



Communication, Engagement and Cooperation Department

Stakeholder Engagement

6th Meeting of the EFSA Stakeholder Bureau

Virtual Meeting, 27 May 2020

Introduction

The Stakeholder Bureau is one of the two permanent mechanisms under the Stakeholder Engagement Approach (SEA) with a role to advise EFSA on civil society concerns regarding food safety, health, the environment, risk communication and other issues in the EFSA's remit. The task of the Bureau is also to contribute to the general understanding of EFSA's scientific risk assessment process among stakeholders, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of its outcome. In addition, the Bureau helps shaping the agenda of the Stakeholder Forum, the annual gathering of all registered stakeholder organizations.

The sixth meeting of the Bureau, that took place on 27 May 2020 as a virtual meeting was an opportunity to get an update on the framing of the EFSA Strategy 2027, discuss the progress with the implementation of the Transparency Regulation, and exchange views on the work of the Bureau in the period 2017-2020. The Bureau was also updated on the upcoming communication and engagement activities and on the Science Studies and Project Identification and Development Office (SPIDO) initiative. The Chair of the Bureau, Bernhard Url, the Executive Director of EFSA welcomed the participants and presented the outline of the meeting.

Jaana Husu-Kallio, Chair of EFSA's Management Board welcomed the Bureau and shared the Board's views on EFSA's Strategy 2027 and on EFSA's contribution to the International Year of Plant Health.

The new strategy that will guide EFSA's activities until 2027 is being shaped in close cooperation with EFSA's partners and stakeholders. The Stakeholder Bureau members were actively involved in the two environment scanning workshops held in 2018 and 2019. EFSA's report on these workshops defined the main drivers triggering the design of the new Strategy 2027 and was published in June 2019. Considering the potential impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on factors such as the Multiannual Financial Framework, the European Commission's Health and Food Safety policy goals, and the availability of key partners in contributing to the continued discussions, EFSA's Management Board has decided to freeze the draft 2027 Strategy at this current stage. As a checkpoint, the Management Board will discuss the Strategy 2027 at the June 2020 meeting, following with a concrete plan to finalize EFSA's Strategy 2027.

Jaana Husu-Kallio reminded the participants about the International Year of Plant Health and its importance in raising awareness of how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment, boost economic development, and contribute to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Plant Health is at the core of EFSA's work. EFSA is a fundamental actor to keep plant health in the EU, in collaboration with the Member States, the European institutions and the scientific community.

EFSA is contributing to this initiative with a number of activities to raise awareness and explain further EFSA's work (e.g. launch of a topic webpage; EFSA's special webinar on "Horizon scanning for plant health"). Jaana Husu-Kallio invited the Bureau to support this initiative to help improving plant health and build a better future.

Implementation of the Transparency Regulation

The implementation of the Transparency Regulation (TR) remains a high priority and EFSA remains committed to ensuring involvement of the public and stakeholders along the implementation process towards 2021 and beyond.

The European Commission highlighted that EFSA and DG SANTE are working closely together and that a joint implementation plan has been developed with appropriate coordination mechanisms set so to ensure the delivery of results in time.

The Bureau and stakeholders are regularly informed on the implementation of Transparency Regulation via different formats (Sounding Board, Technical Groups, dedicated webpage, Stakeholder Newsletter). The colleagues from the European Commission updated the Bureau on the latest developments regarding the Transparency Regulation implementation, adoption of implementing acts and upcoming events (e.g. meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Group on Food Chain, 5 June 2020).

An overview of past and upcoming engagement events related to the implementation of the Transparency Regulation is provided as Annex 3.

Stakeholder engagement, the way forward

This agenda point allowed for an exchange of views on the work of the Bureau in the period 2017-2020, on the main outcomes of the forum 2019 and recommendations from the 2019 review of the Stakeholder engagement approach. The Bureau was informed on the scope of a dedicated virtual event in October 2020 to explain how the stakeholder input provided during the 2019 stakeholder forum and stemming from the SEA review process has been taken into account across different EFSA initiatives. Finally, the Bureau was informed on the scope of the info session on the Transparency Regulation Implementation, to take place on 24 November 2020, as well as on the overview of ongoing initiatives under the large-scale engagement project.

Work of the Bureau in the period 2017-2020

The input provided by the Stakeholder Bureau during its three-year mandate, 2017-2020 proved to be very relevant in rolling out EFSA's Stakeholder Engagement Approach. The Bureau plays a role in framing the annual gathering of registered stakeholders – the Stakeholder Forum – and contributes as moderator of discussions at the Forum. In addition, the Bureau provides input on the regular review of the stakeholder engagement process and serves as an engagement mechanism that provides a forum for open discussions and networking opportunity between stakeholder representatives and the EFSA management including representatives of the Management Board.

As part of the framing of the EFSA Strategy 2027, Bureau members have contributed to the environment scanning workshops. For what concerns the implementation of the Transparency Regulation, along with the Member States and European Commission representatives, the Bureau members are part of the Sounding Board. The [1st Sounding Board meeting](#) took place on 23 March 2020, in a form of a virtual meeting due to the

Covid-19 restrictions on physical meetings. The 2nd Sounding Board meeting is scheduled for July 2020.

The three-year term of the Bureau's members started on 30 May 2017. The process for the renewal of the Bureau membership for the main members was launched on 25 February 2020. Stakeholders had two months for consultations within their category and for submitting nominations. In cases of multiple nominations EFSA facilitated an on-line voting. The new list of Stakeholder Bureau Members and Alternate members is available at EFSA webpage at the following [link](#).

Bernhard Url expressed his gratitude to the Members of the Stakeholder Bureau for all their work in the last three years.

Review of SEA & Stakeholder Forum 2019 - recommendations and follow-up

In compliance with Article 9 of the Decision of EFSA's Management Board on the criteria for establishing the Stakeholders Engagement Approach (SEA) a review of the effectiveness of EFSA's stakeholder engagement was carried out for the period 2016-2019. The review focused on the effectiveness of the main features of the SEA; the categories of stakeholders; the registration process; the functioning of its permanent engagement mechanisms (Stakeholder Forum, Stakeholder Bureau) and targeted engagement mechanisms (discussions groups, public consultations, stakeholder meetings, Comms Lab).

The review of the SEA indicates that the approach is meeting the key objectives established by the Management Board to enable a wider range of stakeholder organisations to be informed about EFSA's work, and to provide input at different stages of the risk assessment and communication processes.

The focus of the 2019 Forum was to review and gather input on the design of future engagement mechanisms, inform the regular three-year review of SEA and gather stakeholder input to inform the Strategy 2027. Participants had the opportunity to provide input during different sessions on topics such as framing of questions, digital solutions for engagement, risk communication, crowdsourcing, and how to ensure follow-up on input provided by stakeholders.

The review of SEA and the discussions in the Stakeholder Forum resulted in recommendations on how to further improve the engagement approach such as a) adopting a more topic-based engagement and explore possibilities to organise events on topics of interest to a wider audience across different categories of registered stakeholders; b) produce an engagement catalogue to provide more clarity and visibility on the existing engagement mechanisms and to increase stakeholder interaction from early in the risk assessment process; c) explore the feasibility of additional engagement methods at different stages of the risk assessment process to ensure an appropriate level of transparency and openness while maintaining EFSA's independence; and d) involve stakeholders in the selection of topics for the Communicator Lab.

One of the recommendations of the review of the Stakeholder Engagement Approach 2016-2019 envisages establishing a feedback loop to provide more information on the impact of stakeholders' input on EFSA's work. EFSA is committed to look at additional ways to provide stakeholders with more information about the impact of their input to EFSA's work and plans to host regular interactive virtual events, to ensure more visibility on the progress with the implementation of specific follow-up actions. The Bureau members are invited to contribute in shaping this process.

Stakeholder event on Transparency Regulation – 24 November 2020

Since the adoption of the Transparency Regulation, EFSA has worked extensively to adapt its processes and tools to the provisions of the new law. This effort is carried out in close cooperation with the European Commission and in open consultation with the Member States and other key stakeholders, which have been invited to provide their input throughout the process during Sounding Board and technical working group meetings.

The event will take place in the form of a one-day information session, alternating presentations of how will EFSA operate in the future and discussion (questions can be posed by both physical and virtual audience). Participants will be given the opportunity to attend physically or virtually.

Large-scale engagement project - Towards a new engagement framework

The objective of this initiative is to evolve EFSA's current engagement mechanisms to meet the demand of the Transparency Regulation, create the right processes and tools to engage more effectively with interested parties along the risk assessment process and to ensure preparedness for future challenges and aligned with the suggestions and recommendations provided by the Stakeholders during the Stakeholder Forum 2019.

The project is expected to deliver a new engagement framework (e.g. classification of interested parties, catalogue of engagement methods, target audience identification methodology) as well as enhanced processes. It also envisages a pilot phase to test some new methods with the stakeholders and fine-tune the catalogue based on lessons learnt.

Upcoming engagement and communication activities

Barbara Gallani, Head of Communication, Engagement and Cooperation Department presented the latest EFSA's communication activities related to EFSA's scientific work, and what comes next as regards stakeholder engagement. The Bureau was also updated on the progress with the Reputation Barometer 2020 and the EFSA's contribution to the World Food Safety Day 2020.

Latest communication activities covered topics such as pesticides cumulative risk reports, trends in pesticide residues in food, update of the host list with thirty-seven new plant species, African Swine Fever and the welfare of rabbits. The ongoing scientific work includes gene drive, genome editing, synthetic biology, scientific opinion on welfare of pigs at slaughter, and climate change.

In 2017, EFSA launched its first Reputation Barometer - a tool designed to better understand the expectations and perceptions of those with whom we interact with on a regular basis. The study provided important insights into the approach EFSA takes to working with our institutional partners and stakeholders and how to improve it. For EFSA this remains crucial, especially as we embark on a new regulatory framework and a strategic cycle that will place more emphasis on building partnerships and broadening engagement.

The 2020 reputation barometer study consists of a stakeholder and partner survey combined with dedicated interviews with peer organisations. Results of the study, a combination of reputation feedback and ideas on how to improve EFSA's reputation monitoring process will be available early July 2020.

Science Studies and Project Identification and Development Office (SPIDO)

Marta Hugas, EFSA's Chief Scientist presented the SPIDO, a new initiative of EFSA, where EFSA may use the budget foreseen for 'verification studies', as foreseen by Article 32d of the Transparency Regulation to commission scientific studies necessary for the performance of its mission, particularly preparedness for future risk assessment requirements in the area of food and feed safety and in line with EFSA's 2027 strategic directions.

The project focus is directed to address studies and data generation in regulatory science requiring, among others, multi-annual cooperative arrangements with Member States, EU Agencies and international partners. It supports advances in knowledge and capacities in regulatory science, areas of key importance for current and anticipated challenges, as well as preparedness for verification studies.

EFSA's Chief Scientist informed the Bureau that the first wave of scientific themes currently considered are multiple chemicals risk assessment, new approach methodologies, artificial intelligence in evidence management and environmental risk assessment. These scientific themes and the process to select future themes will be discussed and agreed with DG SANTE and EU Member States. As the next step, a targeted, phased approach receiving inputs on these themes from various audiences such as EU Agencies, International organisations and possibly stakeholders is foreseen in the course of 2020.

General remarks and next steps

Bernhard Url recalled that EFSA will continue to exchange information with the Stakeholder Bureau members and looks forward to an active participation and interaction over the coming months, particularly in view of the implementation of Transparency Regulation, framing of the Strategy 2027 and the upcoming stakeholder events.

The Executive Director announced that this is the last Bureau meeting where Jaana Husu-Kallio is attending in her capacity of the Chair of the Management Board since her term of office ends in July 2020. Bernhard Url expressed his gratitude to the Chair of the Management Board for her continuous support and guidance on EFSA stakeholder engagement in last years.

The next meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau will take place in second half of September (indicative date 15 September, to be confirmed).

Table 1. Follow up actions

| | Follow up action | When |
|----|---|---------|
| 1. | Share additional information on implementation of the Transparency Regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implementation of the Transparency Regulation – EFSA web link, SANTE web link- The European Commission, DG SANTE Advisory Group - Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health – link | Done |
| 2. | Call for contribution in framing of the Stakeholder Event - follow up on the Stakeholder Forum 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bureau Members invited to express interest as members of organising committee | Ongoing |
| 3. | Share results of the renewal of the Stakeholder Bureau 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- List of Members of the Bureau – link | Done |
| 4. | Info leaflet - Work of the Bureau 2017-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Finalisation of the communication material; Bureau members invited to contribute | Ongoing |
| 5. | COVID19 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- COVID-19 and farmed and domestic animals – Questions and Answers – link | done |

Annex 1. Draft Agenda

| Time | No. | Topic | Scope | Presenter |
|-------------|-----|---|--|--|
| 09.30-09.40 | 1 | Welcome by the Chair of the Stakeholder Bureau and adoption of the Agenda | Welcoming the participants and presenting the outline of the 6th meeting of the Bureau. | Bernhard Url, Executive Director, EFSA |
| 09.40-09.50 | 2 | Welcome by the Chair of the Management Board | Welcoming the Bureau and sharing the Management Board view on ongoing EFSA initiatives; EFSA Strategy 2021-2027; EFSA's work related to the International Year of Plant Health. | Jaana Husu-Kallio Chair of EFSA's Management Board |
| 09.50-10.20 | 3 | Update on implementation of the Transparency Regulation | Update by the European Commission and EFSA on the ongoing work towards implementation of the Transparency Regulation. | Anastazia Alvizou DG SANTE, European Commission |
| 10.20-10.35 | | <i>Coffee break</i> | | |
| 10.35-11.00 | 4 | Stakeholder engagement - the way forward | Exchange of views on the work of the Bureau in the period 2017-2020; main outcomes of the forum 2019; recommendations from the Stakeholder engagement approach review 2019; scope of a dedicated event to show case how stakeholder input at the Forum 2019 has been taken into consideration across different EFSA initiatives; overview of ongoing initiatives under the large-scale engagement project. | Goran Kumric, (ENCO) & Cinzia Percivaldi, (ENCO) |
| 11.00-11.20 | 5 | Upcoming engagement and communication activities | Presenting the upcoming communications related to scientific outputs; overview of upcoming engagement activities (events, public consultations, call for data, Reputation Barometer, World Food Safety Day 2020). | Barbara Gallani, Head of Communication, Engagement and Cooperation |
| 11.20-11.40 | 6 | Science Studies and Project Identification and Development Office (SPIDO) | Overview of the SPIDO project. | Marta Hugas, EFSA's Chief Scientist |
| 11.40-11.50 | 7 | Issues raised by the Bureau | COPA COGECA proposed the topic on COVID19 and its link with the food safety and the way EFSA communicates on it. | Bureau Members |
| 11.50-12.00 | 8 | Closing remarks | Thanking the participants for the discussion and feedback and briefly outlining next steps | Bernhard Url |
| 12.00 | | <i>End of the meeting</i> | | |

Annex 2. Participants list

Stakeholder Representatives

| | Stakeholder Category | Stakeholder Organisation | Name and Surname |
|----|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1. | Consumers | SAFE Food Advocacy | Floriana Cimmarusti |
| 2. | NGOs and Advocacy Groups | Pan Europe | Martin Dermine |
| 3. | Farmers and Primary Producers | COPA-COGECA | Bruno Menne |
| 4. | Business and Food Industry | Association of the European Self-Medication Industry (AESGP) | Maud Perrudin |
| 5. | Distributors and HORECA | Euro Commerce | Els Bedert |
| 6. | Practitioners | European Federation of Associations of Dietitians | Ayla Gulden Pekcan |
| 7. | Academia | EuroScience | Josee van Eijndhoven |

EFSA's Representatives

| | Name and Surname | Function |
|----|-------------------|---|
| 1. | Barbara Gallani | Head of Communication, Engagement and Cooperation Department, COMCO |
| 2. | Bernhard Url | EFSA's Executive Director |
| 3. | Cinzia Percivaldi | Engagement & External Relations Officer, ENCO |
| 4. | Elena Marani | Institutional and Stakeholder Relations Assistant, ENCO |
| 5. | Goran Kumric | Engagement & External Relations Officer, ENCO |
| 6. | Jaana Huso Kalilo | Vice Chair of the Management Board of EFSA |
| 7. | Marta Hugas | EFSA's Chief Scientist |
| 8. | Matthew Ramon | Team Leader, External Engagement, ENCO |
| 9. | Victoria Villamar | Head of Unit, Engagement and Cooperation, ENCO |

European Commission, DG SANTE Representatives – Observers

| | Name and Surname | Function |
|----|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Anastasia Alvizou | European Commission, DG SANTE, D1 |
| 2. | Fatima Darago | European Commission, DG SANTE, D1 |
| 3. | Peter Bokor | European Commission, DG SANTE, D1 |

Annex 3. Overview of engagement events related to the implementation of the Transparency Regulation

