date for submission of applications is 15 October 2008

In the above mentioned period the CONTAM Panel has received a new request on arsenic in foodstuffs (EFSA-Q-2008-425). The deadline for this request is September 2009.

Panel on additives and products or substances used in animal feed (FEEDAP)

The FEEDAP Panel held 23 Working Group meetings and two Plenary meetings. In addition, two technical hearings have taken place to discuss on specific dossiers. Eleven opinions were adopted in the two plenaries.

Five of the opinions were related to applications for authorisation of feed additives under Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003, of which two were for coccidiostats [Elancoban (Monensin sodium) for chickens for fattening, turkeys and chickens raises for laying (EFSA-Q-2007-140) and Coxidin® 25% (Monensin sodium) for chickens and turkeys (EFSA-Q-2007-192)] and three for microbial products [Sorbiflore (Lactobacillus rhamnosus and Lactobacillus farciminis) for piglets (EFSA-Q-2006-062), Levucell SC (Saccharomyces cerevisiae) for lambs (EFSA-Q-2007-139) and Ecobiol (Bacillus amyloliquefaciens) for chickens for fattening (EFSA-Q-2007-190)].

Five of the opinions were guidance documents intended to help the applicants in the preparation of the dossiers for the authorisation of feed additives according to Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003 [Guidance for the different categories of feed additives for technological, nutritional and zootechnical additives and for coccidiostats and histomonostats (EFSA-Q-2008-403), technical guidance on tolerance and efficacy studies on target animals (EFSA-Q-2008-405) and the guidance for the re-evaluation of certain additives already authorised under Directive 70/524/EEC]].

Another technical guidance was adopted on the update of the criteria used in the assessment of bacteria for resistance to antibiotics of human or veterinary importance (EFSA-Q-2008-004).

The contract: "Pre-assessment of Environmental Impact of Zinc and Copper used in animal nutrition" was signed on 25 August 2008. Art. 36 call: CFP/EFSA/FEEDAP/2008/01: "Selected trace and ultratrace elements: Biological role, content in feed and requirements in animal nutrition. Elements for risk assessment". The call has been published on the web and is open until 12 September.

A new mandate on Ractopamine (EFSA-Q-2008-433) was received.

Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)

The GMO Panel held two plenary sessions (2-3rd July and 10-11th September). **Six working group** meetings were held: Two meetings for the genetically modified microorganisms WG (two days), two meetings for the molecular characterization WG (four days), one meeting for the food and feed WG (two days) and one meeting for the Environmental assessment WG (two days).

6 opinions were adopted: GMO panel co-opinion with the NDA panel, the ice structuring protein as novel food ingredient under regulation (EC) No 258/97 (EFSA-Q-2008-073); opinion of the GMO panel on MON89788 Soybean, under regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 (EFSA-Q-2006-182); opinion of the GMO panel on statistical consideration in the safety evaluation of GMOs (Self tasking activity; EFSA-Q-2006-080); GMO panel opinion on Greek ministerial decision concerning the extension of validity and amendment of the trading of MON810 seeds (EFSA-Q-2008-313); GMO panel opinion on safeguard clause invoked by Hungary in relation to maize MON810 (EFSA-Q-2008-316). An opinion statement was issued by the GMO panel in response to request from the European Commission on the need for a 90 day rodent feeding study with GM rice LLRICE62 (EFSA-Q-2008-342)

Public consultations were launched on 21 June for: (i) the updated draft guidance for applicants (food, feed and molecular characterisation sections) published on 16 June and presented to member states in SCFCAH Committee on 16 June; and (ii) the draft final report for statistical analysis of data generated for the comparative food safety evaluation of GMOs. A further public consultation was launched on 16 June for the risk assessment of genetically modified plants used for non-feed purposes.

A meeting between GMO panel experts and Hungarian experts was organised on 11 June concerning the Hungarian safeguard clause MON810 maize (Directive 2001/18/EC). A meeting between GMO panel experts and Greek experts as organised on 11 June concerning the Greek safeguard clause MON810 maize (Directive 2001/18/EC). A final report and discussion with the German competent authority performing the environmental risk assessment of 40-3-2 Soybean (NL-2005-24) was held. A meeting was held on 8 July between EFSA and non-governmental organisations in the issue of GMO (environmental and consumer organisations).

A procurement call (CFT/EFSA/GMO/2008/01) entitled "defining environmental risk assessment criteria for genetically modified fishes to be placed on the EU market" was launched on 9 September. A request was received from the European Commission for further scientific advice on Bt11 maize and maize 1507 (EFSA-Q-2008-679)

Panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies (NDA)

The NDA Panel held 6 Working Group meetings and one Plenary meeting and adopted 3 Article 14 risk reduction health claims, 5 Article 14 health claims referring to children's health and development and 1 Article 13 (5) claim (claims based on newly developed scientific evidence and/or for which protection of proprietary data is requested). The Panel also adopted 3 Novel foods opinions (ice structuring protein, fungal oil, noni leaves). In addition, 8 specific sub working groups have taken place to discuss on specific "health claims" dossiers.

With respect to health claim applications, to date EFSA has received 7 Art. 13(5) applications, 202 Article 14 applications related to children health and development and 24 Article 14 applications related to disease risk reduction. It is expected that the NDA Panel will adopt around 50 opinions by the end of 2008. For the other applications, EFSA is currently has requested more data or clarification on the scope of the applications.

In July 2008, the European Commission requested a scientific opinion from EFSA on a draft list of health claims, based on 44,000 claims supplied by Member States. The current list includes 2870 main entries and around 7000 similar health relationships. EFSA is currently discussing with the Commission how best to undertake this work.

Panel on Plant Health (PLH)

The Panel held 2 plenary meetings (2-3 July and 10-11 September) and 16 working group meetings (including web-conferences). The experts were busy with elaboration on two ongoing mandates: (i) evaluation of the pest risk analysis made by South Africa on citrus black spot *Guignardia citricarpa* and (ii) guidance document on evaluation of pest risk assessment documents prepared by third parties for phytosanitary purposes.

The panel contributed to two prestigious international events, namely the 2nd World Congress on Risk in Mexico (9-11 June) and the 9th International Congress of Phytopathology in Turin (25-29 August). At the latter event, EFSA organised a Special Session devoted to "Risk assessment of plant pathogens, mycotoxins and plant protection products for the EU". In June, PLH participated in the meeting of the Chief Officers of Plant Health Services, held under the auspices of the Slovenian presidency, presenting the future vision of its contribution to the risk assessment process in plant health in the EU.

There were no opinions due in the reference period. The report of the EFSA 10th Scientific Colloquium titled "Pest risk assessment – Science in Support of phytosanitary decision making in the European Community" was published. Contract EFSA/PLH/2007/01 "Inventory of data sources for phytosanitary pest risk assessment in the European Community" was signed and commenced 28 August. A new call for proposals CFP/EFDSA/PLH/2008/01 "Development of a harmonised approach to the characterisation of risk in pest risk assessment" was launched. A new mandate on the evaluation of the pest risk analysis made by UK on precessionary moths is in the preparatory stage and is expected to be submitted by the Commission/SANCO soon. In preparation for benchmarking PRAs in 2009, a self-task for development of guidelines for pest risk assessment has been discussed by the Panel at the plenary meeting in September and is undergoing finalisation for the ED endorsement.

Panel on plant protection products and their residues (PPR)

The PPR Panel held two plenary meetings on 17-18th June and 23-24th September, and 21 Working Groups have taken place since mid June. The opinion on the Guidance Document on risk assessment for birds and mammals (EFSA-Q-2006-064), adopted on 17th June, was published on 24th July with a web story. The collaboration with Commission and Member States to enable the preparation of a "ready-to-use" Guidance Document with management recommendations, as requested by MS in the final public consultation, was postponed by DG SANCO to early 2009, due to other priorities.

An Art 36 call on thresholds of toxicological concerns closed in July and the contract is under finalisation. A second Art 36 call related to the evaluation principles of the toxicological burden of metabolites, degradation and reaction products of pesticides in food commodities, closed on the 15th September. The final report from the contractor (9-month contract under Article 36 of 2007) regarding the development of a new Guidance Document on exposure of operators, workers, bystanders, and residents to pesticides (EFSA-Q-2008-261) was delivered at the end of September. It will be analysed by the Steering Committee, and the WG will start its work in October.

An open call for tender "Literature reviews on ecotoxicology of chemicals with a special focus on plant protection products" has been launched: the submission deadline is 24th September. The work on the opinion regarding risk assessment for cumulative exposure of triazoles pesticides (EFSA-Q-2007-183), is ongoing and was discussed in two parallel Working Groups in Residues and in Toxicology. The Steering Committee analysed the final report from the contractor (9-month procurement) on the exposure component.

The work for the development of a new Guidance Document on emissions from protected crop systems-greenhouses and cultivations grown under cover (EFSA-Q-2008-260) is ongoing; the outsourcing of some work via a negotiated procurement procedure is under preparation. The first draft of the opinion on toxicological effects of deltamethrin (EFSA-Q-2008-373, from the Commission) was discussed in a WG. The adoption is foreseen in December 2008.

Two Guidance Documents will be prepared in the area of residues. One is on the evaluation principles of the toxicological burden of metabolites, degradation and reaction products of pesticides in food commodities (adoption in 2011). The preparation of a SLA agreement with EC Joint research centre (JRC) on the QSAR analysis has just started. The development of another new Guidance Document will start in September on the use of probabilistic methodology in modelling consumer exposure to pesticide residues for consumer risk assessment.

The comments from the public consultation on the revision of the Guidance Document on persistence in soil (EFSA-Q-2007-184) and work-plan were analysed (Fate WG). Specific aspects were developed in collaboration with the JRC (Ispra). The Ecotoxicology Working Group is treating in parallel the issues on soil organisms: from their discussions it emerged that a new self-tasking opinion is needed on the usefulness of total concentrations and pore water concentrations as metrics for the assessment of ecotoxicological effects in soil. A Working Group will start in June. Work will commence in September to update two existing EU Guidance Documents: one on aquatic ecotoxicology and one on terrestrial ecotoxicology.

SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

Scientific Cooperation

All 27 Focal Point agreements have now been signed. The 2nd and 3rd Focal Point meetings took place on 4/5 June and 9/10 September in Parma. The main discussion points were the workshops to be organised in new Member States to foster applications to EFSA's Panels, the promotion activities of the expert database, the reporting on the Focal Point activities (due by 1 October), as well as the opening of the list of organisations supporting EFSA in its tasks (under Article 36). The meetings took place in a very open atmosphere and Focal Point representatives in particular appreciated the guidance provided on the reporting and are very actively promoting the expert database and the Article 36 network.

Discussions on the scientific topics EFSA would like to address via its series of Scientific Colloquia in 2009 have started and the proposals will be discussed at the Advisory Forum and the Scientific Committee. Preparations have started for two workshops in Budapest and Warsaw to encourage experts from new Member States to participate in EFSA's Scientific Panels. They will take place on 30 October (Budapest) and 27 November (Warsaw). In collaboration with Sweden, the unit will organise an international workshop on the risks and benefits of folic acid in January 2009. Preparations (draft agenda, invitation of speakers) are ongoing.

The Scientific Work Programme for the work carried out under Article 36 and under procurement has been discussed with Member States (Focal Points) and within EFSA. A draft programme has been submitted to the Advisory Forum (and will be submitted later to the Scientific Committee) for further discussion. The "Information Exchange Platform" to exchange scientific information with Member States has been launched on 8 September. The Expert Database has been launched on 5 June and the respective report was finalised and published on EFSA's website. The report on the harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies, based on the feed back of a questionnaire sent to Member States, is under preparation.

A questionnaire to serve as a basis for the review of the strategy on cooperation and networking has been developed. Comments from the Advisory Forum have been included and the questionnaire has been sent to the Advisory Forum for endorsement. Progress on the strategy to raise EFSA's scientific visibility, including the creation of an independent scientific EFSA journal, has been presented and discussed in the Scientific Committee.

The unit will continue to work on the following mandates:

- prepare a summary report on the activities of the Focal Points
- prepare the final report on the harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies
- prepare the review of the strategy on cooperation and networking
- further develop the Information Exchange Platform (in cooperation with Member States)
- further promote the expert database
- continue to raise EFSA's scientific visibility, mainly by establishing the EFSA journal

New mandates may come up at the next meeting of the Steering Group Cooperation.

AMU

The Assessment Methodology Unit provided scientific, statistical and modelling assistance and participated in working groups of the Zoonoses unit (baseline studies), the DATEX unit (beta caseine), the BIOHAZ panel (QMRA, fate of Salmonella spp. on broiler carcasses before and after cutting and/or deboning, Salmonella criteria poultry production chain, technical guide on poultry decontamination), the PLH panel (climate working group), the PPR panel (FATE working group), the CONTAM panel (cadmium) and the NDA panel (health claims). The unit organized a sub-working group meeting on toxicokinetic modelling of cadmium as a support to the CONTAM panel and developed a new modelling approach which will also be published in a peer reviewed journal.

Following a question received in March 2008 from the "Mortality, collapse and weakening in bee hives" working group of Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments (AFSSA), a report was published in August: EFSA-Q-2008-428, Survey on colony collapse disorder (CCD) in bees in Europe. This report collates information obtained by a short questionnaire which was distributed through the EFSA Focal Point Network. Furthermore, sources of European data on honey production and chemical residue monitoring were analyzed. To follow on from the survey on CCD another Art 36 call was launched for an EU-wide review of literature on the topic and description of active surveillance programmes to facilitate an objective assessment of all possible causes of CCD.

The unit wrote provided technical reports, annexes and chapters to different opinions or reports of the Zoonoses unit, the CONTAM panel, the NDA panel and the SCAF unit. The AMU unit is responsible for the collection, reporting and coordination of the progress indicators and the monthly scientific activities of the SCA and RA directorates. AMU launched 2 calls for grants. To establish an inventory of quantitative models describing the spread, establishment or development of plant pest on crops in Europe including climatic data and / or plant phenology as input factors, an Art 36 call was launched under the title "Systematic review of pest risk models using climatic data and plant phenology". The unit will start a self task on the modelling of the link between the EU microbiological criteria to poultry meat prevalence at retail. AMU also will launch a framework contract for Toxicology support to EFSA.

Data Collection and Exposure Unit (DATEX)

The first meeting of the Food Consumption and Exposure WG took place on 27 June 2008. This WG is a subgroup of the Expert Group on Food Consumption Data with the task of giving support to the establishment of a Comprehensive European Food Consumption Database. On 19 June the Expert group for Chemical Occurrence Data was launched in Parma, to share scientific information with the Member States and provide scientific advice to Chemical Occurrence Data Collection activities; a particular focus will be on common Food Classification and Data transmission standards.

DATEX provided support to the CONTAM WG on Heavy Metals by collecting data and providing exposure calculation on Cadmium. The written contribution on exposure will be part of the final Panel Opinion. The WG on beta-casomorphins and related peptides had two meetings on 12 June and 2-3 September. The activities focused so far on completion of literature collection and structure of the report.

Two new data Collections on Heavy metals were launched: Lead and Arsenic. The lead data collection call was published in June 2008 and submissions are ongoing. The arsenic data collection call was published in July 2008; data submissions are expected by November. A call for data on Uranium occurrence was issued directly to selected

organisations. Data on uranium concentration in water and foodstuff has started in the DATEX Unit. This information will be liaised to consumption data for exposure assessment of Uranium consumption. Selenium and chromium data collection was launched – the call was published on the EFSA website on 09 Sep 2008.

Following the Commission request for a full risk assessment on polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in food, the DATEX Unit was responsible for collection of occurrence and consumption data and drafting of exposure assessment as part of the editorial committee finalising the CONTAM Panel opinion that was published on 5 August 2008. Updates of the previously published DATEX occurrence report were completed and published on the EFSA website. In the field of activities of the CONTAM WG on marine biotoxins, the exposure assessment chapter for Yessotoxins was provided by DATEX. Furthermore, a call for data was launched on two new groups of toxins: Domoic Acid (DA) and Cyclic Imines (CI); this is a further step towards the completion of the ongoing evaluation process of these shellfish contaminants.

A call for tender on Market Intelligence was launched in August. It is addressed to commercial companies offering insight services on market intelligence in the form of online databases and reports. EFSA wants to get access to such sources of information, mainly focusing on trends in new food products and ingredient usage, food consumption at household level and market share of different food items and goods, to complement food consumption data from national surveys.

Based on a request from EFSA, the EU Permanent Representatives were asked to officially nominate the Organisations responsible for Food Consumption Data Collection of the each Member State. So far 19 nominations were received and the corresponding invitation letters on "Collaboration agreements for the provision and processing of food consumption data" were sent. A meeting of the Expert Group on Food Consumption Data, involving participation of Experts from all Member States, is planned for 30 October 2008. Applications and Evaluation of proposals are expected for the ongoing call for tender on Market Intelligence.

Pesticide Risk Assessment Peer Review (PRAPeR)

The following meetings were held: 13 PRAPeR experts' meetings with MS experts; 3 bilateral teleconferences with the EU-Commission; 2 teleconferences with Member States and the Commission; 2 meetings and 1 teleconference with the members of the Working Group on the efficiency of the pesticides peer review process; and 1 meeting with a representative from the US Environmental Protection Agency. In July a workshop with MS experts was held where the new procedures for MRL setting and the review programme for existing MRLs were discussed.

Six EFSA conclusions were finalised and delivered to the Commission. On 1 September, an Article 36 contract was signed concerning the collection of Codex Maximum Residue Limits and related information for active substances to be evaluated under Article 12(2) of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005. Two resubmission applications were submitted to EFSA under the accelerated procedure in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 33/2008. A maximum of 50 such re-submission applications are expected to be submitted to EFSA during 2008 – 2010.

In accordance with Articles 12a and 25a of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1095/2007, in the period up to 31 December 2010, EFSA is to deliver a view on the 62 'green track' substances from the 3rd and 4th stages of the review programme that were considered to meet the 'not harmful' criteria. In 2009 EFSA may be asked to carry out a peer review for the 7 active substances included in the Annex I Renewal Programme, in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 737/2007. On 4 July EFSA the European Commission asked EFSA to provide a scientific opinion on certain MRLs of concern for 15 active substances.

Since Regulation 396/2005 became fully operational on 2 September 2008, all the new provisions regarding the procedures for setting/amending MRLs, reviewing MRLs and drafting the Annual monitoring report are applicable henceforth. Consequently, the MRL review process was started by launching a self-mandate on 2 September for 168 active substances already included in Annex I of Directive 91/414/EEC. The reasoned opinions regarding these mandates have to be finalised within 1 year.

Emerging Risks Unit (EMRISK)

The Emerging Risks Unit held 4 meetings with the ESCO WG on Emerging Risks. The mandate of the Working Group is to identify key sources of information for the identification of emerging risks, develop procedures and best practices for data collection and analysis, and propose methodologies and procedures to establish network to exchange information in a timely manner. The WG is well on track with the elaboration of its interim report which will be presented to the ESCO Steering Committee on Emerging Risks on the 24th September.

The Emerging Risks Unit is working to establish a network of national and international partners engaged in building capacities for the identification of emerging risks in the area of food, feed, and animal and plant health. Bilateral meetings have been organized with partners within the EC, including the ECDC, and DG-SANCO (i.e. the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, and the risk assessment C7 Unit), as well as with international organizations like FAO.

With reference to tools and applications needed for the systematic identification of emerging risks, the competition for a specific contract under the multiple framework contract (NP/EFSA/EMRISKS/2008/02) was launched on the 19th August for an assignment on the development of an it application to analyze data from the DG-SANCO Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed Safety (RASFF). This application will allow a prompt and efficient analysis of the RASFF notifications, a systematic monitoring of notifications from the RASFF system, over time and geographical areas, for the identification of potentially relevant emerging threats. The call will close on the 24th September.

A call for tender was published in the on 26/08/2008 (EFSA reference number CFT/EFSA/EMRISK/2008/01) for the delivery of a database on bioactive constituents of food plants. This will provide a comprehensive database with up-to-date food and feed plant compositional data on known or newly emerging bioactive compounds with potential health or toxic effects for humans or animals, to support activities of EFSA scientific staff and panels. The call will close on 8/10/2008. In addition, EFSA's draft "Crisis Handling Manual" produced by an external consultant is currently being revised by the Emerging Risks Unit, in close discussions with the members of the EFSA crisis management team, with the view to rendering it suitable for the needs of EFSA.

Animal Diseases Transmissible to Humans Unit (ZOOZONES)

The meeting of the Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection (a Network) was held on 17-18 June. The main issues were the validation of the zoonoses data reported from 2007 and the results from the EU-wide Salmonella baseline surveys in slaughter pigs and turkeys.

A total of 5 Working Group meetings were organised between June and mid September: 3 of them were related to preparation of future baseline survey protocols or analyses of baseline survey results, and 2 meetings concerned harmonisation of the annual data reporting. A coordination meeting between EFSA, ECDC and EFSA's Zoonoses Collaboration Centre was organised in end August to discuss the major findings in 2007 data.

Two data collection reports were published: one on the Analysis of the baseline survey on the prevalence of Salmonella in slaughter pigs, in the EU, 2006-2007; Part A: Salmonella prevalence estimates, on 9 June 2008; and another on proposed technical specifications for a coordinated monitoring programme for Salmonella and Campylobacter in broiler meats at retail in the EU, on 2 September 2008.

A call for contracts was published in June on analyses of data on antimicrobial resistance in certain zoonotic agents and indicator organisms (Lot 1) as well as data on Salmonella serovars and phage types (Lot 2) derived from animals and food in the European Union. Work on a new mandate from the Commission on preparation of a baseline survey protocol for Listeria in ready-to-eat foods started in July with the first meeting of the relevant Working Group. New mandates on preparation of the 2007 Community Summary Report and the preparation of reports on antimicrobial resistance and Salmonella source attribution analyses, as well as on revision of the reporting manuals, were adopted. In addition, work on a new mandate on harmonisation of the monitoring of Yersinia in animals and food was initiated.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE & ADVISORY FORUM

Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee (SC) held its 31st Plenary meeting on 15-16 July in Parma. It discussed the progress on the consideration of cross-cutting issues in the various Scientific Panels, SC Working Groups and the Scientific Cooperation and Assistance Directorate. EFSA updated the SC on the outcome of meetings of the Management Board, the Advisory Forum, the EFSA Colloquium on Acrylamide and about the inauguration of the new ANS and CEF panels. In addition the draft opinion on application of nanotechnologies was discussed and will most probably be adopted for public consultation at the next plenary meeting. SC Working Group meetings were held in the area of animal cloning, welfare of experimental animals and nanotechnology.

The ESCO Working Group on Botanicals had its two first subgroup meetings; the first subgroup is completing the Compendium of Botanicals reported to contain toxic, addictive, psychotropic or other substances of concern. The second subgroup is testing the proposed scientific framework for the safety assessment of botanicals with a number of examples. EU Commissioner for Health Androulla Vassiliou paid a visit to EFSA and met the EFSA Scientific Committee. The chair Vittorio Silano presented the work of the Scientific Committee and Panels.

The opinion "Food safety, animal health and welfare and environmental impact on animals derived from cloning by somatic cell nucleus transfer (SCNF) and their offspring and product obtained from those animals" was adopted. After the adoption a press briefing as well as a stakeholder presentation of the opinion was held in Brussels to communicate the conclusions and recommendation of the opinion.

A new mandate on "Exploring options for providing preliminary advice about possible human health risks bases on the concept of threshold of toxicological concern" was adopted and a Scientific Committee working group will be soon established. Sue Barlow was appointed Chair of the WG.

Advisory Forum

At the 27th AF plenary meeting in Oslo on 12-13 June 2008, the AF discussed EFSA's draft management plan for 2009, the progress of the ESCO projects, the review of the implementation of the strategy on cooperation and networking, article 36 calls, and the collaboration between EFSA and the Member States in cases of food crisis. The AF also agreed on venues and dates of its five meetings in 2009.

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE

Communications activities

Since the last Management Board meeting, the Communications Directorate carried out a number of communications activities aimed at raising EFSA's visibility:

5 June – EFSA launches its expert database which heralds the start of a wider promotion plan, led by the Communications Directorate, to encourage experts to sign up to EFSA's expert database and to promote the launch of EFSA's call to renew Scientific Committee and Panel members in October. The plan includes a campaign to run dedicated adverts in scientific journals and in major national newspapers; supporting promotional products including a postcard, poster and a roll-up poster banner; and a presentation for EFSA experts to use when presenting EFSA's work at events.

12 June - EFSA co-organised the 'EFSA and the National focal Points' Joint Event with the Norwegian Food Safety Authority. EFSA's Executive Director, Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance, and the Head of the Scientific Cooperation Unit, all gave speeches during the event. The event was attended by 60 representatives from Norwegian institutions.

4 July - following an address at the Journées d'Etudes in Paris organised by the European People's Party and European Democrats (EPP-ED Group) of the European Parliament, the Executive Director gave an interview to Le Monde science journalist Jean-Yves Nau on topics including GMOs and animal cloning.

7 July - the Press Office organised the first in a series of media lunches in Brussels. The Executive Director met Brussels correspondents of La Repubblica and ANSA (IT), El País (ES), Gazeta Wyborcza (PL) and European Voice (Pan-EU). Discussions included EFSA's work in general, GMOs, food additives and animal cloning.

18 July - Commissioner Vassiliou visited EFSA. The Press Office produced a web news story and informed the local media. All local journalists were present at a photo opportunity with the Executive Director, Commissioner Vassiliou and Italy's Undersecretary for Health, Francesca Martini. The Executive Director was interviewed by La Gazzetta di Parma, L'Informazione and TV Parma. Following the event, several articles appeared in the local press and in ANSA (Italian news agency).

21 July - EFSA's Executive Director gave a speech entitled 'How Institutions Manage Risk Communication' at a Round Table (Food Risk Communication - Bridging Theory and Practice) chaired by Geoffrey Podger, during the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) in Barcelona. Also at ESOF, David Carlander was a panellist for the session 'Dolly for dinner? Technological and socio-economic perspectives of animal cloning' on 19 July. Throughout the event (18-22 July) EFSA had a stand where visitors could learn about EFSA's Experts Database, as well as find out about EFSA's wider role in the European food safety system.

24 July - the Press Office organised a press briefing in Brussels on EFSA's final opinion on animal cloning. More than 30 media outlets, mostly national & international agencies, newspapers and broadcasters attended the briefing which was followed by a number of interviews conducted by Prof. Silano and Prof. Collins. The opinion drew extensive coverage across Europe and beyond.

23 August - an event entitled "Food Safety, Animal Health and Consumer Protection" organised by Slovenia took place in Radenci. EFSA signed its last Focal Point agreement and the Executive Director was interviewed by the local press. There was substantial media interest from Slovenian national TV and national newspapers, and from journalists of neighbouring countries.

26 August - EFSA organised a scientific session at a major international scientific event, the International Congress on Plant Pathology, entitled 'EFSA risk assessment of plant pathogens, mycotoxins and plant protection products: a scientific approach to food safety in Europe'. EFSA was also present with a stand throughout the event (25-28 August) to raise its visibility at high-profile scientific conferences.

15 September - the Press Office organised a media dinner in Rome. The Executive Director met six Italian media (AGI, APCom, ANSA, Il Sole 24 Ore, Corriere della Sera and Il Salvagente). The aim of the event was to explain in more detail the role and mission of EFSA illustrated by key topics on which EFSA is working.

Corporate / Science Press materials: Press releases / Web news stories

Over the summer period the Press Office issued numerous press releases and web news stories on topics such as EFSA's Annual Report, the creation of the two new panels ANS and CEF, aluminium in food, bisphenol A, animal cloning and health claims, which all received widespread media coverage across Europe.

Press Releases:

- Seven members appointed to EFSA Management Board (24/6/2008)
- EFSA's scientific output moves up a gear - 5 years of commitment to ensuring Europe's food is safe (30/6/2008)
- EFSA creates two new panels to boost its scientific work (10/7/ 2008)
- EFSA advises on the safety of Aluminium in food (15/7/2008)
- EFSA publishes advice on the consumption of young sheep and goats coming from TSE affected flocks (15/7/2008)

- EFSA publishes two opinions on testing levels for BSE in cattle (17/7/2008)
- EFSA looks at the impact of husbandry systems on the welfare of Atlantic salmon (22/7/2008)
- EFSA updates advice on bisphenol A (23/7/2008)
- EFSA adopts final scientific opinion on animal cloning (24/7/2008)
- EFSA adopts first opinions on health claims made on foods relating to disease risk reduction and children's health (21/8/2008)

Web News Stories:

- EFSA publishes guidelines on recycled plastics (1/7/2008)
- EFSA publishes advice on Salmonella and other biological hazards in animal feed (15/7/2008)
- EFSA opinion on two environmental pollutants (PFOS and PFOA) present in food (21/7/2008)
- EFSA recommends Member States carry out analyses on life patterns of bluetongue virus vectors (23/7/2008)
- Opinion on the science behind the Guidance Document on risk assessment for birds and mammals (24/7/2008)
- EFSA adopts opinion on antibiotic resistant bacteria (4/8/2008)
- EFSA opinion on suitable indicators for both the occurrence and toxicity of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in food (4/8/2008)
- Update on flavouring evaluations (8/8/2008)
- EFSA confirms safety of noni leaves for tea (11/8/2008)
- EFSA launches public consultation on its draft scientific opinion on Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (13/8/2008)
- EFSA launches public consultation on its general approach to establishing Dietary Reference Values (13/8/2008)


Articles following web news stories appeared mainly in the specialised media across Europe, such as EU Food Law, NutraIngredients, FoodNavigator, NewsFood.com, Just Food, etc.

Web developments

The most significant improvements on the website during the period have been in the areas of content, system administration, web metrics management, and internal processes. New content included a section detailing the Risk Assessment workflow for Scientific Opinions; 2 areas featuring all aspects of the work of the two new Scientific Panels ANS and CEF; and the Declarations of Interest Database. Other new content includes improved Article 36 pages, a new PRAPeR Maximum Residue Levels area, and a large number of Working Group minutes. New 'key topics' sections were published on EFSA's role in setting dietary reference values and dietary guidelines, monitoring and advising on food-borne diseases such as Campylobacter and Salmonella, and the use of decontamination treatments in the food chain. EFSA's new range of thematic newsletters was made easily accessible online. New content has also been published outside the scope of the EFSA website, on Wikipedia, in an effort to ensure a factual and accurate description of EFSA on this now very authoritative online forum.

On July 21, the Web Content Management System (CMS) publishing platform was switched from static to dynamic. The project resolved fundamental and persistent CMS underperformance related to day-to-day publishing and system stability, which has hampered web management since September 2007 when the new CMS was launched. The initiative did not, however, address issues which impede site management and project development. The Web Team continues to work with IT to find a solution to these problems.

An important addition to internal working processes include a medium-term initiative to improve web metrics reporting, culminating in a detailed web statistics report, produced on a monthly basis. Further improvement to statistics tracking and analysis remain as a long-term project. Other process-related initiatives include electronic archiving and retention of webcasting recordings; a systematic log of Public Access to Documents requests; and a new platform for more efficient web page development.

Core initiatives which improve web usability include an online review of requests and mandates to avoid duplication with information in the Register of Questions; and a phasing out of non-standard file formats on the website. The visual quality of the site, as well as the accessibility, has been improved by reducing the size of photos; by conducting in-house PFD training with key content providers; and by featuring action icons such as the  image to drive traffic to webcasts, including Management Board meetings.

Publications

Since the last MB meeting, several scientific and corporate publications have been published. These include:

Scientific:

- The first editions of EFSA's new thematic family of electronic newsletters, EFSA in focus, were distributed in September. Aimed primarily at risk managers, risk assessors and policy-makers, each issue focuses on a particular topic (Food, Animals or Plants). Each issue provides a snapshot of EFSA's latest activities plus a round-up of events, contracts, mandates and scientific opinions in each area.
- The report from EFSA's 8th Scientific Colloquium - Environmental Risk Assessment of Genetically Modified Plants - Challenges and Approaches, was made available digitally for participants visiting the EFSA stand at the International Congress of Plant Pathology in Turin in August. It is currently being laid out for print.
- The 2006 Zoonoses report has been printed and distributed.
- In addition scientific posters were prepared for an annual conference on zoonoses (June, France), the EurBee3 Conference (September, Ireland), the BirdFlu 2008 event (September, UK), and a workshop on the assessment of animal welfare at farm and group level, (September, Belgium).

Corporate:

- The first edition to use the new look of EFSA news was printed in all four official EFSA languages in July.
- The second edition of Moving Together was printed in all four official EFSA languages in July.
- The Annual report and its summary have been printed and are being distributed.

ADMINISTRATION

Cooperation with the European Institutions

European Commission

Visit of Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou

On 17 and 18 July, the European Commissioner for Health Androulla Vassiliou visited EFSA in Parma. The Commissioner met members of the Management Board, the Scientific Committee, the Executive Director and senior EFSA staff. An extensive exchange of views took place ranging from EFSA's priorities to the working processes of the Authority. An important part of the discussions revolved around cooperation with Member States. The visit concluded with the Commissioner's address and meeting with EFSA staff.

The Executive Director and the Director General of DG SANCO continued with their regular schedule of bilateral meetings (18 June 2008 and 12 September 2008). In addition, the numerous exchanges and meetings with colleagues from the interface Unit continued.

During the period of reporting, EFSA representatives also participated in different meetings of the European Commission's Advisory Group on the Food Chain, Animal Health and Plant Health as well as meetings of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health on invitation of the Commission's services. Topics included notably the use of Health Claims and GMO authorisation procedures.

European Parliament

EFSA representatives followed parliamentary developments on a series of dossiers of interest to EFSA interest while participating in several EP Committee meetings including ENVI, AGRI, BUDG and IMCO. This activity concerned inter alia the proposal on a revision of the novel food Regulation that includes a common authorisation procedure; the

proposed future legislation on food information for consumers (labelling rules), health rules for animal by-products not intended for human consumption and budgetary questions in relation to EFSA's 2009 draft preliminary Budget.

On July 14, EFSA liaison MEP Ms Kartika Liotard reported to the ENVI Committee on the visit of an EP ENVI delegation on 14 April. She gave positive feedback and stressed the transparent way in which information is exchanged.

EFSA senior representatives also contributed to parliamentary debates within the framework of hearings, respectively concerning on the one hand food information for consumers and the work carried out by EFSA on nutrient profiles in connection with the use of health claims (28 August 2008), and on the other hand EFSA's activity in the context of novel foods (10 September 2008).

At the occasion of the EP EPP-ED Group Study Days early July, the EFSA Executive Director was invited to participate at a round table on food safety and food security. Her address can be read at http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1211902018434.htm.

Presidency

At the invitation of the French Presidency, EFSA participated in a Seminar on modernising health inspections in slaughterhouses which took place from 7th-11th July in Lyon, France. EFSA is also invited to participate at upcoming conferences organized in the context of the EU Presidency on topics such as rural development and pesticides (end of November) and on sustainability and biotechnologies (end of October).

EFSA's *Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2013* was discussed at a working group in the Council on 15th September. At this meeting, EFSA presented the draft which has been sent for consultation to EU institutional partners, namely the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Member States. With this initiative, the French Presidency aims at providing EFSA with input from MSs. Discussions in the Council will be pursued with the EU Permanent Representatives (COREPER) and at a future meeting of the Chief Veterinary Officers.

Relations with Stakeholders

On the 23rd July a technical briefing with EFSA Stakeholders took place in Brussels on the presentation of the final Scientific Opinion of the EFSA Scientific Committee on the "Food Safety, Animal Health and Welfare and Environmental Impact of Animals derived from Cloning by Somatic Cell Nucleus Transfer (SCNT) and their Offspring and Products Obtained from those Animals". The EFSA's opinion was presented by Professor Silano and Professor Collins with the support of EFSA's staff. 23 participants attended the meeting.

International Relations

Dr. Akihiro Hino and Mr. Kentaro Kishimoto from the Japanese Food Safety Commission visited Parma on 30th of June 2008 and discussed with EFSA colleagues various risk assessment topics and the relations between both agencies. In September, a delegation from EFSA was invited to participate in the 5th anniversary of the FSC.

Pre-Accession Programme for Turkey, Croatia and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

In the reporting period experts from the three Candidate countries took part in the following 7 EFSA meetings:

PRAPeR Experts' Meetings, 1) Residues 2-6 June and 2) Mammalian Toxicology, 2-6 June, Conference on Future challenges to Microbial Food Safety, NL, 9-12 June, Advisory Forum Meeting, Oslo, 12-13 June; Meeting of Experts' Group for chemical occurrence data, 19 June; Advisory Forum Communication Working Group, Berlin; 19-20 June and BSE-TSE Network meeting, Cyprus, 26-27 June.

In addition 6 experts from Turkey and 6 experts from Croatia took part in a study visit arranged by the Pre-Accession team to the UK Food Safety Agency and to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 15/16 September.

Legal and policy affairs (LPA)

During this timeframe, orders of the Court of First Instance declared inadmissible three actions brought against EFSA

in 2006 aiming at the annulment of some scientific opinions. The ruling endorsed the defence provided by the Legal Unit and the Legal Services.

The LPA Unit ensured legal support for the implementation of the Health and Nutrition Claims regulation and for several recent regulations impacting on the pesticides sector and the newly developed EFSA Policy on Declarations of Interests. Legal staff attended several meetings of the Standing Committee on the Safety of the Food Chain and DG SANCO's Advisory group. The LPA Unit also ensured legal advice for all outstanding issues related to the installation of EFSA in Parma. In particular, legal support was given for the dossiers of the final seat.

The LPA unit provided support for the liaisons with the Italian authorities. In particular, legal assistance was provided for the preparatory work for the roundtable organized in Rome on the 15th September between the Executive Director and the Undersecretary of State, Gianni Letta and which also included the Minister of European Affairs and several Heads of Cabinets from the ministries of Transport, Education, Foreign Affairs, Infrastructure and Health.

Human Resources

<i>HR – Numbers of recruitment procedures for Temporary Agents and officials (until 30th September 2008)</i>										
			RECRUITMENT (+)		END OF CONTRACT (-)					
	Staff foreseen 2008 (establishment plan)	Total TA & Officials End Dec 07	Number of New Contracts	New comers	Change in contract, Cat. or Grade (*)	Departures (**)	Change in Cat. or Grade (***)	Contract expiry	"Net" Result	Total TA & Officials End Sept 08
AD	185	144	50	34	16	10	13	4	23	167
AST	150	129	20	10	10	10	6	1	3	132
Total	335	273	70	44	26	20	19	5	26	299

<i>HR – Numbers of recruitment procedures for all staff (until 30th September 2008)</i>										
			RECRUITMENT (+)		END OF CONTRACT (-)					
	Total staff number end Dec 06	Total staff number End Dec 07	Number of New Contracts	New comers	Change in contract, Cat. or Grade (*)	Departures (**)	Change in contract, Cat. or Grade (***)	Contract Expiry	"Net" Result	Total staff number End Sept 08
AT+Officials	173	273	70	44	26	20	19	5	26	299
AUX ¹	24	4	0	0	0	3	1	0	-4	0
CA	24	24	44	42	4	2	9	0	35	59
END	7	9	2	3	0	0	1	0	2	11
Total	228	310	116	89	30	25	30	5	59	369
(*) = EFSA's staff recruited to TA posts (including AUX, CA, END) at EFSA.										
(**) = Resignations, termination of contract after probationary period, termination of contract.										
(***) = EFSA's staff leaving their TA post in order to be recruited to a new TA post at EFSA (AUX, CA, END not included)										
¹ Auxiliary Contract types ended at 31/12/2007										

Budget execution

As of 15 September 2008:

EUR 43.1 million or 65 % of the EUR 66.4 million budget including the Pre-accession program was committed. The commitment level stands EUR 2.2 million below the forecast made at the beginning of the year (EUR 45.3 million).

EUR 32.3 million or 49 % of the total appropriations were paid.

This payment level stands EUR 2.3 million below the forecast made at the beginning of the year (EUR 34.6 million). These EUR 2 M delayed are mainly due to delays in recruitment procedures as more than 30 candidates shall join during last quarter of 2008.