

42nd Meeting of the EFSA Management Board
Minutes of the Public Session
Parma, 8 October 2009, 09.00 h

Members of the Management Board present

Diána Bánáti (Chair)	Marianne Elvander (Vice-Chair)
Bart Sangster (Vice-Chair)	Sue Davies
Paola Testori-Coggi	Roland Vaxelaire
Sinikka Turunen	Jiri Ruprich
Peter Gaemelke	Bernhard Url
Matthias Horst	Konstantinos Yazitzoglou

Staff of the European Food Safety Authority present

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle	Hubert Deluyker
Olivier Ramsayer	Anne-Laure Gassin
Riitta Maijala	Claudia Roncancio Peña
David Caira	Gisèle Gizzi
Dijen Liem	Christine Majewski

Also attending:

Prof. Andrew Chesson, Chair of the FEEDAP Panel

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SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

The Management Board:

- Adopted the agenda with added items under any other business on the seminar on antimicrobial resistance in Sweden, a new member of the PPR Panel, the visit of the EU Commissioner for Health to EFSA, and future topics for Board discussions.
- Acknowledged the apologies of Board members Marion Guillou, Pierguiseppe Facelli, Milan Pogačnik and the chair of the Scientific Committee, Vittorio Silano
- Noted the address of the Chair of the FEEDAP, Prof. Andrew Chesson.
- Adopted a membership list for EFSA's Stakeholder Consultation Platform with a view to revisiting the list in 2010 for renewal for a further 3-year period.
- Adopted a revised list of Article 36 organisations.
- Adopted the work programme for Article 36 grants for 2010.
- Noted the document and discussion on EFSA's Communication Strategy and agreed to hold a public consultation on the Strategy.
- Noted the update by the Chair of the Audit Committee.
- Noted the budget execution to end-August and the predictions for year-end.
- Noted the transfers in the EFSA budget.

The Management Board also:

- Took note of the Executive Director's Progress Report and congratulated EFSA and its staff on its achievements.
- Noted the declaration of interest of Sue Davies in relation to renewal of the Stakeholder Consultative Platform.
- Noted the venue and date of the next meeting of the Management Board in Stockholm, Sweden on December 15, 2009.
- Noted the venue of the March 2010 Board meeting in Toledo, Spain.
- Noted the appointment of Dr. Theo Brock to the PPR panel.

Item 1: Welcome by Chair

1. The Chair opened the Public Session of the 41st Management Board meeting by welcoming Board Members, the new Commission representative Paola Testori-Coggi, the EFSA executive and Directors, the Chair of the FEEDAP Panel, Prof. Andrew Chesson, and the audience in Parma and online.
2. Apologies were received from Marion Guillou, Pierguiseppe Facelli, Milan Pogačnik and the chair of the Scientific Committee, Vittorio Silano.
3. The Chair announced that Prof. Chesson would address the meeting.
4. Under declarations of interest (DOIs) of Board Members, Sue Davies declared an interest in relation to item 4 of the agenda: appointment of members of the Stakeholder Consultative Platform.

Item 2: Adoption of the Draft Agenda

5. Additions to the agenda under Any Other Business included a seminar on antimicrobial resistance in Stockholm in December, appointment of a member of the Panel on Plant Protection Products, the visit of Commissioner Vassiliou to EFSA and topics for future discussion by the Board. The draft agenda was adopted.

Item 3: Executive Director's Progress Report

6. The Chair invited the Executive Director to present the progress report.
7. The Executive Director updated the Board on progress from the start of June to the end of September 2009. A separate PowerPoint presentation is available for a detailed description.
8. On behalf of the Board, the Chair congratulated the Executive Director on the achievements during the reporting period, and thanked her in particular for updating the Board on her appearance at the ENVI Committee of the European Parliament.
9. The first series of questions/comments by Members dealt with: discussion of science-based topics at the GMO conference which EFSA had organised; follow-up of the Board recommendations on cooperation with Member States; acknowledgement of EFSA's achievements in publishing the recent opinions on Article 13 health claims; the workload of NDA Panel members; ensuring that claims received are within EFSA's remit; attendance of meetings by the Panel/Unit on Animal Health and Welfare; fees for applications; communication of EFSA's role in the authorisation of applications to food industry; and scrapie in goats.
10. The Executive Director thanked Members for their positive responses and encouragement. In relation to discussions with non-governmental organisations on GMOs, EFSA was encouraged by the dialogue to date and the meetings already held had been useful in clarifying any misunderstandings. She reiterated the need to ensure that applications were within remit and that all necessary data and information are provided by applicants; 2000 applications under Article 13 had been returned to the Commission due to insufficient data. The reasons for attending meetings in the animal health and

welfare field were outlined but the need to remain focused on EFSA's core business was acknowledged. While funding of EFSA has been appropriate thus far, the possibility of introducing fees should be carefully examined and the Commission representative was invited to comment. In relation to health claims, the Executive Director reemphasised the need for dialogue with all stakeholders and Member States and for improvement in the quality of data in applications.

11. The Director of Risk Assessment outlined the situation in relation to scrapie in Cyprus, pointing out that an opinion on genetic resistance to scrapie would be adopted before the end of 2009.
12. The Commission representative told the meeting that a report on establishing a fee system for EFSA would be presented to the European Parliament by June 2010 and the new Commission would decide on any legislative proposals. She noted that the Commission had been surprised by the volume of health claims received and while claims had been checked by Member States and the Commission, the volume received means that the Commission will not be able to issue a final list by January 2010.
13. Further questions/comments were received on: concrete plans for harmonisation in the Advisory Forum; the nature of health claims submitted to EFSA, in particular incomplete dossiers; steps for cooperation between EFSA and international organisations; the need to explain EFSA's role in the assessment of claims to all stakeholders; the availability of the report on the meeting with national experts on dietary values held in Barcelona, Spain on September 7; and the methodological completeness and budget of EFSA's data collection work.
14. In responding, the Executive Director indicated that EFSA would continue to work with stakeholders in explaining its role and re-emphasised that many health claim dossiers received were incomplete. A full report on the dietary reference values meeting would be made available.
15. The Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance outlined the results of the review that was carried out with Member States in 2008 in which the harmonisation of data collection, establishment of a working group on food classification, and enhancement of data and methodologies for exposure assessment were prioritised. He noted that the proposed pan-European dietary survey has important budget implications. He added that medium-term cooperation with Member States was EFSA's goal rather than *ad hoc* annual programmes.
16. In summarising, the Chair remarked at the average 300 updates of EFSA's website per week. She noted that, whether or not fees for some of EFSA's activities were introduced, its scientific excellence and independence must never be compromised.

Item 4: Appointment of Members of the Stakeholder Consultative Platform

17. EFSA's Director of Administration presented the document which outlined the methodology and rationale involved in formulating the proposed list which comprised 29 full members and 16 associate members. The presentation is available separately for further information.
18. Comments were received on: the rationale behind enlarging the Platform; the potential negative impact of the proposed change to membership on the balance of the Platform; the dangers of bodies like the Platform becoming "institutionalised"; the selection criteria for Platform members; the logic behind the addition of some of the proposed new members; and the classification of some of the proposed members.

19. The Executive Director responded that the proposed list was within the limit of 30 members indicated by the Board. She indicated where EFSA's remit had expanded and the need to have representation of those areas. The Director of Administration reiterated the logic behind the proposed list.
20. The Chair pointed out that the Platform needed clear criteria and clear distinction between the roles of full and associate membership. She noted that overall the Board was in favour of horizontal membership.
21. Some members suggested the retention of the existing list of members while another noted that the *raison d'être* of the Platform was the proper starting point for discussion of membership.
22. The removal of organisations with poor attendance records from the list was suggested and the Executive Director pointed out that attendance was one of the selection criteria.
23. Commenting that the need for expansion of the list needed a clearer rationale, a member noted that some consumer bodies did not have the resources to attend all meetings.
24. Rather than just accepting the current list, a Member pointed out that the current list should be assessed to ensure it was appropriate for the needs of the Platform. Another member suggested that EFSA should map out the areas that EFSA will be focusing on in coming years and the main relevant stakeholders and not just automatically accept the status quo.
25. Further discussion ensued on what list, if any, could be adopted at the meeting and, having checked the legal status with the Director of Administration, a compromise arrangement was agreed by a majority of Board Members (9 to 3 in favour) to adopt the existing 24 full Platform members and the reduced number of 21 associate members (16 proposed associate members + 5 new proposed full members as outlined in the document for discussion) for a period of one year with a view to reappointing members for a further 3-year period.

Item 5: Presentation of the Chair of the FEEDAP Panel

26. Prof. Chesson's presentation incorporated aspects of the regulatory framework relevant to the FEEDAP Panel, the role and composition of the panel and unit, its workload in 2008 and in the overall period 2006-2009, development of guidance, interactions with applicants and stakeholders, and future challenges. A separate PowerPoint is available.
27. The Chair thanked Prof. Chesson for his stimulating presentation and questions were received on: working with the NDA Panel on feed additives that can enter the food chain; in light of the ongoing review, prioritisation of feed additives according to their potential risk to consumers; the most appropriate size of the panel; workload of panel members; the future availability of appropriate expertise for the panel; the possibility of EFSA facilitating the training of rapporteurs; the work involved in guiding applicants in the completion of dossiers; and the deadline for completion of the assessment of feed additives.
28. Prof. Chesson responded by outlining the interaction with other appropriate panels, e.g. in co-adoptions, and confirmed that the current size of the panel (21) was probably appropriate. The panel does not "support industry" as suggested because the work on guidance for applicants was also essential for EFSA's risk assessment. Prioritisation of dossiers would depend on the number of

dossiers received he said and compromise on deadlines would more than likely be required depending on the volume.

Item 6: Review of EFSA's Communication Strategy

29. The item was presented by the Director of Communications and it outlined the proposed methodology for the review of EFSA's communications strategy. The overall framework for the review was tabled for discussion taking into consideration the key factors of timetable and significant milestones. The Board was also asked for its views on holding a public consultation on the strategy. A separate PowerPoint presentation is available for a detailed description.
30. Questions/comments were tabled on: the separation of risk assessment and risk management in the strategy; crisis communication; the implications of increasing EFSA's visibility, both quantitative and qualitative; the consultant's report on EFSA communication of May 2009; clear, precise and comprehensive communication in EFSA opinions; consultation on the framing of questions; EFSA communication of advice to consumers; EFSA's communications team as a stakeholder in its scientific outputs; training of experts in communicating their science; the importance of communicating on nutrition issues; use of social media; the international perspective on risk communication; public perception of risk; the provision of a summary of the document; building EFSA's corporate identity; defining the role of the Communications Directorate in EFSA; progress in attaining the goals of visibility, simplicity and coherence; coordination of communication with the Commission and national agencies; scope of EFSA's communication strategy in light of the current recession; cooperation with the national agencies; identifying where EFSA communication can deliver the greatest value for money; timing of the public consultation; value for money of web streaming the Board meetings; involvement of Member States in writing the strategy; differentiation between discretionary and non-discretionary risks; and communicating residue limits.
31. The Director of Communications thanked members for their encouraging words and reemphasised the importance of coordination with risk managers. It was equally important, she said, to explain where EFSA's role begins and ends. The qualitative research that is proposed will comprehensively cover risk communication and will involve risk managers. In relation to crisis communication, procedures are described in EFSA's emergency manual and are regularly tested. In relation to opinions, the need for early involvement in the communication process and the importance of question framing were recognised. She noted that it was unrealistic for EFSA to directly communicate to the half-million EU consumers and the use of social media would be reviewed. Media monitoring is both quantitative and qualitative and a new service provider would shortly begin its work. The importance of input from experts was acknowledged and reference was made to the Advisory Group on Risk Communications. EFSA runs workshops on media handling and helping to translate science for non-experts and EFSA is very grateful for the support of the Panel Chairs in this process. The Director of Communications thanked Members for supporting the proposal for a public consultation and agreed to review the chronology.
32. A further comment re-emphasised the need to coordinate communication with the Commission so that stakeholders get consistent messages. He further stated that the review provided a good opportunity to work with both the Commission and stakeholders to provide a good overview of food safety in the EU and the roles of the risk assessor and risk manager.

33. In summing up the item, the Chair noted that the document was an excellent basis for further discussion. The qualitative research that would be concluded in autumn 2009 would feed into the deliberations and the Board would like a revised draft strategy to discuss at the March 2010 meeting which should include the feedback from the public consultation. The final strategy would be scheduled for discussion in autumn 2010.

Item 7: Implementation of Article 36 on cooperation: (a) Changes in the list of organisations; (b) 2010 work programme for Article 36 grants

34. Both documents were presented by the Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance. In the list of organisations, four changes in organisations (three in the UK and one in Finland) were announced; changes were due to mergers with other organisations.
35. The revised list was adopted.
36. The 2010 work programme for grants and contracts was presented. The planning and consultation process was described. One of the lessons learned from previous exercises had been to start the process earlier and calls were scheduled to be launched in the last 3 months of 2009 with a view to signing agreements in January 2010. In addition, budgets could now be carried over for a longer period than before and the whole process was facilitated greatly by the Focal Points. Procurement has acquired greater significance for EFSA and authorisation support was growing for both grants and contracts.
37. In light of the growing reliance on Article 36 work, a Member queried how EFSA ensures that standards of transparency and independence are upheld and asked for more details on the specific areas that will be covered by this work.
38. The Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance responded that Article 36 grants mainly covered preparatory work and that, in light of the changing context, it would not be possible to give more details at this time. The Director of Risk Assessment reiterated that grants were used for preparatory work, e.g. on guidance, and not on the authorisation process itself. It was easier to screen individuals undertaking procurement work, she noted, adding that working groups have an important role to play in ensuring independence.
39. The Commission representative stated that EFSA's founding regulation enshrines the principles of networking, using existing expertise and avoiding duplication and divergence.
40. A member commented that it was important that national agencies had the opportunity to feed into the planning process and for EFSA to use all the expertise available in Europe.
41. The work programme for 2010 was adopted.

42.

Item 8: Update of the Audit Committee

43. The Chair of the Audit Committee welcomed the new member of the Committee, Paola Testori-Coggi, and reported on the last meeting which included a presentation by EFSA's Head of IT which identified

three issues: knowledge retention, business continuity planning and the number of ongoing projects. The IT Strategy of EFSA will be presented to the Management Board. The audit on mission reimbursement had been completed and no major issues were identified; however in future comments and answers from management will be sought prior to discussion at Audit Committee. The evaluation of EFSA's bank had concluded that it was appropriately safe for EFSA funds. Finally, audit planning had identified the processes governing scientific outputs as a subject for 2010.

44. The Chair emphasised the importance of the IT strategy in supporting the work of experts.

Items 9: Budget Execution and Year-End Forecast

45. The Director of Administration presented the document; a separate presentation is available for further information. It was noted that at the end of August 61% of budget was committed which was in line with expectation. Compared with 2008, budget execution was 6% greater but this was not consistent across all activities. Activities involving tendering were particularly slower. Overall, EFSA expects to execute 97% of its budget in 2009 (including €2 million from the release of the reserve imposed by the European Parliament) if contracts and grants develop as planned. EFSA had asked for the reserve to be lifted in August with a view to using the funds for infrastructural projects in November/December 2009.
46. A Member asked how EFSA managed to decrease its administrative costs, as all institutions would wish for, and the Director of Administration responded that this was mainly due to the proportionate growth of the scientific part of EFSA in recent years but also to efficiency gains.
47. Another Member asked about outcomes if EFSA were not able to achieve the release of the reserve and stressed the importance of ensuring that it did not recur. The Director of Administration replied that he was confident that all conditions to attain the release were in place and that the funds would be available in November. If release were not achieved, priorities would be re-examined and work would focus on the absolutely essential deliverables.

Item 10: Transfers in the EFSA Budget

48. The Director of Administration reported that there were no transfers between budget titles with some relatively minor transfers within titles. The most significant adjustments related to science contracts.

Item 14: Any other business

49. The Executive Director announced that Dr. Theo Brock had been appointed to the PPR Panel. The Chair confirmed Stockholm as the venue for the next Board meeting on December 17 and announced that an invitation had been received from the Spanish authorities to host the March 2010 meeting in Toledo. The Board was happy to accept this invitation. Before the Stockholm meeting on December 17, a seminar on antimicrobial resistance in animal foods and humans in the EU was planned on the 15 December, a joint venture between EFSA, ECDC, EMEA and a Swedish group. The EU Commissioner for Health, Mrs. Vassiliou, would visit EFSA in Parma on October 16 and on behalf of the Board, the Chair expressed her gratitude to the Commissioner for her interest in EFSA's work.

50. In closing, the Chair thanked the Members of the Board, the Executive Director and her Directors, Prof. Chesson, Chair of the FEEDAP Panel, the experts working in EFSA Panels and Scientific Committee, the audience in Parma and those watching via webstreaming, the webcast team, colleagues in Brussels, the staff of the Authority and the interpreters.

END

Actions arising

Meeting reference	Action	Deadline	Status
Oct 8, 2009	Full report on meeting with national experts on dietary values held in Barcelona on Sep 7	Dec 2009	Open
Oct 8, 2009	Proposal for renewal of membership of the Stakeholder Consultative Platform	Oct 2010	Open
Oct 8, 2009	Revised draft Communications Strategy incorporating feedback from a public consultation	March 2010 Board meeting	Open
Oct 8, 2009	Finalised Communications Strategy for discussion	Oct 2010 Board meeting	Open