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European Food Safety Authority

SCIENCE STRATEGY AND COORDINATION

GENDER BALANCE AND GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY: ACTIONS TO ENCOURAGE APPLICATIONS FOR PANEL MEMBERSHIP FROM ALL MEMBER STATES

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the 14th of March 2012 discussions during the EFSA's Management Board meeting on the renewal of the Scientific Panels, the need to examine possible ways to further foster gender balance and membership in the Scientific Panels of experts that are nationals from across the European Union (EU), was highlighted.

This report aims to analyse the geographical and gender distribution of the applications to the 2012-2015 call for the selection of members of 8 Scientific Panel and the Scientific Committee (Ref. EFSA/2011/001). It also presents current and new initiatives to promote the call and discusses the merits of additional initiatives.

2. PROMOTION PLAN TO STIMULATE APPLICATIONS IN EFSA CALLS

In order to promote the awareness of this call, promotion plans were carried out in three successive 'waves' launched on 31st March, 10th May and 1st June 2011.

This included the publication of the call on the Official Journal, on EFSA's website and in its newsletters. In addition, experts currently working for EFSA in various groups received targeted emails, and the call was disseminated via leading scientific associations, presentations and posters in scientific conferences, as well as during EFSA meetings.

The sources of information through which experts became aware of the 2009, 2011 and 2012 renewal of Panels are listed in Table 1. They indicate that through the years EFSA staff remained the primary source of information for Scientific Panel renewal, even if for the 2011 renewal (of the ANS and CEF Panels only), the networking via EFSA staff was relatively less important.

For the 2009 renewal of 8 Scientific Panels and the Scientific Committee, the call was not only published on the EFSA website and its newsletters, but also in one leading national newspaper per Member State and in 18 leading scientific journals. Whereas, these two measures increased the budget of the promotional plan (by 150k€), they seemed to have had only a limited impact and were not re-conducted in for the 2012 renewal.

Table 1. Sources of information through which the applicants became aware of the call for Panel renewal (2009, 2011, 2012).

Information source	2009 (8 SP & SC)	2011 (ANS & CEF)	2012 (8 SP & SC)
EFSA Staff	30%	23%	34%
Friend /Colleague	12%	15%	15%
EFSA Website	26%	21%	17%
EFSA Newsletter	10%	24%	15%
Leading newspapers	0.6%	N/A	N/A
Other	21.4%	17%	19%

3. ANALYSIS OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL BALANCE

The list that EFSA's Management Board adopted in March 2012 for Panel membership includes experts from 21 EU countries and Norway, with the highest numbers being from the UK, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy and France (Table 2). In contrast, no experts were nominated from Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta and Romania. An analysis was conducted as to possible causes for these differences.

Table 2. Overview of nationalities along the selection procedure.

Country	Applications	Non Eligible (% of applications)	Eligible (% of applications)	66 and above (% of eligible)	Nominated (March 2012)
AT	11	9	91	40	0
BE	27	7	93	72	7
BG	17	24	76	31	1
CY	3	67	33	0	0
CZ	11	9	91	20	1
DE	89	4	96	68	22
DK	22	5	95	81	8
EE	5	0	100	0	0
ES	63	14	86	44	9
FI	17	6	94	56	6
FR	80	4	96	62	15
GR	41	15	85	26	5
HU	15	13	87	38	2
IE	18	0	100	78	5
IT	139	14	86	42	16
LT	3	33	67	0	0
LU	0	0	0	0	0
LV	4	0	100	25	1
MT	1	0	100	0	0
NL	32	0	100	84	20
OTHER	92	12	88	62	12
PL	13	8	92	58	3
PT	25	16	84	33	2
RO	12	8	92	18	0
SE	33	0	100	61	7
SI	5	0	100	60	2
SK	5	20	80	75	1
UK	88	5	95	77	24
Totals	**871**				**169**

3.1. Application

A possible reason for the differences is the size of the Member State. Thus the number of applicants was plotted against the number of inhabitants for each Member State. Figure 1 shows that the number of candidates does increase linearly with the size of the population in a country, across all 27 EU Member States.

Given this linear trend, there is no obvious reason to promote the call more in any particular country. The trend line in Figure 1 shows three exceptions i.e. Italy, Poland and, to a lesser extent, Romania. Italy has an estimated 70 applicants more than would be expected from its population size (Figure 1). This is probably a 'home' effect

due to EFSA being based in Parma, Italy. As discussed later, this effect is somewhat mitigated later in the selection process.

Poland, on the other hand, had about 30 applicants less than would be expected from its population size. This suggests that a targeted promotion campaign in Poland may be worthwhile. If successful, it would increase the number of applicants from the current 13 to an estimate above 40 (Figure 1). The application increase for Romania can similarly be estimated to be about 10 applicants.

It is worthwhile to mention that, following EFSA's Management Board concern about the low number of applicants from new Member States to the 2008 renewal for the CEF and ANS Panels, EFSA's Scientific Cooperation Unit, in collaboration with the Focal Points, organised two seminars, one in Budapest and one in Warsaw, to motivate experts from newer Member States to apply for the 2009 renewal of the Scientific Panels and the Scientific Committee. The seminars were attended by 103 experts, from all 12 newest Member States, of whom 18 subsequently submitted a full application for the 2009-2012 Panel renewal.

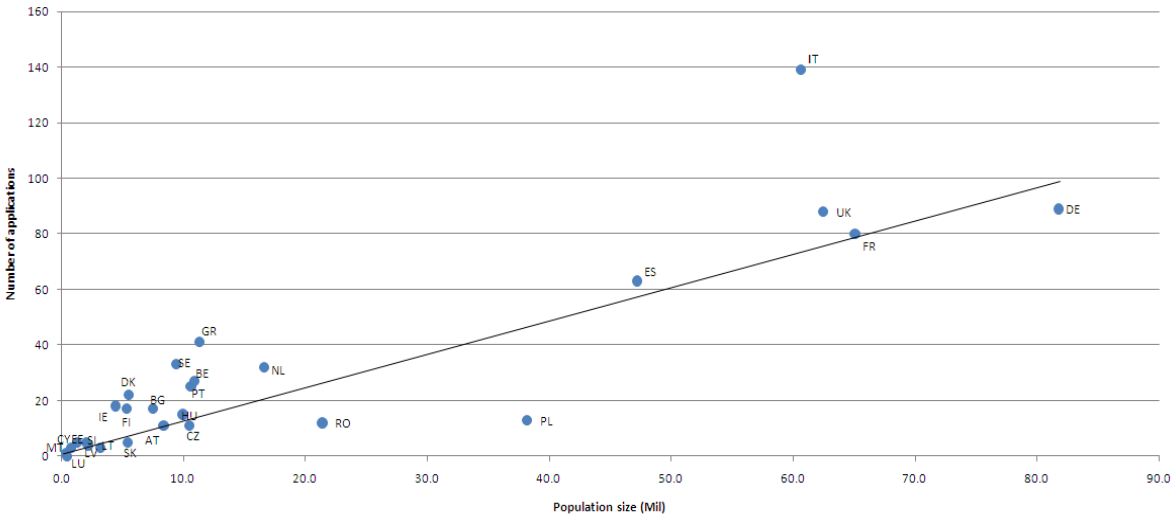

Figure 1. Distribution of the number of applicants by population size of the country

3.2. Evaluation process

Eligibility.

While the number of applicants from a country depends on the population size, it is worthwhile also to examine the success rate of these applications through the evaluation process. The results show (Table 2) that the eligibility rates of applicants were high (76-100%) with the exceptions of Cyprus and Lithuania who each had however only three applicants.

Scientific excellence.

To be considered for Panel nomination by the Management Board, the applicants had to achieve a score of scientific excellence of at least 66 (out of 100). The variability in the percent candidates who scored 66 or above was large, ranging from 0 to 85 % (Table 2). The following 12 countries had less than 50% of candidates that scored 66 or above: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia,

Portugal, and Romania. For Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Malta, there were in fact no candidates that scored 66 or higher. Hence, none could be chosen.

Scientific expertise results from the investment in research and development, which may depend in particular on a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). To visualise possible differences between Member States, the number of experts that scored 66 or above was first standardised by size of the population which was then mapped against the GDP per inhabitant for the country. Support vector regression (Figure 2) was used to examine the relation between the two variables. The model was tuned based on cross-validation techniques, which avoids over-fitting due to extreme observations in the data. The fitted line is plotted in Figure 2 suggesting a non-linear relation between GDP per capita and the number of applicants scoring above 66.

Clearly, here also there are exceptions. In particular Denmark (22 applicants), Ireland (18 applicants) and Slovenia (5 applicants) seem to have an exceptionally high proportion of their experts applying that scored 66 or higher, relative to their GDP. It may be worthwhile to ascertain if there are lessons that could be learned from their experience that might be relevant for other Member States.

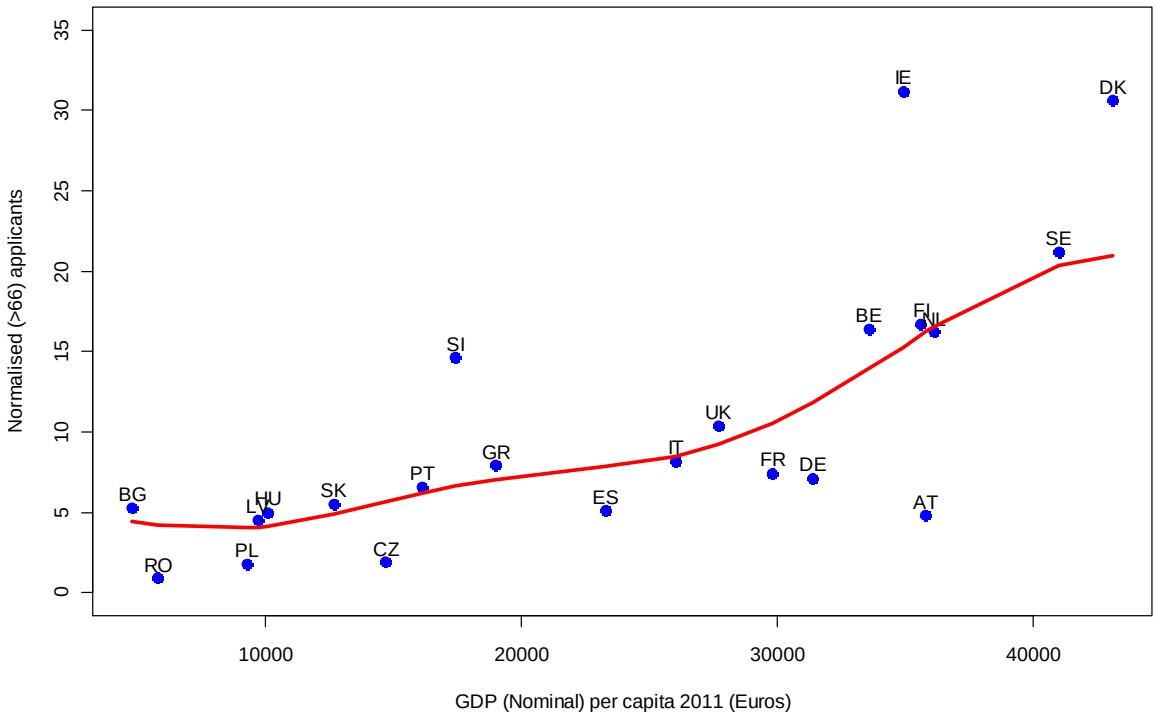

Figure 2. Distribution of the number of "above 66" applicants (corrected for population size) versus per capita GDP.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE GENDER BALANCE

The average percent of female applicants was 34% (Table 3). This ranges from a low 13% (The Netherlands) to a maximum of 68% (Portugal). The percent non-eligible applications were 15% for women and 6% for men. The percent eligible applicants that scored 66 or above was 45% for women and 62% for men. These results indicate that the gap between females and males that already exists at the application stage and subsequently widens throughout the selection process.

Four countries have a high ratio (≥50%) female experts nominated for Panel membership: Denmark, Finland, Slovenia and Portugal. It is proposed that the reasons for this be further investigated, with support of the Focal Points.

Table 3. Overview of gender distribution along the selection process

Country	Applications (% of applications by country)		Non Eligible (% of applications by gender)		Eligible (% of applications by gender)		66 and above (% of eligible by gender)		Nominated March 2012 (% of nominated by country)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
AT	64	36	0	25	100	75	43	33	0	0
BE	85	15	4	25	96	75	68	100	71	29
BG	18	82	0	29	100	71	33	30	0	100
CY	67	33	50	100	50	0	0	0	0	0
CZ	64	36	0	25	100	75	14	33	0	100
DE	78	22	4	5	96	95	68	68	86	14
DK	41	59	0	8	100	92	78	83	25	75
EE	60	40	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0
ES	65	35	7	27	93	73	55	19	89	11
FI	47	53	0	11	100	89	63	50	50	50
FR	70	30	4	4	96	96	65	57	80	20
GR	61	39	16	13	84	88	24	29	60	40
HU	73	27	9	25	91	75	50	0	100	0
IE	83	17	0	0	100	100	73	100	100	0
IT	60	40	12	16	88	84	51	26	69	31
LT	33	67	0	50	100	50	0	0	0	0
LU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LV	75	25	0	0	100	100	33	0	100	0
MT	100	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0
NL	88	13	0	0	100	100	82	100	85	15
OTHER	70	30	8	21	92	79	66	50	75	25
PL	54	46	0	17	100	83	71	40	67	33
PT	32	68	25	12	75	88	50	27	50	50
RO	42	58	20	0	80	100	50	0	0	0
SE	67	33	0	0	100	100	59	64	71	29
SI	60	40	0	0	100	100	67	50	50	50
SK	80	20	0	100	100	0	75	0	100	0
UK	76	24	3	10	97	90	78	74	83	17
Totals	**66**	**34**	**6**	**15**	**94**	**85**	**62**	**45**	**75**	**25**

5. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSED INITIATIVES

In general, the results indicate that for women both awareness of the call as well as elements that increase the success rate during the subsequent steps of the selection process are important. For geographical distribution there is a need not so much to promote the call but rather to strengthen the success rate of the applications.

A number of initiatives to increase the **awareness** of the call and to stimulate the applications could be:

- To identify well respected/known top scientists willing to promote the call through "interview quotes" to use in communication tools, making sure that these include enough (about 50%) women. This is also intended to give the experts more insight into how to apply, which may increase their success rate.

- To increase awareness of the call in targeted countries, such as Poland, it is proposed to repeat the 2009 workshops.

- More general initiatives that could also be considered are to improve the identification for each Panel of:
    - organisations, networks, associations suitable to promote the call;
    - channels where scientists go and are receptive to our messages: also where scientists look for jobs association web portals, web pages of publishing houses, etc.
    - events where the call can be promoted (e.g. Risk assessment training under the Better Training for Safer Food programme, scientific conferences, etc.).

Based on the results shown in Figure 2, it is proposed that **training** of experts is essential. Therefore the Commission's initiative to also initiate, with support from EFSA, a programme on risk assessment training is key. This is started this year with a basic training on risk assessment through the programme on Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) which will be useful for experts from all the Member States. It is recommended that it particularly target experts from countries whose success rate was low and that the quota for women be sufficiently high.

Next, experts need the opportunity to gain expertise through the **participation in working groups** or by joining EFSA temporarily, e.g. as seconded national experts.

In addition, EFSA has launched a new initiative for specialised training courses on certain aspects of food safety risk assessment for its experts and EFSA staff. This will, consistent with the Science Strategy, provide a next level of training.

As a further **follow-up**, it is proposed that the results of the analysis be shared with the Advisory Forum and the Focal Points. It is proposed that the Focal Points from the Member States with a higher-than-expected proportion of experts scoring above 66 or 50% or more women nominated be asked to assist in identifying factors that may be of value for others. This could serve as the basis for the Focal Points to develop a promotion plan targeted for their individual countries or groups thereof.

6. ANNEXES

ANNEX I PANEL RENEWAL PROMOTION PLAN 2011 CALL

a Tools

1. PowerPoint slides and promotional material disseminated to HoU and presented at various events
2. Posters disseminated to EFSA Units and external contacts on request.
3. Web banner published on EFSA website. Special landing page explaining Call, incentives and motivations published on EFSA website.
4. Press release published on EFSA website (Highlight disseminated to all EFSA Highlights subscribers [25,122 subscriptions to date]).
5. Advert published in EFSA newsletters (online and printed versions disseminated to all EFSA Newsletter subscribers [5,431 subscriptions]).
6. Call notification posted on DG Research website.

b Channels

EFSA's Networks:

1. Cover email explaining the difference of the Calls and incentives/motivations sent to all contacts.

EFSA's Focal Points (FPs):

1. Cover email explaining the difference of the Calls and incentives/motivations sent and disseminated by FPs.
2. Recruitment drive postcard and holder sent and disseminated by FPs.
3. Poster (A3) sent and disseminated by FPs.
4. Web banner published on 80% of all FP websites.
5. PowerPoint slides sent to FPs for presentation at upcoming events.

Art. 36 Institutions:

1. Cover email explaining the difference of the Calls and incentives/motivations sent and disseminated by FPs.
2. Recruitment drive postcard and holder sent.
3. Poster (A3) sent.

ANNEX II. POPULATION AND GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA OF THE 27 MEMBER-STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (1 JANUARY 2011 ESTIMATE)

Member State	Population in thousands	Population % of EU	GDP (Nominal) per capita 2011€
Austria	8,404.2	1.67	35,800
Belgium	10,951.7	2.15	33,600
Bulgaria	7,504.9	1.49	4,800(2010)
Cyprus	804.4	0.16	22,000
Czech Republic	10,532.8	2.1	14,700
Denmark	5,560.6	1.1	43,100
Estonia	1,340.2	0.27	11,900
Finland	5,375.3	1.07	35,600
France	65,075.3	12.95	29,800(2010)
Germany	81,751.6	16.27	31,400
Greece	11,325.9	2.25	19,000
Hungary	9,985.7	1.99	10,100
Ireland	4,480.8	0.89	34,900(2010)
Italy	60,626.4	12.06	26,000
Latvia	2,229.6	0.44	9,700
Lithuania	3,244.6	0.65	9,500
Luxembourg	511.8	0.1	82,700
Malta	417.6	0.08	15,300
Netherlands	16,655.8	3.3	36,100
Poland	38,200.0	7.6	9,300(2010)
Portugal	10,636.9	2.12	16,100
Romania	21,413.8	4.26	5,800(2010)
Slovakia	5,435.3	1.08	12,700
Slovenia	2,050.1	0.41	17,400
Spain	47,190.4	9.18	23,300
Sweden	9,415.6	1.87	41,000
United Kingdom	62,435.7	12.42	27,700
European Union	502,519.9	100	25,100