

46th Meeting of the EFSA Management Board
Adopted minutes of the Public Session
Brussels, 21 October 2010, 13.00 h

Members of the Management Board present

Diána Bánáti (Chair)	Milan Kováč
Sue Davies (Vice-Chair)	Jan Mousing
Piergiuseppe Facelli (Vice-Chair)	Milan Pogačnik
Stella Michaelidou-Canna	Jiri Ruprich
Paola Testori-Coggi	Sinikka Turunen
Manuel Barreto Dias	Bernhard Url
Marianne Elvander	Pieter Vanthemsche
Matthias Horst	

Staff of the European Food Safety Authority present

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle	Hubert Deluyker
Olivier Ramsayer	Anne-Laure Gassin
Riitta Maijala	Gisèle Gizzi
David Caira	Djien Liem

Also attending:

Jean Renault, Head of the Food Safety Cabinet of Sabine Laruelle, acting Belgian Minister for SMEs, the Self-Employed, Agriculture and Science Policy

Vittorio Silano, Chair of EFSA's Scientific Committee

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SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

The Management Board:

- Appointed Diána Bánáti as Chair and Sue Davies and Piergiuseppe Facelli as Vice-Chairs
- Issued a statement on the independence of the Board
- Noted the address of Jean Renault, Head of the Food Safety Cabinet of Sabine Laruelle
- Adopted the agenda unchanged
- Asked that the Draft EFSA Communications Strategy 2010-2013 be amended and resubmitted for adoption to the December Board meeting
- Noted the report from the September 2010 Advisory Forum meeting
- Adopted the Amended EFSA Budget 2010
- Adopted the amendments to the list of Article 36 organisations
- Adopted the 2011 work programme for Article 36 grants
- Postponed discussion of holding Management Board meetings in public until the December meeting
- Noted that agenda items 10 and 11 (Budget Execution and Year-End Forecast, and Transfers in the EFSA Budget, respectively) were for information only and questions or comments should be sent in written form.

The Management Board also:

- Took note of the Executive Director's Progress Report and congratulated the EFSA executive and staff on their achievements
- Took note of the publication of the decree for the new legal status of the European School in Parma and the roundtable that is planned with the Italian authorities in Rome on November 4
- Noted that three new members had been elected to the Audit Committee which would meet in December
- Noted that the next Board meeting in December would be extended

Item 1: Welcome by the Chair and Presentation of new Members, Chair and Vice-Chairs

1. The Chair opened the Public Session of the 45th Management Board meeting by welcoming Jean Renault, Head of the Food Safety Cabinet of Minister Sabine Laruelle, Board Members, the newly-elected Vice-Chairs, the EFSA Executive Director and Directors, the audience in Brussels and online, stakeholders, Member State authorities, experts and staff members. She expressed her gratitude to the Belgian authorities for hosting the meeting.
2. The Chair announced the election of Diána Bánáti as Chair of the Management Board and Sue Davies and Piergiuseppe Facelli as Vice-Chairs.
3. The Chair read a statement which had been discussed by Board members on the independence of the Board, the full text of which is available at:
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/corporate101021.htm>
4. The Chair announced that renewal of the Audit Committee would be discussed under any other business.
5. The Chair asked the new Board members to introduce themselves briefly: Pieter Vanthemsche; Stella Michaelidou-Canna; Manuel Barreto Dias; Jan Mousing; Milan Kováč; and Marianne Elvander.
6. Declarations of interest were announced by Jiri Ruprich (EFSA Working Group on Total Diet Studies and the Medical University of Brno), Pieter Vanthemsche (President of the Belgian Farmer's Union) and the Chair (Budapest Corvinus University and the International Academy of Food Science and Technology).

Item 2: Address of Jean Renault

7. On behalf of the Minister, Mr. Renault congratulated the Chair on her re-election, the Vice-Chairs on their election and the Board members on their appointment. He thanked the Chair for having accepted the Belgian invitation to host the meeting and welcomed everyone to Belgium. He noted the successful and stimulating exchanges that had taken place at the roundtable held on the previous day. He commented that there was a close cooperation between the Belgian food safety authorities, in particular the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC), with EFSA and said that Minister Laruelle attaches particular importance to achieving an appropriate balance between consumer safety and market conditions. He mentioned the difficulties in overcoming distrust among some citizens even with the help of international renowned experts. He said that EFSA has reached maturity in the excellence of its scientific work and the new Board should direct the institution towards the ongoing pursuit of excellence. He concluded by wishing the meeting every success.
8. The Chair thanked Mr. Renault for his contribution and the Ministry for the very successful roundtable discussions on the role of science in food policy that could be continued within the Board.

Item 3: Adoption of the Draft Agenda

9. Noting the short open session, the agenda was adopted unchanged.

Item 4: Executive Director's Progress Report

10. The Chair invited the Executive Director to concisely present the progress report.
11. The Executive Director updated the Board on progress from July to September 2010. A separate PowerPoint presentation is available for a detailed description.
12. On behalf of the Board, the Chair congratulated the Executive Director and EFSA staff on the achievements during the reporting period. She commented on the need to urge the Italian authorities on the need for progress in relation to the European School and for confirmation of the progress of the EFSA Seat.
13. Questions/comments were received on: backlogs in EFSA's work; collaboration with WHO on public health issues; the need to accelerate the activities of the Working Group on Emerging Risk; the outcomes of the Scientific Colloquium on Emerging Risks held on Oct 12, 2010; methodologies on assessing emerging risks associated with nanotechnology; the need for an analytical summary as a preface to the progress report; food classification in relation to EFSA's food consumption databases; predicting the impact of legislative changes on EFSA's workload; the importance for European innovation of EFSA's ability to deliver on the evaluation of authorisations; in relation to emerging risks, the need for EFSA to concentrate its efforts on risks that have human health implications associated with new technologies; and fulfilling expectations in relation to expectations of scientific cooperation.
14. In relation to backlogs, the Executive Director pointed to the Roadmap agreement with the Commission for the prioritisation of work. As this prioritisation covered even the mandates EFSA received in its early years, she pointed out that EFSA does not have a backlog per se. Anticipation of workloads could be improved, she added, and EFSA is working with both DG SANCO and the Advisory Forum on a more medium-term view.
15. The decree on the status of the European School has been published and the appointment of a Director is imminent, the Executive Director said. Recruitment of teachers under the new conditions was scheduled to begin in early 2011. A roundtable is planned with the Italian authorities in Rome on November 4 to ensure full implementation of the decree.
16. The Executive Director agreed on the need for cooperation not just with international organisations with similar remits, such as WHO, but also with European agencies. In relation to emerging risks, the Executive Director stressed the need to keep this activity focused on what is relevant to risk managers. The Director of Scientific Cooperation & Assistance described the EFSA Colloquium on Emerging Risks, the aim of which was to contribute to the gradual development of methodologies for collecting and analysing signals. The Chair of EFSA's Scientific Committee briefly described its work to date on nanotechnology and in particular on risk assessment approaches.
17. The need to continue to strengthen scientific cooperation was emphasised by the Executive Director who noted the achievements to date and the annual budget of more than €8 m for contracts and grants. The need for both short- and medium-term planning was highlighted. EFSA, she added, could not be viewed as a bottleneck for innovation but rather the engine of sustainable innovation. The Authority already devotes 40% of its resources to this new task that the regulator has given it and continually strives for efficiency gains.

18. The Chair enquired on the impact of the revised Novel Food Regulation on EFSA's work and other "new" mandates such as animal cloning.
19. The Executive Director responded that EFSA had not received a new mandate on cloning but had updated the previous opinion with a statement which was with the Commission. The Novel Food Regulation will pass the burden of proof on risk to EFSA and this could be expected to effect working procedures and workloads.
20. In summing, the Chair reiterated the Board's appreciation for the work of EFSA's experts and noted the importance of emerging risks, nanotechnology and medium-term planning in the preceding discussion. She highlighted the intention to hold a joint meeting with the Advisory Forum in March 2011. She said that EFSA should not be seen as a bottleneck in innovation and that its scientific risk assessment should never be compromised.

Item 5: Draft EFSA Communication Strategy: 2010-2013 Perspective

21. The Director of Communication presented the revised draft strategy and reminded the Board of the process and key milestones involved in its construction including the findings of the target audience research and Eurobarometer survey that EFSA has commissioned. The presentation also covered the main findings of the review and the future vision for risk communication in EFSA. A separate PowerPoint is available for a detailed description.
22. The main queries/comments by the Board related to: the balance between communicating to people and communicating with people; understanding and opening up the risk assessment process; the interface between risk assessment and risk management; the framing of questions; retrieving information on health claim opinions on the EFSA website; the inappropriateness of using the word "campaign" in describing a thematic approach to communication; comparisons of perception of risk in old and new Member States; a more targeted approach to communicating to specific stakeholder groups; the need to emphasise independence in the document; the efficiency or value for money of EFSA's communication activities; proactive communication in sensitive areas such as GMOs; the fact that summaries do not sometimes appear to reflect the content of opinions; risk managers should be the primary target of EFSA's communication; the lack of emphasis on timeliness in the draft strategy; the resource implications of the strategy; and the web usage statistics that show that industry uses the EFSA website far more than NGOs.
23. In response, the Director of Communication noted that EFSA has started a task force on openness and transparency to address the issues raised in the target audience research. As a communicator, EFSA is very aware of the framing of questions but has to be careful that it doesn't overstep its remit. In this regard, a thematic approach could be useful. Rather than describing it as a campaign, the idea is to have a continuous approach to communication in certain areas such as pesticides where EFSA would describe its contribution to protecting the consumer along with Member States and risk managers. In relation to regional and national difference in risk perception, she commented that the Eurobarometer survey also provided valuable national perspectives which highlighted the differences in perception across Europe. A more targeted approach is best done by the national food safety agencies and Member States. In relation to the resource implications of the plan, she reminded members that the strategy is predicated on existing available resources and that development of the EFSA website will be the focus of resources going forward. The key topic on health claims has recently been updated and should make the retrieval of information in this area more efficient. The

issue of the quality of summaries could be addressed outside the meeting in cooperation with the Risk Assessment Directorate.

24. In relation to risk managers and key audiences, the Director of Communication said that EFSA communication was aligned with the Codex model. While improvements were always possible, she added that EFSA has several products that specifically target risk managers such as thematic newsletters. The need for simplicity and relevance in communication is not just for the general public, she added, but also for risk managers. In relation to the web usage statistics, the predominance of industry users reflects the greater numbers of individual industry stakeholders compared with NGOs.
25. The Executive Director added that it was important that the resource implications of the strategy are clear to the Board. EFSA currently allocates about 14% of its resources to communication and dialogue and this would remain flat or decrease slightly over the duration of the strategy.
26. The Chair asked why so few comments had been received during the consultation process and why the strategy did not include crisis communication. The Director of Communication responded that the strategy has been discussed several times with the Advisory Forum, the Working Group on Communications and the Stakeholder Platform which had all provided detailed feedback directly to EFSA. Specific crisis communication strategies are laid down in EFSA's Emergency Manual, she added but the general communication principles would also apply.
27. In summing, the Chair said that the draft strategy should be amended as suggested by the Board, particularly in relation to budget and resources and re-tabled at the next meeting.

Item 6: Report from the Advisory Forum Meeting

28. The Executive Director briefly described the context of the Advisory Forum for the benefit of new members. In the mid-term review of the Strategy for Networking and Scientific Cooperation in 2009, Member States expressed the wish to boost scientific capacity at both the EU and national levels. This has resulted in the establishment of new networks (e.g. GMOs, animal health and welfare, plant health, and risk assessment methodology) and the identification of the need for a more medium-term planning perspective to enable Member States identify opportunities for collaboration at an early stage. On September 22, a document that provided a five-year perspective on EFSA's work and described the tools to deliver the work programme was presented to the Forum. The document is currently being finalised and will be made available on EFSA's website. Commissioner Dalli addressed the Forum meeting and emphasised the need to maintain and develop a critical mass of expertise at national level in order to ensure the sustainability of the EU system of risk assessment. He recognised that EFSA has a heavy workload and must find new ways of working and cooperating with national bodies. The proposed medium-term planning that has been agreed with the Advisory Forum should include more substantial involvement of the Member States, he said. The Executive Director went on to describe the heavy and sometimes unpredictable workload EFSA faced as well as the qualitative changes in the work of the Authority to include new aspects such as efficacy, risk-benefit, and environmental risk assessments. The Forum has expressed a wish to further discuss EFSA's priorities and include risk managers in the discussion. Reiterating EFSA's commitment to *Europe 2020*, the Executive Director said that EFSA was reflecting on its efficiency to ensure that it could deliver on the increasing demand for authorisations while maintaining its important public health remit. In light of the difficult budget situations in Member States, a discussion on priorities among all key players, including

the Board, is needed in the coming months. It is important, she added, that EFSA has both an annual and multiannual perspective on its work to facilitate this prioritisation process.

29. A member commented that the Commission needs a more progressive and timely approach in relation to fees for EFSA that could sustain Member State participation in the Authority's activities.
30. The Commission representative said that one of EFSA's key tasks is to coordinate resources so as to avoid duplication of effort across the EU. The Commission has a finite resource allocation for EFSA and Commissioner Dalli in his speech was inviting EFSA to explore the best use of this resource with Member States. A decision on fees she said was contingent on the views of both the Parliament and Council which would most likely be received in 2011. In a subsequent contribution, she said that Parliament is the key budgetary authority and any Board discussion should be delayed until Parliament had expressed its views.
31. Another member welcomed the open discussion on fees and the best use of resources but reminded the meeting that this should not impact on EFSA's independence.
32. Further comments were received on the following: ensuring the Member State contributions in relation to data collection were not taken for granted in light of national budget constraints; the fact that national authorities will always welcome extra funding; the need for an EFSA policy in relation to the collection and use of national data; the use of EFSA's budget for Article 36 grants; the danger of fees merely replacing existing EFSA funding; and the budgetary difficulties in national agencies will encourage more effective cooperation.
33. In summing, the Chair noted that the views of Parliament on fees would be clearer before the next Board meeting.

Item 7: Amended Budget 2010

34. The Director of Administration outlined two amendments to the Board. Iceland and Norway now fulfil the conditions to participate in the activities of EFSA and other EU bodies; one of the conditions of their participation is a payment equal to 2.49% of EFSA's budget, amounting to more than €1.7 m which has to be added to the budget (both in payment and commitment appropriations). In parallel, the payment pattern in scientific cooperation is slower than expected resulting in less resource than anticipated being spent. As a result of both factors, EFSA is returning €1.9 m in payment appropriations to the budget authority.
35. The amended budget was adopted.

Item 8: Implementation of Article 36 on Cooperation

36. The Director of Scientific Cooperation & Assistance presented an amended list which added a number of institutions from five Member States that satisfy the inclusion criteria.
37. The amended list was adopted.

38. The Director of Scientific Cooperation & Assistance then presented a work programme for Article 36 grants for 2011 to enable calls to be launched as early as possible but that was contingent on the final EFSA budget adopted in December. He noted a trend that grants represent a smaller proportion of the total budget, an evolution that reflects the growing importance of procurements for authorisations. He noted that a medium-term strategy was implementable through framework contracts for three to five years under procurement, not through the grant system.
39. A member commented that, as well as financial and technical capabilities, the selection criteria also stated that there should be no conflict of interest. The Director of Scientific Cooperation & Assistance confirmed that this criterion was applied.
40. In summing, the Chair mentioned that a discussion on the differences between grants and procurement would be useful for new members and the work programme was adopted.
41. In light of the time restraints, the Chair announced that item 9 on holding management board meetings in public would be postponed until the December meeting of the Board. Items 10 and 11, Budget Execution and Year-End Forecast, and Transfers in the EFSA Budget, respectively were for information only and questions or comments regarding those two documents should be sent in written form.

Any Other Business

42. The Chair announced that three new members had been elected to the Audit Committee: Jiri Ruprich, Jan Mousing and Pieter Vanthemsche. They join Bernard Url and a Commission representative.
43. In closing, the Chair said that, as some agenda items from this meeting remained for discussion and the Audit Committee needed to meet, the December meeting of the Board would be longer than usual. She noted that the March Board meeting could potentially be a joint meeting with the Advisory Forum. She added that, due to the time between Board meetings, the minutes could in future be adopted by written procedure. She thanked Jean Renault, EFSA's Executive Director and her Directors, the Chair of the Scientific Committee, EFSA staff, the experts working in EFSA Panels and Scientific Committee, the audience in Brussels and those watching via webstreaming, the webcast team and the interpreters.

END

Actions Arising

Meeting reference	Action	Deadline	Status
October 21, 2010	Amend Draft EFSA Strategy on Communications as indicated by the Board and re-submit for adoption	For December Board meeting	Open