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**ADVISORY FORUM AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION UNIT**Parma, 12 January 2012  
EFSA/AF/M/2011/410/RES/FIN**Minutes****FORTY SECOND MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM  
WIESBADEN (GERMANY), 30 NOVEMBER – 1 DECEMBER 2011****MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM****Chair:** *Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle*, Executive Director, EFSA

Austria	<i>Roland Grossgut</i>	Latvia	<i>Gatis Ozoliņš</i>
Belgium	<i>Benoît Horion</i>	Lithuania	<i>Zenonas Stanevicius</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Boiko Likov</i>	Luxembourg	<i>Nathalie Welschbillig</i>
Cyprus	<i>Popi Kanari</i>	Malta	<i>Flavia Zammit</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Jitka Götzová</i>	Netherlands	<i>Evert Schouten</i>
Denmark	<i>Jørgen Schlundt</i>	Norway	<i>Kirstin Færden</i>
Finland	<i>Jaana Husu-Kallio</i>	Poland	<i>Jan Krzysztof Ludwicki</i>
France	<i>Rozenn Saunier</i>	Portugal	<i>Maria João Seabra</i>
Germany	<i>Andreas Hensel</i>	Romania	<i>Liviu Rusu</i>
Greece	<i>Eirini Tsigarida</i>	Slovenia	<i>Ada Hočevar</i>
Hungary	<i>Maria Szeitzné Szabó</i>	Spain	<i>Ana Troncoso</i>
Ireland	<i>Bernard Hegarty</i>	Sweden	<i>Leif Busk</i>
Italy	<i>Giancarlo Belluzzi</i>	United Kingdom	<i>Andrew Wadge</i>

## OBSERVERS

Croatia	<i>Zorica Jurković</i>	Turkey	<i>Nergiz Özbağ</i>
FYR of Macedonia	<i>Svetlana Tomeska Mickova</i>	European Commission	<i>Jeannie Vergnettes</i>
Montenegro	<i>Nedeljko Latinović</i>	German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL)	<i>Helmut Tschiersky-Schöneburg<sup>1</sup></i>
Switzerland	<i>Michael Beer</i>	German Federal Office for Statistics (Destatis)	<i>Dieter Sarreither and Ruth Brand<sup>2</sup></i>

## REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

**Advisory Forum secretariat:** *Saba Giovannacci, Jeffrey Moon and Torben Nilsson.*

<i>Bernhard Berger</i>	<i>Marta Hugas<sup>3</sup></i>
<i>Hubert Deluyker</i>	<i>Birgit Nørrung (Chair of EFSA's BIOHAZ Panel)<sup>3</sup></i>
<i>Alexandre Feigenbaum<sup>4</sup></i>	<i>Tobin Robinson</i>
<i>Anne-Laure Gassin</i>	<i>Alberto Spagnoli<sup>5</sup></i>

### 1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle opened the meeting, thanked Germany for hosting the meeting in Wiesbaden, welcomed the President of the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety and the Vice-President and Head of Department for Agricultural Statistics of the German Federal Office for Statistics, and passed the floor to Mark Weinmeister, State Secretary of the Hessian Ministry for Environment, Energy, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, who welcomed the AF members and shared information on the role of the German *Länder*, *i.e.* the Federal States, and cooperation during the recent STEC outbreak. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked for information on lessons learnt from the handling of the STEC crisis. She then welcomed the AF members, in particular the substitute from Ireland, and mentioned that apologies were received from Estonia, Iceland, and Slovakia.

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<sup>1</sup> Attended agenda items 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Attended agenda items 1-3.2.

<sup>3</sup> Attended agenda items 5-7.

<sup>4</sup> Attended agenda item 4.3 (via telephone).

<sup>5</sup> Attended agenda item 4.2 (via telephone).

## 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle apologised for the late sharing of the minutes of the 41<sup>st</sup> AF meeting and said that the minutes would be adopted by written procedure. The agenda was adopted. Denmark, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Norway raised matters to be covered under agenda item 6.

## 3 STRATEGIC DISCUSSION ON EFSA'S WORK WITH MEMBER STATES (PART I)

### 3.1 Follow up on previous strategic discussions

- **Medium-term planning**

Hubert Deluyker provided an update on EFSA's dialogue with the European Commission on the medium-term planning and said that EFSA would table the medium-term planning and a multi-annual work plan, including a multi-annual work programme for grants and procurement, for discussion at the next AF meeting in March 2012.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle noted that the budgetary execution of scientific cooperation projects in 2011 had been low, so an action plan had already been established for implementation early next year. In addition, there would be a need to take a strategic approach to identifying key areas to invest in during the coming five years.

Sweden said that EFSA had been successful in establishing platforms and tools for scientific cooperation, so there would be a need for the Member States to do their part in scientific cooperation.

Hubert Deluyker provided further information on the reasons why some calls for proposals had been unsuccessful in 2011, e.g. no suitable proposals received.

*Action 1: AF members to share information on national medium-term plans on risk assessment at the next AF meeting in March 2012.*

- **Data collection**

Hubert Deluyker updated the AF on EFSA's follow up on the plans on data collection that were agreed at the last AF meeting. He reminded the AF members that nominations for the EU Menu Steering Committee as well as the overall steering committee on cross-cutting issues in the area of data collection were still welcome. For simplification, he suggested that these two steering committees could possibly be combined. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle supported this proposal.

### 3.2 National perspectives on data collection regarding food safety

The German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) presented a national perspective on data collection regarding food safety:

Experiences from the cooperation between Germany's sixteen Federal States could be valuable also for the cooperation between the EU Member States. Data collection was performed periodically and additional data were required in case of a crisis. The BVL thanked EFSA for its support during the STEC outbreak. The presentation was completed by some proposals to further enhance data management on EU level.

Denmark commented on the use of data, which could lead to mistakes if national experts were not involved, so consultation on reports was needed.

Hubert Deluyker agreed and referred to the biological monitoring as an example.

Finland enquired about funding issues, compatibility of data from the different Federal States, and access to the data.

The BVL replied that data are collected through surveys and Federal monitoring plans under a common legal framework for data collection and with funding from the BVL. An IT system was being developed to meet data requirements. The data are used by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and reported to the European Commission and EFSA.

Germany added that the quality of monitoring data depends on the quality of sampling and laboratory work.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle confirmed that EFSA works with the European Commission to avoid double reporting of data and to harmonise the requirements.

Sweden said that there is a need for long-term planning to address human risks both in regulated and non-regulated areas, so EFSA self-tasking was suggested. Sweden agreed on the need for good sampling plans and emphasised the need for validated data for human exposure assessments and total diet studies.

Hubert Deluyker agreed on the proposal to consider data needs in the medium-term planning that would be discussed at the next AF meeting and said that EFSA would work with the European Commission to consider the data collected, since often the data are not useful for risk assessments.

The German Federal Office for Statistics (Destatis) presented its structure, the European statistical system, and examples of statistics regarding food safety.

With reference to EFSA's Science Strategy, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that EFSA would contextualise risks related with the food chain and rank these risks.

Sweden then shared its views on various aspects regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the technical report of the AF discussion group on data collection that was presented and endorsed at the last AF meeting. These comprised the importance of developing a data collection plan and defining

EFSA's role in horizon scanning and modelling of exposure assessments. Sweden also encouraged data collection on nutrients and joint data collection projects.

Germany underlined the potential usefulness of data generated by the industry.

Austria presented its national perspective on data collection regarding food safety, emphasising the importance of medium-term planning on data collection. Austria advocated for a uniform terminology and uniform systems for data in different areas and recommended establishing a centralised point at national level for data sharing with EFSA, possibly in conjunction with the Focal Points.

France presented the results of its national surveillance study on dietary exposure to chemical substances.

Sweden commented that the French study was a nice illustration of the type of study that had been proposed by the AF discussion group on data collection. Sweden then enquired which limit values were used for comparisons in the study, *i.e.* maximum residue levels (MRL) or acceptable daily intake (ADI), since exceedence of an MRL would not necessarily mean that there was a health risk.

The Netherlands said that they were planning a similar study for infants, including breast milk.

France replied that toxicological reference values, taking into account safety factors, and nutritional recommendations were used in the national surveillance study and that also in France a study on breast milk was ongoing.

Germany asked if total diet study data corresponded with information obtained through biomonitoring in France.

France confirmed that the data were coherent, although they had not been compared systematically.

Finland complimented the French study and enquired about consumer reactions.

France replied that public information was foreseen.

Hubert Deluyker and Denmark reflected on the possibility of comparing the results of the French study with total diet studies in other countries.

Sweden suggested that comparison with ordinary exposure assessments could provide interesting results.

The Netherlands saw an opportunity to validate other exposure assessment methodologies.

Hubert Deluyker replied that EFSA would play a role in modelling of exposure and take advantage of ongoing work by research institutions in this area.

Sweden suggested that research projects should be granted permission to use national data, since this would be very valuable.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked the presenters and concluded that the recommendations of the technical report of the AF discussion group on data collection were very relevant, so EFSA would work further at EU level on avoiding duplication of reporting and developing adequate tools.

*Action 2: France to share the link to the report on the national surveillance study on dietary exposure to chemical substances when it is published.*

### **3.3 Hazard databases**

Tobin Robinson presented the work on EFSA's chemical hazards database.

Sweden offered to share a data tool on available toxicity data with EFSA.

Ireland found that it could be useful to extend the database to Member State risk assessments and enquired about quality criteria for data acceptance.

The Netherlands asked if data on nanoparticles would be included.

Tobin Robinson replied that data used by EFSA's Panels is included, so the quality control took place at that level. Nanoparticles would be incorporated with reference to their chemical structure when assessed by EFSA.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle emphasised the coordination with other international organisations, including the European Chemicals Agency and the OECD.

### **3.4 EFSA's emerging risks exchange network**

Tobin Robinson presented the activities of the emerging risks exchange network. He encouraged the few Member States who had not yet joined the network to designate a representative. He also said that EFSA considered extending the composition of the network to comprise also other EU agencies, international organisations and key third countries. In addition to presenting the role of the network in supporting the identification of emerging risks, he also reported back on three specific issues that had been referred to the network following prior discussion in the AF: Energy drinks, for which consumption data would be gathered, pine nuts with a bitter metallic taste, where the source had been identified, and allergic reactions caused by certain easy-to-bake products containing acid-hydrolysed wheat protein, where no further cases had been reported.

Finland emphasised the importance of cooperating with the European Medicines Agency on food supplements and proposed that the AF should discuss food supplements at a future meeting. Finland also enquired if EFSA had done any risk assessment on the human consumption of insects.

The United Kingdom supported the network and the intention to link with international organisations. The United Kingdom further reflected on the need to focus on issues rather than risks, *i.e.* to take a broader approach to identifying new risks and learn from past crises.

The Netherlands advocated for transparency in sharing information on emerging risks.

Belgium expressed support to the network and informed that the European Commission is currently working on an inventory of insects sold in the EU.

Germany questioned whether the members of the emerging risks exchange network would have the right profile to consider risks related with animal health and suggested that this task might better be addressed by the CVOs.

Hungary found the network useful and complimented an interesting workshop organised by Italy in connection with the last network meeting.

Italy acknowledged that CVOs are in charge of animal health, but still advocated for inclusion of animal health in the remit of the emerging risks exchange network, since many food safety risks derive from this field. Italy remarked that, in principle, EFSA should create a reference model of structured systems for collecting signals and warned that bad communications on emerging risks could create false alarms.

Hubert Deluyker said that EFSA's emerging risks unit had detected that microbiological contamination on fresh vegetables could be a risk prior to the STEC outbreak, so the question was how to react on such alerts. He agreed with Germany to focus first on food risks before extending the scope of the network to comprise also plant health and animal health.

The European Commission advocated for a cautious approach to communications on emerging risks and expressed doubts over the proposal to extend the network to include third countries.

Norway said that due to the difficulty of the task, its network member was planning to establish a system for support, *e.g.* a national network on emerging risks. Norway emphasised the importance of avoiding duplication of literature searches for emerging risks, supported the proposal to include both plant health and animal health, and found that the transparency of the minutes of network meetings could be improved.

Tobin Robinson emphasised that the network constituted work in progress, so the methodology would be further refined in 2012. There would be a need to focus on priority areas for food safety risks.

Germany reminded of its concerns expressed already in connection with the establishment of the network, namely that the work on emerging risks should not be conducted in parallel to normal risk assessments, since some risks are not new. Germany also emphasised that newly emerging risks are normally addressed at national level. In addition, both science and communications would need to be considered.

Denmark agreed with Germany and warned against spending resources on emerging risks work at the sacrifice of normal risk assessments. Using the example of *E.coli* on vegetables, Denmark said that this risk was well-known, so EFSA would have to raise awareness in the European Commission in order for risk managers to take preventive action.

Hubert Deluyker informed that the work on emerging risks addresses unregulated areas and exposure changes of known hazards. The work would contribute to risk ranking in consultation with EFSA's Scientific Committee.

Denmark replied that, even in regulated areas, EFSA has a role to point out shortcomings.

The United Kingdom found the use of resources for identifying emerging risks justified, since there is a need to pick up and filter signals in order to advise risk managers. These signals can sometimes be economic, *e.g.* related with food fraud.

Germany advocated for involving the Scientific Panels in advising on dealing with uncertainties and emerging risks. Further discussion at an upcoming AF meeting was proposed.

Finland agreed with the United Kingdom and encouraged EFSA to continue its work on emerging risks and to be flexible regarding the involvement of Member State experts.

Austria reminded that the emerging risks exchange network had been created to address emerging issues that were previously raised in the AF.

Hubert Deluyker said that EFSA's Science Strategy foresees resources for emerging risks work and that the Scientific Panels play a role in risk ranking.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded that EFSA would continue investing in this important area and would discuss the progress again with the AF in 2012.

#### **4 OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY EFSA AND THE MEMBER STATES**

##### **4.1 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012: EFSA/General Food Law**

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle introduced the presentation by saying that the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EFSA and the General Food Law of the EU would be an opportunity to take stock and look ahead. Anne-Laure Gassin presented the

anticipated key messages and activities to mark the anniversary, including a two-day scientific conference in EFSA's new seat in Parma in November 2012.

Austria suggested that the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary could be an opportunity to reiterate EFSA's independence.

The United Kingdom supported the focus on successes and suggested involving stakeholders that recognise EFSA's value, since trust is a key point.

Denmark proposed to strengthen the focus on achievements and to use this opportunity to clarify EFSA's role and reliance on work done by Member States.

Anne-Laure Gassin took note of the proposals. She said that the key messages could be amended and further discussions would take place in the AFCWG.

#### **4.2 Impact indicators**

Alberto Spagnoli presented the conclusions of the preliminary phase of EFSA's impact monitoring. Upon enquiry from the Netherlands, he elaborated on the difference between performance monitoring and impact monitoring.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said that the idea is to see if EFSA's opinions have been considered and to understand the reasons, if this is not the case.

#### **4.3 Other matters raised by EFSA**

Hubert Deluyker briefed the AF on the possibility for Member States to send national experts in professional training in EFSA.

*Action 3: EFSA to launch a call in January 2012 for expressions of interest regarding national experts' professional training in EFSA.*

Alexandre Feigenbaum updated the AF on bisphenol-A (BPA) following the discussion at the last AF meeting of a new opinion on BPA issued by the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES). EFSA and ANSES had jointly examined the reasons for their apparently diverging views and a statement by EFSA's CEF Panel as well as an article 30 report would be shared with the AF members and published shortly after the meeting. The scope of ANSES' work on BPA (hazard identification) was different from that of EFSA's opinion (hazard characterisation), which explained the different approaches. In addition, different studies and endpoints were considered. Based on new scientific knowledge, including results of new studies conducted by the US Food and Drug Administration, EFSA would consider if any elements would call for a revision of the EFSA opinion. Furthermore, EFSA would organise a scientific colloquium on low dose effects in 2012.

The United Kingdom agreed that risk assessors should keep abreast of new research results, while the lack of cooperation prior to the publication of the

ANSES opinion and the disproportionate amount of resources spent on a chemical with no proven effect on human health according to all international studies were unsatisfactory.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle agreed that diverging scientific views should be addressed during the risk assessment process.

Sweden enquired about the uncertainties of the studies considered by ANSES and whether the new studies would clarify the windows of exposure.

Denmark said that it could not surprise that different results were observed, since ANSES' study was broader in scope than EFSA's opinion. The new knowledge and different views on uncertainties should be addressed scientifically.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle confirmed that scientific discussions took place between ANSES and EFSA and that the scientific colloquium on low dose effects in 2012 would be an opportunity to address the uncertainties further with the broader scientific community.

Germany questioned why EFSA's CEF Panel had excluded meta analyses from its work and agreed with the United Kingdom that BPA was just one substance, while it would be useful to look more broadly into endocrine disruptors, since some substances are hormonally more active than BPA.

France underlined the good collaboration with EFSA on understanding and explaining the differences between their respective opinions.

Alexandre Feigenbaum explained the criteria applied by EFSA's CEF Panel to identify those studies that are most useful for risk assessment purposes. He also said that BPA is rapidly eliminated from the human body, as demonstrated by toxicokinetic studies. He concluded by reiterating that the Panel would consider the new literature on BPA to decide on a possible revision of the EFSA opinion.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded that EFSA would meet with ANSES to discuss further on BPA. In addition, EFSA would review new scientific evidence early next year and ANSES would perform a risk assessment of BPA in 2012.

## **5 STRATEGIC DISCUSSION ON EFSA'S WORK WITH MEMBER STATES (PART II)**

### **5.1 Cooperation in the BIOHAZ area**

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle welcomed Birgit Nørrung, Chair of EFSA's BIOHAZ Panel, who presented the work of the Panel and the cooperation in the BIOHAZ area, including the BSE and microbiological risk assessment networks.

Austria enquired about EFSA's cooperation with international organisations in the BIOHAZ area, *e.g.* the WHO.

Finland, Cyprus, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom complimented the Panel on its good work.

Finland highlighted in particular the work on *Campylobacter*, which was also relevant for turkey meat. Finland also asked if the BIOHAZ Panel was involved in work regarding biogas production from animal by-products.

Cyprus asked if the BIOHAZ Panel had performed any risk assessments of *Listeriosis* from packed food.

Italy enquired about broiler decontamination.

Birgit Nørrung replied to Austria that many Panel experts are also involved in WHO and FAO work, while there was no formalised cooperation between EFSA's BIOHAZ Panel and the WHO.

Marta Hugas added that EFSA cooperates internationally also through its participation in European Commission delegations, e.g. to *Codex Alimentarius* meetings.

Regarding biogas production, *Listeriosis* and broiler decontamination, Birgit Nørrung confirmed that work was ongoing.

Denmark insisted on the importance of establishing formal cooperation with the WHO and FAO. Denmark also asked if the Panel was satisfied with the follow up by risk managers on its opinions.

Birgit Nørrung replied that there is a good collaboration with the European Commission on defining the terms of reference and mandates, while there is a separation between the risk assessment work by the Panel, which aims at providing scientific advice, and the subsequent follow up by risk managers at EU and Member State level. She added that often the opinions influence the risk management decisions.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle referred to the presentation on impact monitoring under agenda item 4.2 that showed that EFSA's opinions are considered by the European Commission.

Denmark stated that EFSA advises the European Commission so that it can manage properly, so if no risk management actions follow EFSA's reports on *Campylobacter*, then EFSA ought to remind the European Commission.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle replied that the European Commission is indeed working on *Campylobacter* and that also the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control is involved.

Hubert Deluyker raised the issue of access to data from the Member States.

Lithuania enquired about plans for further risk assessments of parasites in fish beyond the Baltic Sea.

Germany said that the prevention of zoonoses is directly related to kitchen hygiene, so it would not be enough to consider slaughterhouses and meat processing, but also targeted risk communications on food hygiene would be needed, even though influencing behavioural change was always a challenge. Germany had held two conferences on biogas, which raised a number of questions, so there would be a need to closely monitor this area. In addition, in general there would be a need to address the impact and opportunities of new technologies in food production, since the old technologies cannot guarantee adequate food safety. Thus, the establishment of an ESCO working group on food technologies was proposed.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle suggested that biogas and new technologies could be addressed by the emerging risks exchange network.

The Netherlands provided an example of a new technology and further asked why antimicrobial resistance was only addressed in relation with GM plants.

Germany found that strategic topics should be discussed in the AF and suggested working with the industry to address the effects of new technologies on food safety in a special AF meeting, while this topic could also be addressed by the emerging risks exchange network.

Birgit Nørrung agreed that collaboration with the industry is needed to evaluate the impact of new technologies. She explained that antimicrobial resistance had been extensively dealt with in previous opinions and was always taken into account in new opinions, so this was not limited to GM plants. The Panel would be open to new mandates regarding parasites in fish, while the Panel did not have expertise in risk communications.

The United Kingdom said that while the work of the BIOHAZ Panel is well aligned with key health issues, the excellent scientific information produced is not adequately used by risk managers, so the AF should reflect on how to address the mismatch between science and risk management, *e.g.* antimicrobial agents were ruled out in the EU despite their documented advantages and use elsewhere. The United Kingdom then proposed that the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EFSA could be an opportunity to raise awareness about the top ten public health risks.

Hubert Deluyker suggested that new technologies could also be discussed with EFSA's stakeholder platform that comprises industry representatives.

Anne-Laure Gassin informed that EFSA already communicates on the importance of kitchen hygiene and concurred with the comment made on the challenges of changing consumer behaviour. This topic could be referred to the AFCWG for further consideration.

Birgit Nørrung explained that EFSA's opinion on the safety of hot water decontamination had not been followed by risk managers due to disagreement amongst the Member States. In such instances, one could perhaps foresee an opportunity to consult the Panel further.

Sweden mentioned a Heads of Agencies working group on transparent use of risk assessment in decision making, which the United Kingdom would say more about under agenda item 6.

Belgium expressed some reservation regarding the declaration on the mismatch between scientific opinions and risk management actions. Belgium reminded first that risk managers have often to take other factors than science into consideration and, secondly, that available scientific knowledge, as reflected into EFSA opinions, may not be always clear enough to take appropriate actions.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded that EFSA could address a letter to the European Commission on behalf of the AF to emphasise the importance of risk management action in the area of *Campylobacter*, that risk communications on good hygiene practices could be addressed by the AFCWG, that the AF would discuss the impact of new technologies at a future AF meeting based on further information, and that top ten public health risks should be reflected in the key messages for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012.

The AF agreed on this conclusion.

Marta Hugas then presented further information on EFSA's work on decontamination treatments to reduce the microbial surface contamination level of food products of animal origin.

Belgium insisted on coherence of the applied regulatory framework for decontamination, since the different risk assessment processes under two different legislations on hygiene and additives, respectively, cause incoherence. Belgium asked EFSA to question the European Commission when such incoherence occurs.

Finland enquired about experiences with these antimicrobial agents elsewhere.

Marta Hugas confirmed that she was aware of the two different regulations and said that EFSA's risk assessments were conducted in accordance with the mandates received from the European Commission. The antimicrobial agents were known from the United States, where they had been approved for use.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle emphasised that both regulations prescribed a comprehensive risk assessment.

Italy stressed the concept of prevention of microbial contamination within the flocks. Italy underlined that biosecurity relies on the general prevention of

microbial contamination throughout the production chain in farms as well as the hygiene of the final products. The latter point was considered important in the context of the modernisation of the meat inspection issue.

Marta Hugas agreed and said that the Panel always stresses biosecurity and good hygiene practices in its opinions.

*Action 4: EFSA to address a letter to the European Commission on behalf of the AF to emphasise the importance of risk management action being taken in the area of Campylobacter.*

*Action 5: The AFCWG to consider risk communications to positively influence consumer behaviour related with kitchen hygiene.*

*Action 6: EFSA to address top ten public health risks in its key messages for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012.*

## **6 OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBER STATES**

Denmark announced a conference on combating antimicrobial resistance that will be held in Copenhagen on 14-15 March 2012, under the auspices of the Danish EU presidency. The Member States were invited to attend.

Spain briefed the AF on the emerging presence of ciguatoxin in certain sea fish in warm waters. In reply to Germany and Dutch comments on the similarity of the symptoms of these neurotoxins with those of other diseases and the consequent need to train doctors, Spain confirmed that doctors in the affected area, *i.e.* the Canary Islands, are well aware of the symptoms. No immediate action was requested from EFSA, but Spain would continue investigating the issue.

The United Kingdom informed the AF about a Heads of Agencies working group on transparent use of risk assessment in decision making that aims at examining the transparency of risk management processes in the EU.

Germany expressed concerns over the consumption of unnaturally spicy products with very high Scoville levels. Such consumption without dilution could lead to intoxication, mainly of children. Austria made a public warning on the internet regarding these special products.

Norway mentioned that a new opinion of the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety describing the processes in the value chain and risk assessment of decomposition substances and oxidation products in fish oils had been uploaded to the Information Exchange Platform.

## 7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Hubert Deluyker presented the topics proposed for strategic discussion in the AF in 2012. These comprised identified previously topics and reflected the key objectives of EFSA's Science Strategy.

Austria appreciated the plan, which would allow the Member States to prepare for the discussions, *e.g.* through preparatory working groups.

Sweden supported the broad scope of the headings for each meeting.

Anne-Laure Gassin mentioned that the AFCWG would prepare the discussion on risk perception - risk communication at the next AF meeting in March 2012.

*Action 7: AF members to comment on the proposed planning of strategic discussions in the AF in 2012 by 16 December 2011; thereafter EFSA to finalise and share the planning with the AF members.*

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle informed the AF that, considering the facilities at the new premises of EFSA and meeting costs, she would recommend to EFSA's Management Board that future AF meetings would take place in Parma, with the exception of those venues that had already been agreed with countries hosting an AF meeting during their EU Presidency. Keeping in mind the previously agreed meeting dates, the following meeting schedule was retained:

- Parma, 7-8 March 2012.
- Copenhagen, 27-28 June 2012.
- Parma, 26-27 September 2012.
- Paphos, 5-6 December 2012.
- Dublin, 6-7 March 2013.

Thereafter, all AF meetings would take place in Parma, except under certain circumstances such as the combination with another important event.

## CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Before closing the meeting, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked the German AF member and the authorities of Hessen for hosting the AF meeting in Wiesbaden. She also thanked the AF members and observers, the Chair of EFSA's BIOHAZ Panel, EFSA staff, and the interpreters. On behalf of the AF, she expressed a special thanks to the Dutch AF member who would retire by the end of 2011 for his valuable support and contribution to the European food safety system and EFSA and for the pleasant cooperation in the past years.