European Food Safety Authority

ADVISORY FORUM AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION UNIT

Parma, 9 September, 2013
EFSA/AF/M/2013/468/PUB/FINAL

Minutes

FORTY EIGTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM LONDON, ENGLAND, 19-20 JUNE 2013

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM

Chair: *Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle,* Executive Director, EFSA

Austria	*Roland Grossgut*	Italy	*Giancarlo Belluzzi*
Belgium	*Benoît Horion*	Latvia	*Aivars Bērziņš*
Bulgaria	*Boiko Likov*	Lithuania	*Zenonas Stanevicius*
Cyprus	*Popi Kanari*	Luxembourg	*Patrick Hau*
Czech Republic	*Jitka Götzová*	Malta	*Ingrid Busuttil*
Denmark	*Jørgen Schlundt*	Netherlands	*Antoon Opperhuizen*
Estonia	*Piret Priisalu*	Norway	*Lars E. Hanssen*
Finland	*Matti Aho*	Poland	*Joanna Gajda – Wyrebek*
France	*Rozenn Saunier*	Portugal	*Grac Mariano*
Germany	*Andreas Hensel*	Romania	*Liviu Rusu*
Greece	*Eirini Tsigarida*	Slovenia	*Ada Hočevar Grom*
Hungary	*Maria Szeitzné Szabó*	Spain	*Ana Canals Caballero*
Iceland	*Jón Gíslason*	Sweden	*Leif Busk*
Ireland	*Raymond Ellard*	United Kingdom	*Andrew Wadge*

OBSERVERS

Croatia	*Zorica Jurković*	Switzerland	*Michael Beer*
FYR of Macedonia	*Dejan Runtevski*	Turkey	*Irfan Erol*
Serbia	*Vera Katić*		

European Commission	*Jeannie Vergnettes*		

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Advisory Forum secretariat: *Jeffrey Moon, Saadia Noorani and Elena Zeraschi*.

Per Bergman	*Juliane Kleiner*
Stef Bronzwaer	*Alicja Mortensen, Chair of the ANS Panel*
Hubert Deluyker	*Iona Pratt, Chair of the CEF Panel*
Claudia Heppner	*Tobin Robinson**
Anne-Laure Gassin	*Laura Smillie*
*Mary Gilsenan**	*Alberto Spagnolli**
*Roy Kirby**	*Bernhard Url*

(=by telephone)*

1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle opened the meeting and passed the floor to the Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency, Ms Catherine Brown.

Catherine Brown welcomed members to London and outlined the relevance of the topics to be discussed to the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) strategy, emphasising the partnership approach necessary in order to improve consumer health and the importance of an evidence based approach along with clear and coherent communication priorities.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked the FSA for their contribution to EFSA's activities and welcomed the opening comments.

Apologies were noted from Slovakia and Montenegro and for this meeting Roger Meuwly represented Switzerland.

2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle informed members that the agenda had been updated to best accommodate all the items to be presented.

The Agenda was adopted with the inclusion of an additional item from Germany on Hygiene in Catering.

The Executive Director's Progress Report to the Management Board meeting, due to take place the following week, was shared with the AF members. Members asked to receive further information on the report on prioritisation of research and details of the recent BIOHAZ report on Hepatitis A.

Germany and Austria raised the issue of international cooperation, mentioned in the Progress Report and requested more information on EFSA's approach and

proposed that it would be useful to know which countries have existing arrangements with international organisations and third countries.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle agreed to circulate the reports and noted that International Cooperation would be discussed at the next Advisory Forum meeting, asking the Secretariat to liaise with members in preparing for the discussions to be held at that time.

Action 1: Secretariat to circulate recent reports on prioritisation of research and Hepatitis A; Secretariat to prepare for discussions on international cooperation with input from interested AF members.

3 STRATEGIC DISCUSSION ON EFSA'S WORK WITH MEMBER STATES

3.1 Work Planning and Prioritisation

- **EFSA's Draft Multi-Annual Plan 2014-2016**

Alberto Spagnolli, Head of Unit of the Executive Office, by telephone, presented the current state of development of EFSA's Management Plan for 2014 and updated members on the progress of the Multi-Annual Plan 2014-2016.

Alberto advised members that the plans would be discussed with the Management Board later in the year and members could comment further after the meeting.

Austria suggested that in the plan it should be detailed which activities have influence on each other and in the key activities, harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies should be reflected. Austria and Finland felt that more detail on scientific cooperation should be reflected in the management plan. Sweden suggested that there should be more focus on boosting risk assessment capacity in the EU. Latvia shared the same views on risk capacity and harmonisation of risk assessment. Germany suggested that the development of international contact points should be in the work plan for 2014.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle noted the points made, indicating the links between the discussions on scientific cooperation which will feed into the development of the management and multi-annual plans and welcomed additional comments until September when the plan will be finalised for approval by the Management Board.

Action 2: Members to provide written comments on the Management plan 2014/Multi Annual Plan by end of September

- **Work planning and information sharing**

Stef Bronzwaer, Head of the Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation Unit, introduced the discussion on work planning and information sharing in order to better allow planning on risk assessment between EFSA and the MS, sharing feedback from the Focal Points on the subject.

France noted that the sharing of such information did not enable the top priorities to be identified with Belgium suggesting that ongoing and output activities were more useful than planned activities.

Stef Bronzwaer agreed that the information sharing tools did not allow the identification of top priorities and advised members that the Information Exchange Platform was likely to be incorporated into the Virtual Library with more details to be provided later in the year

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle reiterated the usefulness of sharing work plans to identify as early as possible work being done by the MS and to anticipate medium term priorities more effectively.

Action 3: Update on Virtual Library to be provided at 50th AF meeting, December

3.2 Scientific Cooperation Review

Hubert Deluyker, Scientific Advisor, introduced the session, providing a summary of discussions that took place at a meeting of the Advisory Forum Discussion Group on Scientific Cooperation (AFDGSC), held on 24 May. In particular two areas were identified for further consideration, those being *optimising risk assessment capacity in the EU* and *strengthening scientific evidence for risk assessment and risk monitoring* (particularly in relation to data collection and literature research).

The plenary session closed to allow members to participate in small discussion groups to consider the two issues, making proposals for further consideration. Proposals included: outsourcing preliminary risk assessment activities – potentially creating 'centres of excellence' in the MS; focussing data collection on areas where there is a demonstrated public health issue; expanding the role of Focal Points as national coordinators on related matters and developing further training initiatives including exchange of staff between EFSA and MS.

After a report back on the outcomes of the discussion groups to the plenary, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle closed the session indicating that the proposals would be considered further by the AFDGSC in order to prepare a discussion paper for the September AF meeting and a summary would be provided to the Management Board as an indicator of the discussions so far.

3.3 Grants and Procurement Programme 2014

Following the discussions on Scientific Cooperation, this item was deferred until later in the year

3.4 Risk Mapping – how do we assess and rank risks from food to ensure maximum public health gain?

The UK introduced the topic with a presentation detailing food safety risks and the associated public health burden.

Germany posed the question of how the UK communications strategy makes consumers aware of the real, rather than perceived, risks. The UK agreed that this was a challenge, referencing a consumer 'backlash' in the 1990s relating to salmonella in eggs, highlighting the need to raise awareness without scaring consumers, using schemes like the ratings of food establishments as examples.

Finland noted the success of dealing with salmonella in eggs and partially the problem of campylobacter in poultry in Northern Europe.

Austria noted that microbiological hazards which mostly cause acute effects can more easily be recognised, but that for chemical hazards causing long term effects it may not be so easy to find mono-causal effects. Sweden indicated caution was needed when comparing microbiological, nutrition and chemical risks noting the difficulty in finding data relating to chemical risks. The UK agreed that comparison was difficult, but that it should still be done, with a clear indication of uncertainties and pointed out that chemical hazards are generally controlled to levels which have no effect. On nutrition, the UK noted that poor diet was a chronic and not an acute problem. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle noted the need of protecting consumers from long term chemical risks as well as acute microbiological risks.

Italy noted that with regard to zoonoses, there were recognised interventions to be taken by farmers and risk managers to reduce the microbiological risks. The UK agreed that this was the case, but which came at extra cost. Germany noted from the presentation that *listeria monocytogenes* was an increasing problem and asked if there was a particular strategy to deal with it. The UK advised that this was being developed. Bernhard Url suggested that it was not useful to continue to do risk assessment on campylobacter but to do something with the knowledge already available. Denmark noted that not a lot of investment was needed to act against campylobacter at farm level and that small interventions can give big results. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle suggested there was need to be clearer in communicating science in a way helpful to risk managers. Anne-Laure Gassin advised that there had been a meeting with the Commission to discuss possible risk communication themes and the topics of zoonoses and campylobacter had received a favourable response. The Commission indicated that there was to be a revision of the Decision on transmissible disease and a need for coordination of information from the public health sector, ECDC and food sectors.

Juliane Kleiner, Director of Scientific Cooperation and Strategy, indicated that a call had been launched related to developing methodology on risk ranking involving a comprehensive literature search, clustering of approaches and analysis of approaches. A contractor is due to be appointed in the near future with the project taking up to 15 months. Austria suggested that the MS should be asked what was being done at national level, to which Juliane replied that this was covered in the tender, but any additional information would be welcome.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle asked that MS inform EFSA of any information relating to activities on risk ranking at national level and the Scientific Committee would be informed of the discussions for further reflection and noted the strong advice from the Advisory Forum to EFSA to communicate on biological hazards and zoonoses.

Action 4: Members to share any information on risk ranking at national level with EFSA; *Data Collection to be included as a Strategic Topic for future AF meeting*

3.5 Review of EFSA's Communication Strategy and future developments (2014-2018)

Anne-Laure Gassin, Director of Communications, outlined the current situation regarding the review of EFSA's Communication Strategy providing an overview of the considerations and outlining the timeline for completion of the review.

Austria welcome the setting of strategic priorities for the future, highlighting the need to somehow include in the strategy developing good scientific arguments to counteract some of the publications/releases by NGOs on specific matters. Anne-Laure Gassin noted the ongoing work with Focal Points and the AFCWG on stakeholder mapping to identify the key actors: this work could also support in future more effective outreach and dialogue with stakeholders on scientific issues. Sweden questioned whether risk managers have a communications strategy on their activities and suggested that EFSA's strategy should be developed with this knowledge. Anne-Laure advised that there was ongoing liaison with the Commission to better coordinate plans and work in a more coordinated way.

Hungary questioned whether providing more understandable, "easy to digest" information directly to consumers on certain key topics could be an opportunity for EFSA . Finland noted the importance of being able to communicate scientific uncertainty in a meaningful way. The UK endorsed the priorities set out in the strategy, in particular *strengthening the clarity of the message and in this context welcomed the web redesign*; *building the brand* and *increasing openness and stakeholder dialogue.* Germany noted the difficulty of trying to address real and perceived risks, the differences in risk perception between Member States and in relation to branding, questioned how EFSA could be better positioned as an integral part of the EU food safety network but with a clear differentiated role from its 'competitors'. Germany also queried how EFSA and its communications plans could better fit into those of Member States. Finland also raised the possible difficulty of positioning the respective roles of EFSA and MS n relation to 'branding'. The Netherlands welcomed the development of the strategy and the related work of the Advisory Forum Working Group on Communications as creating a learning platform for future developments in risk communications(eg defining a common risk communications agenda, evaluating effectiveness of communications etc..) . Anne-Laure Gassin advised that the strategy will further clarify who are EFSA's target audiences and that this could also vary according to topical area. The strategy recognises EFSA's contribution in the EU food safety network and that this needs to be reflected in the 'branding'.

Lithuania raised the question of how to measure the effectiveness of campaigns and the need for clarity on the target audience while Spain noted that the findings of a Spanish survey showed that the media is the biggest trigger for food crises

and also the most trusted source of information. Spain suggested that in relation to communications in times of crises, when providing 'under embargo' information, a longer time should be given to allow national preparations to support EFSA's work and prepare for possible communications at national level . Anne-Laure noted that the tools for measuring the effectiveness of campaigns amongst key target audiences are still being developed. In addition, EFSA aims to repeat in 2015 the Eurobarometer on Food Risks in order to gain feedback from citizens on their food safety concerns and level of confidence. She also indicated that the AFCWG will be discussing the possible development of guidelines for crisis communications and tools to improve the coordination of communications at such times (eg more systematic sharing of "lines to take").

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle noted the need to explain and demonstrate the need for protecting consumers from a range of hazards using a more thematic approach and to co-operate with MS on such communications. She stated that there would be further discussions later in the year with the Management Board on the development of the Communications Strategy.

Action 5: EFSA to consider further activities on risk communication relating to zoonoses and campylobacter

3.6 Review of the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Forum Working Group on Communications

Laura Smillie, Senior Communications Advisor, introduced the review being undertaken of the Terms of Reference of the AFCWG. In response to a questionnaire sent to the Advisory Forum on this review, members confirmed that the ToR are satisfactory to enable the group to fulfil its expected remit. Members generally welcomed the establishment of an annual work plan co-ordinated with work ongoing at national level.

Spain noted the communications difficulties during the recent *E. coli* crises and suggested that instead of guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) would be more appropriate.

Anne-Laure Gassin stated that input from the AF members was needed to contribute to the annual work plan. The UK supported a multi-annual work plan that would align with the national plan targeting areas which would have the highest impact on public health benefit.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle referred to the high priority that communications has in EFSA's 2014 Work Plan and stated that the AF would be provided with an update of the specific areas of work for 2014.

3.7 Cooperation in the Food Ingredients and Packaging (FIP) area

3.7.1 Food Additives and Nutrient Sources added to Food (ANS)

Dr Alicja Mortensen, Chair of the ANS Panel, provided an overview of the current ANS panel work programme, the risk assessment challenges it faces and the co-operation activities it is involved with Member States in the area of ANS.

Alicja Mortensen explained that in 2013, the Panel plans to adopt 16 opinions of which 10 have been adopted so far. She highlighted that the major challenges faced by the ANS Panel were the lack of available data in the re-evaluation of food additives programme. The AF was informed that the Panel, when deciding to conduct a risk assessment, used a priority criteria based on the last date of evaluation and availability of new scientific evidence to warrant re-evaluation.

Austria asked what usage data on food additives was used by the Panel and if data was requested by industry. Alicja Mortensen confirmed that usage level data provided by Industry are used in the expose assessment. Claudia Heppner confirmed that requests for usage level and concentration data for food additives are published on EFSA's website1 and that training on data submission had been organised for members of the EFSA's consultative Stakeholders Platform and non-members who could submitted respective data to EFSA.

Norway acknowledged the busy work programme of the Panel and the importance of having the opportunity to self mandate. Alicja Mortensen replied that considering the current work programme, the Panel does not have the resources to self mandate. An exception was on the self mandate relating to allura red which was conducted in light of new scientific evidence to address consumer safety concerns.

Belgium questioned whether a common methodology was used on dietary intake on additives. Alicja Mortensen explained that the exposure estimates are currently conservative and if more data on intakes were available this would improve the intake models to allow more accurate exposure estimates.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked Alicja Mortensen for her presentation and asked her on behalf of the AF to convey her gratitude to members of the Panel.

3.7.2 Food Contact Materials, Enzymes, Flavourings and Processing Aids

Iona Pratt, Chair of the CEF Panel, presented an overview of the panel's work programme. The Advisory Forum members were informed that there was a current call for members of the ANS and CEF Panel. The Chair acknowledged that more experts were needed from the representative Member States since the mandate of the CEF Panel required diverse expertise.

Members were informed that the 2013 work programme for the Panel foresees that 55 opinions are adopted and that 22 have been adopted so far. A major achievement of the Panel, following 10 years of work has been the adoption of a positive list of flavouring. The Panel had taken a stringent approach to their

[1] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/data/call/130327.htm

assessment on flavouring by assessing the genotoxicity data, the majority of which had been provided by industry.

Iona Pratt explained that the Panel would be assessing food enzymes, a new area of work which included GMM derived enzymes. Members were informed this work had been delayed as the submission period for food enzyme applications was extended by the EC until March 2015.

Members were informed that the Panel had self mandated on bisphenol A (BPA) and would be assessing the risk to public health related to the presence of BPA in foodstuffs. The Panel would be considering exposure from all sources e.g. food environment, air and take a weighed evidence approach considering uncertainty. It was planned to endorse a full draft opinion in July 2013 for public consultation and adopt the opinion in November 2013. However due to the challenges in the hazard and risk characterisation part, particularly addressing the relevance of effects observed in animal studies to humans needs more time: Therefore the Panel will not be able to meet these timelines and a 2 step approach, e.g. public consultation on the draft exposure part in July 2013 and a 2nd public consultation on the health part is foreseen, aiming at adopting the opinion in May 2014.

Iona Pratt highlighted the challenges the Panel faces due to its high workload which included a new mandate received to evaluate the safety of coating of glass fibres reinforced plastics. She emphasised the importance of cooperating with Member States (especially with France and ANSES) particularly in relation to sharing data, discussing new approaches to risk assessment and supporting each other's work.

Sweden asked if the Panel was now more concerned about the safety of BPA. The Chair of the CEF Panel replied that the Panel identified in it's BPA opinion of 2010 a number of endpoints where there was limited scientific evidence available at that time.

Denmark mentioned that lessons should be learnt from the BPA issue and believes that divergent opinions should not be suppressed. Iona Pratt agreed on the importance of dialogue.

France welcomed the feedback from the chair of the panel of good cooperation between ANSES & EFSA teams on that topic.

In the area of non-harmonised food contact materials, Austria asked for clarification if the Panel considered direct or non-direct contact materials. Iona Pratt explained that the concern was not on the basic materials but on the printing in contact with food and that there is a need for a more systematic way of approaching the problems and the Panel is currently in discussions with the European Commission.

Germany agreed that communication at EU level on food contact materials was important and asked if there were any discussions with the Commission to agree a common communication approach. Germany informed members that it is also assessing non-food areas and stated the importance of not duplicating work.

France agreed that it was important to have good cooperation and informed members that it had met with the Food Drug Administration (FDA) to discuss data sharing and that complementing data on BPA would be publically available soon.

In summarising, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked Iona Pratt for her presentation and asked to convey her gratitude to members of the Panel. Members were encouraged to disseminate information about the call for new members of the ANS and CEF panels in their respective countries.

3.7.3 Proposal for establishing a FIP network

Claudia Heppner, Head of the Food Ingredients and Packaging (FIP) Unit, introduced a new mandate to establish a scientific network in the area of FIP. Members were informed that nominations would be requested for the different FIP areas and the frequency of meetings would take place on a needs basis.

Spain and Austria requested clarification on whether members were classified as individual experts or as institutions and what steps had been taken since the network review conducted earlier in the year. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle reminded members that the review on networks had produced a number of recommendations which were presented and agreed by the Forum at their last meeting, which included the setting up of a FIP network. She clarified that the request for members was to appoint organisations and not individual experts as network members represent the Member State and that he Management Board decision on the establishment and operation of networks was clear in stating that members were composed of organisations of EU Member States with expertise in the fields covered by the network.

Germany reminded the Forum that at their last meeting it was agreed to keep the members informed about the activities of EFSA networks. Stef Bronzwaer acknowledged that it had been agreed that networks would present their work at AF meetings and that a timetable had been drafted. He agreed that feedback from the networks was important and that all networks were required to provide annual work reports which are published on the EFSA website. Jeff Moon, of the Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation Unit, clarified that EFSA was in the process of implementing the recommendations of the review and once concluded the Forum would be updated. The Secretariat was in the process of meetings with the scientific units and that the terms of reference of some networks were being revisited. Members were informed that it was planned for each network to present its work to the AF. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle suggested that links to the networks' annual reports could be added to the ED progress report. Spain requested members be provided access to the network workspaces on the EFSA extranet space. It was agreed to arrange access.

The Commission acknowledged the importance of the review of networks and suggested that networks could be used to support the panels in times of high workload.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle noted the points made and proposed to revise the terms of reference proposed for the FIP network based on the comments raised by the AF members. It was agreed to circulate the final terms of reference to members.

Action 6: EFSA to revise the TOR of the FIP network mandate based on AF members comments; EFSA to circulate plan of network presentations at future AF meetings and proposed actions following network 'self review'. EFSA to grant access to AF members to network extranet sites.

3.8 Aspartame

Alicja Mortensen introduced the topic on aspartame and informed members that the Panel had been requested by the Commission to conduct a re-evaluation. The Panel had concluded in the draft opinion that there was no new scientific evidence to revise the current ADI and that aspartame does not pose a cancer risk. Members were informed that the draft opinion was sent out for public consultation in January 2013 and the final opinion is due to be adopted by the Panel in November 2013, taking into account the recent comments received during the public consultation.

Sweden mentioned that in past Advisory Forum meetings, enzyme production in the brain due to aspartame was discussed and asked if further information could be provided. Alicja Mortensen explained that the Panel had assessed studies in animals with high intakes of aspartame and enzyme production in the brain.

The UK informed members that it had funded a double blind cross over study on determining reactions to aspartame in subjects who have reported symptoms in the past compared to controls. The report is currently being drafted and the UK would inform the Forum when the report is published. Alicja Mortensen said the Panel was aware of the study but it is unlikely the results would be available before the final opinion is adopted. The UK said it would try to make the results available to the Panel sooner.

France stated that the time for public consultation in general is very short for national agencies to comment, and asked whether it would be possible to arrange a separate consultation for national agencies. The Chair agreed to consider this request with colleagues in EFSA.

Action 7: UK to share information of outcome aspartame study with consideration to the ongoing Panel work in this area.

4 OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY EFSA AND THE MEMBER STATES

4.1 Energy Drinks

Tobin Robinson, Head of the Scientific Committee and Emerging Risks Unit, by telephone, presented results of a survey on energy drinks consumption in Europe. The data showed that energy drinks consumption was higher in adolescents (compared with adults and children) who were also high chronic consumers. The estimated caffeine exposure from energy drink consumption was higher in children in comparison to adolescents and adults. Members were informed that

the data gathered would be used by the Nutrition Panel who is currently assessing the safety of caffeine following a mandate received by the Commission.

Greece presented results from a survey on energy drink consumption amongst high school children in Greece. France presented the outcome of their risk assessment of energy drinks consumption in France.

A number of Member States requested access to the data on energy drinks consumption from EFSA. Tobin Robinson agreed to provide access to the data and requested members to provide contact details to the Secretariat.

Belgium noted that EFSA had received a letter from the European Association on Energy Drinks criticising the survey and asked EFSA for its response on this issue. Tobin Robinson confirmed that a letter had been received from the European Association of Energy Drinks who were not in agreement with the methodology used to analyse the data on children. He assured members that EFSA was confident that the methodology applied for children was appropriate.

Finland asked if France had considered the nutritional aspects of drinks in particular the sugar content. France clarified that the risk assessment did not consider nutritional aspects of drinks.

Austria asked if there were plans to look at energy drinks consumption in combination with alcohol and other drugs. Tobin Robinson responded that issues relating to alcohol abuse and drugs were not necessarily in EFSA's remit.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle summarised that EFSA would provide specific data on energy drinks to Member States on request and agreed to keep members informed on the risk assessment on caffeine.

Action 8: EFSA to share data on Energy Drinks with Member States upon request. Member States to provide contact details of who the data should be sent to.

4.2 Customer Feedback on EFSA's Scientific Outputs (part of the Transparency Initiative)

Juliane Kleiner provided an oral update on the transparency initiative following on from a presentation given at the last Advisory Forum meeting. Roy Kirby, Quality Manager, by telephone, informed that EFSA aims to build also on the external review and incorporate customer feedback via the Advisory Forum and Stakeholders Platform. The next steps would be to set up a Customer Group including representatives of the Advisory Forum.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle requested members to send their expression of interest to the Secretariat.

Action 9: AF members to propose potential members for Transparency Initiative Group with consideration to those who can pose questions to EFSA - feedback of group to be given at 50th AF meeting in December

4.3 Regulated Products: Creating a stable process management environment

Per Bergman, Director of Scientific Evaluation of Regulated Products, provided information on the harmonisation of processes relating to the approval of

regulated products, particularly in relation to the freezing of the timeline of the risk assessment when EFSA seeks additional or supplementary information in addition to the submitted application dossier.

France proposed that procedures relating to access to data might be included. Italy asked whether post market monitoring was included in the mandate. Per Bergman noted that granting access to information and data according to Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 (regarding public access to documents) influenced our everyday work and that post market monitoring after authorisation was relevant in feeding information into re-evaluation of product authorisations or after expiry of these approvals.

Germany raised the issue of proportionality and considering the legal timeframes how to use a quality management system. Per Bergman stated that SOPs were used internally and these were also understood by the operators.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle concluded by indicating that the AF would be provided with an update on the outcome of the initiative and implementation plan.

Action 10: AF to be updated at future meeting on progressing procedures relating to regulated products

4.4 Update on Chemical Occurrence Data, including acrylamide

Mary Gilsenan, Head of the Dietary and Chemical Monitoring Unit, provided an update on chemical occurrence data including acrylamide data. Members were informed that via the grants and procurements programme, EFSA collaborated with Member States to develop the Standard Sample Description (SSD) which is the standard format used to submit occurrence data to EFSA. Training on transmission of data in SSD format has also been provided to industry stakeholders. Austria highlighted that a newer version of the SSD (SSD2), which aims to harmonise data transmission to EFSA from several chemical domains, will come into force in 2018 and that risk managers should be informed as the sampling procedure may need to be changed.

The Netherlands were concerned about the different sampling techniques used by industry. It was noted that in the Netherlands, it is unclear which organisations are sampling and which organisations are submitting data. There are plans in the Netherlands to reduce monitoring. The Netherlands suggested that EFSA conducts a review on data collection needed for risk based sampling. Bernhard Url, Director of Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance, confirmed that EFSA is planning to do a review of the data acquired, assess the quality of the data and to assess the use of data. He acknowledged that it was important to make data more accessible.

Luxembourg highlighted that for that country the implementation the SSD required a high resource and appealed to EFSA and the Commission to simplify the data collection. Luxembourg suggested having one notification system for routine submission of food analysis. Bernhard Url responded that there are

different stream of data calls and recognised that there was a need to harmonise the calls for data.

Sweden also highlighted problems with the SSD2. It was mentioned that there was a fatigue in Sweden with the constant changes. Sweden proposed that it would be a good idea to be informed on the planning and development of data collection and requested EFSA to communicate on its data collection strategy. Bernhard Url acknowledged that a strategy on data collection in EFSA is needed.

Members were also informed of the timeline and work schedule for the acrylamide opinion. The final opinion is scheduled to be adopted by Jan 2015.

Denmark was concerned that the timeline presented for the acrylamide opinion was too long and did not reflect the urgency of the issue. Denmark reiterated the need to take immediate action on this issue and asked EFSA to re-consider the timeline. Austria supported Denmark's view.

Members were informed that Sweden had obtained data from the European Snack Association which showed that the content of acrylamide in foods had reduced over the years.

Bernhard Url responded that EFSA did consider the issue on acrylamide important, but that a full risk assessment does take time and the panel needs sufficient time to make a full assessment.

Denmark reiterated that Member States who had written to EFSA were requesting an opinion on new studies. Denmark stated they would expect EFSA not to move in a bureaucratic way. Mary Gilsenan agreed to report back to the concerned panel to re-consider the timescales.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle reassured the Forum that EFSA was considering the risk assessment of acrylamide as a priority. It was agreed to re-consider the timescale with the panel and explore if the opinion could be delivered in a stepwise approach.

Action 11: EFSA consider possible revision to timeline for completion of the risk assessment on Acrylamide.

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Hygiene and Catering

Germany outlined the zoonotic situation in the country and informed on risk communication measures undertaken by the BfR with special focus on mass catering. Proposals for European wide harmonisation in this sector were made as well.

Luxemburg suggested that Regulation EC No. 852 could be taken as an opportunity to create guidance at EU level. Germany responded that the issue was not related to regulation, but was an issue of communication and building trust. The UK agreed that the issue was not about science or regulation but communication to make consumers aware of the risks when eating out. Consumers should be made aware of the hygiene rating schemes to empower

consumers to make choices. Germany also noted that information materials on food safety needed to be provided in a range of languages as many food industry workers (particularly in the restaurant/catering business) did not have European languages as their mother tongue. Anne-Laure Gassin agreed to discuss the issue at the Advisory Forum Communication Working Group.

Germany reported on the upcoming Chinese International Food Safety & Quality Conference and EXPO and suggested it would be useful for EFSA/MS to be involved in providing experts for sessions relating to risk assessment and risk communication.

Action 12: AFCWG to consider further communications on key messages on hygiene in catering.

5.2 Croatian AF Observer

The Croatian AF observer, Zorica Jurković, announced that she would be leaving her current position at the Croatian Food Agency and therefore would no longer be representing Croatia in the AF. She thanked the AF and EFSA for the positive cooperation and was looking forward to Croatia becoming a full member on the 1st July 2013.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle congratulated her on the advancement of food safety in Croatia and on becoming a full member. She thanked her for her contributions and wished for every success in her future position.

5.3 Management Board membership

The European Commission brought to the attention of members the current call to replace seven of the 14 members of the EFSA Management Board whose mandate will expire on 30 June 2014. Submissions close on 12 July, 2013.

Action 13: Details of Commission's call for EFSA Management Board membership to be circulated to members

6 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle thanked the UK AF member for hosting the meeting in London and the AF members and observers for their active contributions. Catherine also thanked the AF Secretariat and EFSA staff who contributed from Parma for their support.