



# SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

## MINUTES OF THE 141<sup>th</sup> PLENARY MEETING

**Held on 21-22 October 2020, web-conference  
(Agreed on 9 November 2020)**

### Participants

#### ■ Panel Members:

Ana Allende, Avelino Alvarez-Ordóñez, Declan Bolton, Sara Bover-Cid, Marianne Chemaly, Robert Davies, Alessandra De Cesare, Lieve Herman, Friederike Hilbert, Konstantinos Koutsoumanis, Roland Lindqvist, Maarten Nauta, Giuseppe Ru (except part of 21 October afternoon), Luisa Peixe (except 21 October afternoon), Marion Simmons, Panagiotis Skandamis, Elisabetta Suffredini

#### ■ Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:

Not applicable

#### ■ European Commission (EC) and/or Member States representatives:

Paolo Caricato, Patricia Herrero Sancho (EC, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit G4; for item 8.1)

Marina Marini (EC, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit D1)

Athanasios Raikos (EC, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit E1; for item 7.1)

Fabien Schneegans (EC, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit G4; for item 10.4)

#### ■ EFSA:

##### ■ BIOCONTAM Unit:

Katrin Bote, Beatriz Guerra, Michaela Hempen, Maria Francesca Iulietto, Ernesto Liébana, Winy Messens, Karoline Noerstrud, Angel Ortiz-Peláez, Denise Pezzutto, Eleonora Sarno, Valentina Rizzi, Pietro Stella

##### ■ AMU Unit:

Federica Barrucci, Marios Georgiadis (for item 7.2)

##### ■ FEED Unit:

Kostantinos Sofianidis (for item 11.3)

#### ■ Observers:

See Annex I

<sup>1</sup> As defined in Article 17 of the Decision of the Executive Director concerning the selection of members of the Scientific Committee, the Scientific Panels, and the selection of external experts to assist EFSA with its scientific work:  
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/expertselection.pdf>.



## Open session

### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

### **2. Brief introduction of Panel members and Observers**

The BIOHAZ Panel members and EFSA staff briefly introduced themselves to the observers.

### **3. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted without changes.

### **4. Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence<sup>2</sup> and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management<sup>3</sup>, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Panel members invited to the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the members at the beginning of this meeting.

### **5. Presentation of guidelines for Observers**

EFSA BIOHAZ Secretariat introduced the EFSA Guidelines for observers, including the rules for attending the meeting, and explained when in the agenda specific slots for answering questions from the observers have been placed.

### **6. Agreement of the minutes of the 140<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting held on 22-23 September 2020, web-conference**

The minutes of the 140<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 8 October 2020.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/policy\\_independence.pdf](https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/competing\\_interest\\_management\\_17.pdf](https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf)



## 7. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption or endorsement

### 7.1. Scientific opinions providing guidance on date marking and related food information – part I<sup>4</sup>

The WG Chair presented the draft opinion, in particular the changes implemented since the last Panel meeting, the revised decision tree (DT) and conclusions and recommendations. A few minor changes on the DT were requested by the Panel, such as adding toxin production to bacterial growth. The Panel further agreed with the description of the concept of 'intended use' as suggested by the WG. The Panel discussed and agreed on the final wording of the conclusions and recommendation and adopted the draft opinion.

### 7.2. Scientific opinion on the evaluation of public and animal health risks in case of a delayed *post-mortem* inspection in ungulates<sup>5</sup>

The WG presented the draft opinion focussing on the sections in the remit of the BIOHAZ panel, i.e. the effect of a delayed post-mortem inspection in the detection of TSEs, *Trichinella* and *Salmonella*, since the CONTAM sections were already endorsed by the CONTAM panel and the AHAW panel endorsed the sections on animal health during their September Plenary. The presentation of the model results for *Salmonella* and the expression of the related uncertainty was discussed in detail. Some changes were implemented in the formulation of the conclusions in relation to *Salmonella* detection after which the BIOHAZ panel adopted the scientific opinion.

## 8. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

### 8.1. Scientific opinion on the use of the so-called "superchilling" technique for the transport of fresh fishery products<sup>6</sup>

The WG chair presented the whole draft scientific opinion for thorough reading to the panel and gave an update about the outcome of the last WG meeting on 12 October 2020 by web-conference. For term of reference (ToR) 1, the wording "equivalent" fish temperature in the Assessment Question has been replaced with lower or equal (AQ1a) and the conclusions have been considerably shortened. A final expression of the uncertainty would need to be agreed with the Working Group. For ToR 2, the panel proposed some changes in the terminology and agreed to move many tables to an appendix and keep the overview tables that only contain the results of the four "fit for purpose" methods in the body text. The next WG meeting will take place on 9 November 2020. The deadline for adoption is December 2020.

### 8.2. Statement on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feed as notified to EFSA. 13: Suitability of taxonomic units notified to EFSA until September 2020<sup>7</sup>

The WG chair informed the panel that the Extensive Literature Search (ELS) was completed including algae. Since April, new taxonomic units were notified and the following three are included for QPS assessment: *Bacillus circulans*, *Methylobacterium extorquens* and *Mycobacterium aurum*. *Aureobasidium pullulans* was excluded from QPS assessment as it is a

<sup>4</sup> <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00438>

<sup>5</sup> <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00124>

<sup>6</sup> <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00437>

<sup>7</sup> <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00078>



filamentous fungus. The next WG meeting will take place on 10 November 2020. The Statement Part 13 will be presented to the BIOHAZ Panel for possible adoption in December 2020.

### **8.3. Scientific opinion on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feed as notified to EFSA<sup>8</sup>**

The WG chair informed the panel that the draft opinion will include a description on the differentiation between yeasts and filamentous fungi, which is already included to some extent in the current statement part 13, and a brief discussion on microbiological safety in relation to opportunistic infections. The deadline for the next QPS opinion is December 2022.

### **8.4. Scientific opinions providing guidance on date marking and related food information – part II<sup>9</sup>**

The WG Chair presented the draft opinion for discussion to the BIOHAZ panel and gave an update of the outcome of the WG meeting that took place on 28-29 September 2020. The decision tree was presented in detail and changes were suggested. The deadline for adoption of this part II opinion (ToRs 3 and 4) is March 2021. The next WG meeting will take place on 17 November 2020.

### **8.5. Scientific opinion on the role played by the environment in the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance through the food chain<sup>10</sup>**

The WG chair updated briefly the Panel about the outcome of the last WG meeting held on 27 September by web-conference. The sections of the scientific opinion addressing the Introduction, Sources, Resistant bacteria and genes, and Mitigation options had been shared with the experts of the BIOHAZ Panel and the last two sections were discussed at the Plenary. The Panel requested to further develop the methodology used to address ToR2 in relation to bacteria and genes of public health importance. The next meeting of the WG will take place on 30 November 2020. The deadline for the adoption of this scientific opinion was extended to 30 April 2021.

### **8.6. Scientific opinion on specific maximum levels of cross-contamination for 24 antimicrobial active substances in non-target feed<sup>11</sup>**

The chair of the WG shortly updated the Panel on the status of the on-going public consultation of the methodology proposed to address the ToR1 of the mandate *“to assess the specific concentrations of antimicrobials resulting from cross-contamination in non-target feed for food-producing animals, below which there would not be an effect on the emergence of and/or selection for resistance in microbial agents relevant for human and animal health”*. The public consultation will close on 18 November. The next meeting of the sub-WG-AMR will be web-conference on 27 November. The deadline for adoption of the opinion(s) is 30 September 2021.

### **8.7. Scientific opinion on the capacity of certain specific processing transformation methods of animal by-products used in the production of organic fertilisers and soil improvers in view of determining the endpoints in the manufacturing chain of certain derived products<sup>12</sup>**

The WG Chair reminded the Panel the background and terms of reference of this mandate and the deadline for adoption (31 October 2021). The first WG meeting took place on 8 September

<sup>8</sup><http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00083>

<sup>9</sup><http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00439>

<sup>10</sup><http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00343>

<sup>11</sup><http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00221>

<sup>12</sup><http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00401>



2020, as a half-day web-meeting, and the second will take place on 5-6 November. Thus, there has not been any meeting since the last plenary. The chair reminded the points discussed in the first meeting, namely, the scope of the risk assessment, the hazard identification, the definition of risk, data needs and data sources, uncertainty assessment and protocol development. The decisions of the first meeting and the ongoing work included the clarification from the EC on the scope of the risk assessment, the literature review on the identification of biological hazards in the nine groups of materials. The third meeting has also been agreed for 17 December, as a half-day web-meeting.

The chair provided response to two questions related to this mandate submitted in advance by an observer. The first one related to whether plant biostimulants were considered by the determination of then endpoint in the manufacturing chain. The chair replied that the current mandate only deals with derived products of CMC10, which are ABP or derived products. Thus, microbial plant biostimulants as in CMC7 or non-microbial (amino acids, etc.) are not considered in this mandate. The second question asked for a position about hydrolyzed protein from poultry and other species. The chair replied that hydrolysed proteins is a product that appears in the list proposed by Regulation (EC) 1009/2019 for assessment to be done by July 2022, but it is not part of the list of materials included in the mandate. The remit of the BIOHAZ Panel only deals with ABP within Regulation 2009/1069 and Regulation (EU) 142/2011 only provides provisions for ruminant hydrolysed proteins because of the potential risk of TSE.

### **8.8. Scientific opinion on the efficacy and safety of high pressure processing of food<sup>13</sup>**

The last WG meeting was held on 14-15 October 2020 (on ToR1c - chemical food safety risks through food contact materials). No WG meeting on the BIOHAZ issues was held since the previous plenary meeting. The WG chair presented the background and ToRs of the mandate to inform the observers about the work. The panel proposed to change microbiological food safety "risk" to "concerns" (e.g. spores) and this was agreed with the EC. The next WG meetings will be held on 10 November 2020 (related to BIOHAZ issues) and on 17 November 2020 (on ToR1c - chemical food safety risks through formation of process contaminants) and on 8-9 December 2020 (on ToR1c - chemical food safety risks through food contact materials). The deadline for adoption is 31 January 2022.

### **8.9. Scientific opinion on the microbiological safety of aged meat<sup>14</sup>**

The EFSA BIOHAZ secretariat briefly explained to the Observers the remit of this mandate. As indicated at the previous Plenary meetings, the WG chair will be nominated at one of the next plenary meetings, work on this mandate has not started yet. In the meanwhile, Panel members were invited to express interest for their participation in the future WG tackling the mandate. The deadline for adoption of this opinion is 31 December 2022.

## **9. New Mandates**

No new mandates for the BIOHAZ Panel received.

<sup>13</sup> <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00380>

<sup>14</sup> <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00380>



## **10. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/Scientific Panels, EFSA, the European Commission**

### **10.1. Scientific Committee**

No new meetings of the Scientific Committee (SC) took place since the previous BIOHAZ Plenary.

### **10.2. European Commission**

EC representative Marina Marini (DG SANTE) reminded the Panel and the Observers about the publication, earlier this year, of the EC Communication on "A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system". She indicated that several colleagues from DG SANTE will attend the next plenary meeting (December 2020) to update the Panel on the Commission activities on the BIOHAZ front and future workplan.

### **10.3. Update on Scientific and technical assistance on the use of alkaline phosphatase and possible alternative testing to verify pasteurisation of raw milk, colostrum, dairy and colostrum-based products**

No new meetings of the EFSA WG took place since the previous BIOHAZ Plenary meeting. The EFSA BIOHAZ secretariat briefly explained to the Observers the remit of this mandate. The deadline for approval of the scientific report is 31 January 2020, but is likely to be extended for a few months, as already informally agreed with the EC.

### **10.4. Request for scientific and technical assistance to examine the data collected by the Member States in the framework of the 2-years compulsory intensified surveillance in case of atypical scrapie**

The Secretariat presented the new mandate on the analysis of the data collected by the member states in the framework of the two years of compulsory surveillance in case of atypical scrapie. It is a mandate received under Article 31 of the founding Regulation. The mandate was received on 29 September 2020 and the deadline for delivery of the scientific report is 30 June 2021. It includes two ToRs: 1) Do the scientific data on the 2-year intensified monitoring collected by the EC provide any evidence on the contagiousness of atypical scrapie? 2) Do the scientific data on the 2-year intensified monitoring collected by the EC provide any other new knowledge on the epidemiology of atypical scrapie? The working group will be established in the next few weeks with 5-6 members, chaired by an EFSA staff member and endorsement by the BIOHAZ Panel will be pursued. Four meetings have been planned, the first one taking place before the end of the year.

### **10.5. Scientific Networks on MRA and on BSE-TSE**

The BSE/TSE Network meeting took place on 7-8 October 2020 (online meeting). The EFSA Secretariat reported a good turnout, with more than 50 participants registered, between members, alternates, observers and EFSA staff. Thirty-three countries participated, with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey attending for the first time and presenting their TSE activities. There were fixed presentations of the latest activities carried out by the TSE EURL, EC, OIE and EFSA; presentation of the preliminary results of the 2019 TSE EUSR; scientific presentations on scrapie in goats, zoonotic potential of atypical strains and presence of multiple strains in TSE isolates. There were no technical issues during the meeting and the timing of the agenda could be respected during the two days.



The next MRA Network meeting is scheduled for 29-30 October 2020 (online meeting). The panel was updated on the agenda. The presentations will be shared with the panel after the meeting.

## 11. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

### 11.1. Implementation of the guidance on uncertainty analysis in scientific assessments

The BIOHAZ Panel Chair briefly reported feedback from the last EFSA SC cross cutting Working Group on Uncertainty<sup>15</sup>, in particular about discussions on the plans for laying down a written description of the procedure to be followed for simplified EKEs. The Panel Chair briefly explained to the Observers the aim of uncertainty analysis carried out in BIOHAZ scientific opinions.

### 11.2. Topics of scientific concern in the area of biological hazards and BIOHAZ self-tasks

EFSA BIOHAZ Secretariat discussed with the Panel the next steps to draft and submit to the EFSA Executive Director the self-task on the microbiological risks related to the use of water in processing and handling of fruits and vegetables and related control options. The original idea for this self-task mandate was proposed by the BIOHAZ Panel in the past and included in EFSA plans for future work. Next steps will include drafting of the terms of reference for the mandate, with the aim of finalising them at the beginning of 2021. EFSA Secretariat indicated that grant/procurement activities might be launched by EFSA to support this self-task. The Panel Chair commented that the role of the Panel in proposing self-tasking activities is important and suggested that, in future Plenary meetings, the Panel could start reflecting about priority topics for new future self-task mandates.

### 11.3. Introduction on EFSA Call for expression of interest “Scientific and Technical Support – Various Scientific Profiles” for establishing a list of individuals for scientific and technical support scheme

Kostantinos Sofianidis (EFSA FEED Unit) introduced to the Panel the above EFSA Call for expression of interest. The Call is published on EFSA website<sup>16</sup> and is expected to remain open for four years. EFSA BIOHAZ Secretariat invited experts to disseminate among their contacts the web-link to the EFSA Call.

## 12. Answer to questions from observers

During the plenary meeting, observers posed questions to the BIOHAZ Panel in relation to one mandate discussed (see agenda item 8.7).

## 13. Any other business

No AOB were discussed during the Open session of the Plenary meeting.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/wqs/cross-cutting-science/wq-uncertainty.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://careers.efsa.europa.eu/jobs/notice-of-call-for-expressions-of-interest-scientific-and-technical-support-various-scientific-profiles-214>



The Open session of the Plenary meeting was closed.

## Closed session

### 14. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

#### 14.1. New alternative biodiesel process for rendered fat of Category 1 (BDI-RepCat Process, AT)<sup>17</sup>

The WG Chair updated the Panel on the validation letter sent by EFSA to the Applicant on the 07 October 2020 and on the deadline for adoption of the scientific opinion (07 April 2021). The WG chair reminded the Panel about the mandate and the application content and informed on the composition of the working group, which is in the process of being established (conditional to screening and approval of invited experts' declaration of interests). Four half-day WG web-meetings are planned in the next months, with the first WG meeting to be held within the first half of November 2020.

### 15. Any other business

EFSA BIOHAZ Secretariat presented to the BIOHAZ Panel a summary of the comments and suggestions received during the meetings organised during last summer between the Panel coordinator and the BIOHAZ Panel members as a follow-up of the 2020 EFSA/Experts Mutual Assessment. The Panel discussed the topic, with special focus on the circulation of documents in preparation of Plenary meetings. It was agreed that the deadlines currently implemented for circulation of documents are appropriate. Further suggestions for improvements may be discussed in future Plenaries.

The BIOHAZ agreed to preliminarily block 16 December 2020 morning as additional half-day for the December Plenary meeting (in addition to 9-10 December 2020). The need for the additional half-day will be confirmed closer to the meeting depending on the agenda. The Panel also agreed to reschedule the date for the 2021 September's Plenary meeting, now confirmed for 15-16 September 2021.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00450>



UNIT ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS AND CONTAMINANTS

**Annex I**

**List of observers who attended part/whole of the Plenary meeting**

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Country</b>
Arun	Sharadha	Private sector	India
Aydin	Ali	University/public research institute	Turkey
Babjakova	Jana	University/public research institute	Slovakia
Banks	Jeffrey	Private sector	United Kingdom
Belir	Mehmet	University/public research institute	Turkey
Chatzikamari	Magdalini	University/public research institute	Greece
Costa	Paula	Private sector	Portugal
Coyle	Maria	University/public research institute	Ireland
Dmitric	Marko	University/public research institute	Serbia
Ebrahim	Eman	National authority	Egypt
George	Lindley	University/public research institute	United Kingdom
Grenni	Paola	University/public research institute	Italy
Helminen	Ulla	University/public research institute	Finland
Hettiarachchi	Gayana	Private sector	Canada
Jelinkova	Pavlina	University/public research institute	Czech Republic
Karpiskova	Renata	University/public research institute	Czech Republic
Kooh	Pauline	National authority	France
Lämmer	Friederike	Private sector	Germany
Oliveira	Márcia	University/public research institute	Spain
Pedicone	Rossella	National organization of the poultry sector	Italy
Pitino	Rosario	University/public research institute	Italy
Resetar Maslov	Dina	University/public research institute	Croatia
Ripolles-Avila	Carolina	University/public research institute	Spain
Royer	Quentin	Private sector	France
Solo de Zaldívar	Amalia	Food safety manager	Spain
Soviero	Giovanna	Private sector	Italy
Špačková	Michaela	National institute of public health	Czech Republic
Spitznagel	Diana	Private sector	Germany
Szymajda	Adam	University/public research institute	Poland
Valieva	Valeria	University/public research institute	Sweden
Van Hoorde	Koenraad	University/public research institute	Belgium