

**Public Session Meeting of the EFSA Management Board
Parma, 18th December 2008 h10.00**

Members of the Management Board present

Diána Bánáti (Chair)	Sinikka Turunen
Bart Sangster (Vice-Chair)	Marianne Elvander
Peter Gaemelke	Roland Vaxelaire
Bernhard Url	Jiri Ruprich
Piergiuseppe Facelli	Konstantinos Yazitzoglou
Robert Madelin	Matthias Horst

Staff of the European Food Safety Authority present

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle	Hubert Deluyker
Alexandrine Maviel-Sonet	Anne-Laure Gassin
Riitta Maijala	Christine Majewski
Djien Liem	Gisèle Gizzi
Dr Josef Schlatter	Prof Vittorio Silano

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SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

The Management Board:

- Adopted the agenda with two additions: venues for Board meetings in 2009 and suggestions for the Board Awayday under AOB.
- Adopted the minutes from the 2 October 2008.
- Noted that a paper on the responsibilities of the Board with regard to the Final Seat would be prepared by EFSA..
- Adopted EFSA's Strategic Plan 2009-2013.
- Adopted EFSA's 2009 Management Plan, Budget and Establishment Plan.
- Adopted the Article 36 list of institutions and the 2009 Article 36 work programme for grants.
- Noted the budget execution, year-end forecast for 2008 and transfers in the EFSA budget.
- Noted the suggestions for venues for meetings of the Management Board in 2009.

The Management Board also:

- Took note of the Executive Director's Progress Report and congratulated EFSA on the many activities undertaken in 2008.
- Noted the presentation of Dr. Schlatter and thanked him and members of the Contam Panel for their contribution to EFSA.
- Took note of the update from the Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr Vaxelaire.

Items 1 and 2: Welcome and adoption of the draft agenda

1. The Chair opened the Public Session by acknowledging the apologies from Ms. Guillou, Ms. Davies and Mr. Pogačnik. She welcomed the newly elected Chair of the Stakeholder Platform, Mr. Andreas Varlamos, present in the audience.
2. The Chair went on to congratulate EFSA's Executive Director on receiving the award of Insignia of the Knight of Legion of Honour by a decree signed by the French President. She congratulated also the Member of the Management Board, Milan Pogačnik, on his being appointed Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia.
3. Following the Chair's request for any declarations of interest, one Member declared his involvement in an initiative called ASAT (Assuring Safety without Animal Testing) where he is on the scientific advisory board; in addition this Member is also Chair of the ASAT Foundation.
4. The Chair of the Management Board declared to have been elected Secretary of the newly established Committee on Food Safety launched by the President of the Hungarian Academy of Science.
5. The Chair suggested adding to the agenda under Any Other Business a discussion on venues for Management Board Meetings 2009 and suggestions for the Management Board Away Day in Spring.
6. The draft agenda was adopted.

Item 3: Adoption of draft minutes of the previous meeting

7. The draft minutes of the previous meeting were adopted.

Item 4: Executive Director's Progress Report

8. The Chair thanked the Executive Director for the very impressive achievements during the reporting period and congratulated her on these.
9. The Chair declared that, before opening the discussion with the Board Members on the progress report, she wished to make a formal statement in relation to staff affairs at EFSA. Noting concerns that had been raised in public and the hearing at the ENVI Committee of the European Parliament, she reported that Members had been briefed by the Executive Director, who provided all necessary information in detail. The Board was fully satisfied with the explanations it had received and it endorsed the Executive Director's vision with regards to the staff survey. Members were convinced that EFSA is moving forward in the right way.
10. A Board Member congratulated EFSA on the extremely rapid response EFSA provides in emergency situations and especially in the recent case of dioxins in Irish pork. The provision of rapid scientific advice was crucial in this situation, enabling the risk managers to do their job and maintaining a high degree of confidence in third country partners. He added a second point concerning the staff survey. He commented he was impressed by the response to the staff survey and that staff affairs should remain high on the agenda.

11. A Board Member took note of the huge workload especially as far as claims are concerned and pointed out that special support to the Panel involved should be provided. Another Member asked the Executive Director to comment on the 40% resources presently dedicated to managing the huge workload associated with claims. The Executive Director specified that 40% was the amount of resources dedicated to all applications (GMO, food and feed additives, packaging materials etc.) and agreed that the workload from applications was significant. However staff levels had been increased in the units concerned and further developments are addressed in the Management Plan 2009.
12. The Executive Director was further complimented on the excellent networking carried out during the reporting period and on the work done in order to integrate with other authorities.
13. Another Board Member commented on the Staff Survey and its excellent results but asked for further information on the participation rate.
14. The Executive Director answered these questions by informing the Board of the establishment of two internal working groups that had issued recommendations on working conditions and internal communication which were being implemented. Concerning the rate of participation, 55% is comparable with other organisations. EFSA will work towards increasing this proportion in future surveys.
15. Another Member mentioned the work of Environment Ministers on GMOs and the debate in Members States. He suggested that the January Board meeting should include a discussion on GMOs.
16. Concerning the large workload on claims that EFSA is facing, the Executive Director pointed out that EFSA is working in close cooperation with the European Commission in order to establish and adjust priorities.
17. The Executive Director further informed the Board that at the end of 2008 an annual expert survey was launched in order to measure the satisfaction and motivation of EFSA's external experts who now number 1200. The report on this survey will be issued in February and is being carried out by an external consultant.
18. The Chair of the Scientific Committee took this opportunity to thank EFSA's Executive Director and the EFSA Management Board for the collaboration and help received throughout the year - he expressed his deep appreciation on behalf of all experts for this.
19. Another Member complimented the work done in the last period and asked if for 2009 further information on the work still pending could be provided together with the Progress Indicators as this information is missing presently.

Item 5: Update on Final Seat

20. The Executive Director informed the Board that the Commune of Parma had recently launched the tender for the construction of the building. The final selection of this tender will be done in January 2009 and construction will start directly following this and should last for two years.
21. The Executive Director pointed out that there had been some delay in these developments which might have a financial impact. Therefore, EFSA will inform the Budgetary Authority of recent developments in relation with the final seat in order to be able to estimate any financial impact.

22. Members of the Board expressed concern in view of unclear information on final costs of leasing and maintaining the new building and asked for an overview on these costs including costs of using the Palazzo Ducale.
23. It was decided to further discuss the Final Seat in the January 2009 meeting. A paper on the legal responsibilities of the Board, together with a timeline, would be prepared by EFSA.

Item 6: Strategic Plan 2009 -2013

24. The Executive Director introduced the document and highlighted that feedback from many consultations (Member States, the Advisory Forum, the Scientific Committee, the Stakeholder Consultative Platform, the European Parliament, European Commission and Council) had been taken into consideration in the final draft. The document was also subject to public consultation on EFSA's homepage.
25. A Member commented that EFSA should change the wording on sentence 323 to ensure it delivers on the crucial part of its remit to provide timely and high quality evaluations and that resources would be prioritised to that area. The Executive Director agreed to this change confirming that the provision of general scientific advice was covered in objective 1.
26. Other Members' feedback mentioned that nutrition was an important strategic area, that cooperation with Member States and EU organizations and institutions needs to be further developed and that Stakeholder input needs to be maximised. The comments furthermore mentioned that EFSA's international role is of crucial importance and that responsiveness is vital.
27. The Chair thanked the Executive Director for her presentation and for the paper commenting that, although it was important to have a strategy in place, EFSA must remain flexible in view of possible emerging issues.
28. A Member of the Board commented that the number of priorities was too high and the prominence of EFSA's international role should be rephrased. In addition, it was requested that wording on innovative technologies and risk assessment methodologies be amended and the Executive Director agreed to do so.
29. A Member enquired where the management of the large number of health claims EFSA receives was covered. The Executive Director responded that this area was included in the Strategic Objectives, in particular the objective covering the delivery of timely and high-quality evaluations of products and substances and claims.
30. Another Board Member congratulated the Executive Director on this paper and asked for further information concerning EFSA's involvement with environmental risk assessment and the collaboration in this field with the European Environment Agency (EEA).
31. The Executive Director outlined EFSA's existing relationship with the EEA which can be further strengthened while pointing out that the EEA did not perform risk assessments. .

32. The Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance answered a Board Member's question on enhancing EFSA's capacity to identify emerging risks and other players in Europe involved in this area by saying EFSA is a coordinator in this respect. The Chair of the Scientific Committee chairs an interagency committee on emerging risks. He further mentioned the ESCO working group on emerging risks that has completed its work and the strong collaboration already established with the Member States.
33. The Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board.

Item 7: EFSA Management Plan 2009

34. The Executive Director introduced the paper by reflecting that in 2008 EFSA benefited from an additional 25% increase in staff resources and managed to double its scientific outputs compared to 2007. Various issues were improved in 2008, including the strengthening of EFSA's quality review system via self-assessment and an internal review of scientific outputs. In addition, EFSA managed to considerably increase its responsiveness.
35. The Executive Director noted that the Management Plan reflects the priorities as outlined in the Strategic Plan and the emphasis on the delivery of timely and high quality scientific advice will be maintained. The support provided to EFSA's scientific panels and Scientific Committee needs to be further developed.
36. The Executive Director informed the Board that in 2009 EFSA will develop the external review of the quality of its scientific advice and will strengthen the integrated approach that is already being developed.
37. The Board Members expressed their satisfaction with the Management Plan 2009 and highlighted its consistency with the Strategic Plan.
38. The Board adopted the 2009 Management Plan, Budget and Establishment Plan.

Item 8: Strategy on Cooperation and Networking

39. This item, introduced by EFSA Director for Scientific Cooperation and Assistance, was in 3 parts: the interim review of the Strategy; the Article 36 list of organisations; and the work programme for Article 36 grants for 2009.
40. After the presentation of the interim review of the Strategy and the Article 36 list, the Director for Scientific Cooperation and Assistance answered Members' questions on how Article 36 collaboration between different institutes in different countries could be handled. A Member suggested that EFSA should launch a clear message that all interested parties should feel invited. The Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance promised to take this remark on board and mentioned that the Focal Points have made a big impact in this sense but could be encouraged to do more.
41. A Board Member suggested that the interval for renewal of the list of Art. 36 organizations should not be fixed because of the possibility of appearing inflexible.

42. Another Board Member inquired about the possibility to be informed about active and inactive organizations on the Art. 36 list in order to know which organisations are actively contributing to EFSA's work.
43. A Member made a declaration of interest (DOI) concerning an institution in which he was a member of the board and which was on the list to be adopted: two other Members declared they were also Members of the boards of Institutions on the list but that they had already declared this in their DOI.
44. At the end of the presentation the updated list of Art. 36 organisations and the procedure for technical updates of the list were both adopted.
45. The Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance presented the work programme for Article 36 grants for 2009 which was also adopted by the Board.

Item 9 – Presentation by the Chair of Contam Panel

46. The Chair of the Contam Panel, Dr. Josef Schlatter, made a comprehensive presentation on the activities of the panel. Members congratulated Dr. Schlatter on his excellent presentation and the interesting report on the recent crisis on dioxins in Irish pork.
47. A member asked Dr. Schlatter to comment on the future possibility of the Panel being asked to undertake systematic reviews, which were very relevant to the work of the Panel.
48. Dr. Schlatter responded that the Panel was already supported in doing meta-analyses by the Assessment Methodology Unit and that some of the work involved in doing systematic reviews could be done by the DATEX Unit.

Item 10: Update of the Audit Committee

49. The chair of the audit committee presented the new members of the audit committee and highlighted the priorities of the committee. Two audits were considered in the meeting of the audit committee: one on the use of grants by institutions and the other on declarations of interest (DOIs) for scientific staff and panels.
50. The Committee had been informed of the topics that would be followed by the audit service of the European Commission in 2009: DOI procedures, recruitment and the follow-up on the communications audit. A more detailed presentation of these issues would be presented at the January meeting.

Item 11: Budget execution, year end forecast 2008 and transfers in the EFSA budget

51. The EFSA Director for Administration introduced the subject by expressing her confidence that at least 94% of the budget would be achieved.
52. In the area of human resources, EFSA staff would number 395 at the end of 2008.

Item 12: Any other business

53. The Chair suggested to discuss venues for the Management Board Meetings 2009 and proposed that a meeting be held in the Czech Republic if invited by the Presidency.
54. Other Members of the Board suggested to meet in Rome in January and then if possible in Stockholm and Brussels. It was suggested that the meetings in Rome and Brussels should facilitate a meeting with representatives of the Italian government and the EU Parliament respectively.
55. The Chair furthermore asked for suggestions concerning the discussion on the Advisory Forum to be held in 2009.
56. In closing the chair thanked Dr. Schlatter, Members of the Board, the audience in Parma and those watching via webstreaming, the staff of the Authority and the interpreters.