

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY FORUM UNIT

Parma, 27 May 2010
EFSA/AF/PLH/M/2010/332/PUB/FIN

Minutes

Second Meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum
Representatives on Plant Health
Parma, Italy, 20-21 October 2009

MEMBER STATE REPRESENTATIVES ON PLANT HEALTH

Chair: *Riitta Maijala*, Director of Risk Assessment, EFSA

Austria	<i>Leopold Girsch</i>	Italy	<i>Maurizio Desantis</i>
Belgium	<i>Vera Huyshauwer</i>	Latvia	<i>Ringolds Arnitis</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Maria Tomalieva</i>	Lithuania	<i>Rolandas Valatkevicius</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Vaclav Stejskal</i>	Malta	<i>Marica Gatt</i>
Denmark	<i>Christiane Scheel</i>	Netherlands	<i>Dirk-Jan van der Graag</i>
Finland	<i>Hannu Kukkonen</i>	Poland	<i>Witold Karnkowski</i>
France	<i>Nathalie Franquet</i>	Slovenia	<i>Katarina Groznik</i>
Germany	<i>Jens-Georg Unger</i>	Sweden	<i>Karin Nordin</i>
Ireland	<i>Barry Delany</i>	United Kingdom	<i>Martin Ward</i>

Observers and Invitees

Norway	<i>Elin Thingnæs Lid</i>	COPHS	<i>Svetla Kozelska</i>
Croatia	<i>Sanja Miloš</i>	PRASSIS	<i>Vittorio Rossi</i>
FYROM	<i>Marijan Atanasov</i>	EFSA's PLH Panel	<i>Michael Jeger</i>
Turkey	<i>Murat Sahin</i>	EFSA's PLH Panel	<i>Maria Navajas</i>
European Commission	<i>Harry Arijs</i>	EFSA's PLH Panel	<i>Jan Schans</i>

Staff of the European Food Safety Authority

<i>Bernhard Berger</i>	SCO	<i>Ewa Moncure</i>	COMMS
<i>Alessandro Carletti</i>	SCA	<i>Olaf Mosbach-Schulz</i>	AMU
<i>Elzbieta Ceglarska</i>	PLH	<i>Torben Nilsson</i>	SCAF
<i>Sharon Cheek</i>	PLH	<i>Tobin Robinson</i>	EMRISK
<i>Georgi Grigorov</i>	SCAF	<i>Giuseppe Stancanelli</i>	PLH
<i>Virág Katalin Ker-tész</i>	PLH	<i>Sybren Vos</i>	PLH
<i>Elena Marani</i>	SCAF		

1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Riitta Majala welcomed the Advisory Forum representatives on plant health to their second meeting and conveyed apologies from some Member States. She also welcomed and introduced EFSA's Panel members and other invitees.

2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted without changes. The representatives were reminded by the Chair of the importance of completing their Annual Declaration of Interest and advised that the AF secretariat could assist in case of any difficulties.

3 EFSA SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

Review of 2006-2009 activities

Jan Schans (former Chair and present member of EFSA's PLH Panel) presented a review of the activities of EFSA's PLH Panel since its establishment in 2006. He provided examples of opinions adopted by the Panel and drew attention to the two guidance documents developed for pest risk assessment (Guidance on evaluation of pest risk assessments and risk management options prepared to justify requests for phytosanitary measures under Council Directive 2000/29/EC, at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/1194.htm>; Guidance on a harmonised framework for pest risk assessment and the identification and evaluation of pest risk management options by EFSA, at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/1495.htm>).

Malta congratulated the Panel on its work and enquired whether Malta climatic data have been considered in the citrus black spot opinion. Germany asked how uncertainties were addressed by the Panel and whether in cases of high uncertainty a precautionary approach was taken by the Panel on recommending organisms for phytosanitary regulation aspects. Jan Schans confirmed that data from Malta were included in the citrus black spot scientific opinion and explained that uncertainties are addressed as part of the risk assessment process as outlined in the guidance document, while the decision on precautionary measures is the responsibility of risk managers. The United Kingdom saw a need to speed up the decision-making process and questioned the balance between the focus on methodology and specific risk assessments. Riitta Maijala replied that EFSA is aiming to produce both long-term methodology development and rapid replies. She emphasised the importance of the scientific quality of EFSA's advice and referred to agenda item 6 on the EC coordination on pest risk assessment. The United Kingdom commented that resources for pest risk assessment in the EU were limited, and only a few pest risk assessments are made by EFSA. Latvia drew attention to the difficulties of Member States to supply data for complex models and suggested that EFSA should assist in explaining regulatory measures of the EC to third countries. Jan Schans said that this would require a pest risk assessment for that third country.

Current activities and objectives 2009-2012

Michael Jeger (Chair of EFSA's PLH Panel) presented the current activities and future objectives of the Panel. He mentioned the role of the Panel in explaining the various forms of uncertainties for plants to the risk managers and highlighted EFSA's interest in networking with Member State risk assessors in the plant health area.

Poland suggested that EFSA should organise a workshop on how to prepare a pest risk assessment in order to share EFSA experiences. Riitta Maijala agreed to organise such a workshop in 2011. Germany said that responsiveness in emergency situations is very important. The Chair referred to agenda item 9. Upon request from the Netherlands, Mike Jeger elaborated on the ideas of the Panel on how to make use of different types of information, including pest reports. In response to a request for clarification from the United Kingdom, Mike Jeger confirmed that the Panel, in addition to evaluating pest risk assessments, on request from the European Commission prepares risk assessments for the EU territory.

4 DISCUSSION 1: ITEMS SUGGESTED BY MEMBER STATES

Poland presented its integrated information system in plant health and seed inspection.

5 DISCUSSION 2: PLANT HEALTH DATA SOURCES

Presentation of EFSA article 36 plant health project outputs and cooperation with the EC Joint Research Centre

Giuseppe Stanganelli provided an overview on plant health projects funded under article 36 of EFSA's Founding Regulation and cooperation with the EC Joint Research Centre (JRC). He also presented the JRC ClimPest project on modelling EU climate suitability for plant pests.

Vittorio Rossi (PRASSIS project coordinator) presented the PRASSIS project on a web-portal inventory of data sources for pest risk assessment for the European Community.. The structure of the inventory and examples of metadata were presented, highlighting the collaboration with the EU FP7 project PRATIQUE. The final report of PRASSIS is available on EFSA website at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/29e.htm>.

Olaf Mosbach-Schulz presented the MoPest project addressing an inventory of models for pest's epidemiology. The final report of MoPest is available on EFSA website at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/28e.htm>.

Upon request from Poland, Giuseppe Stanganelli confirmed the intention of JRC to make available the outcomes of the ClimPest project to Member States. The final deliverable of the ClimPest project, i.e. a framework application to model climate suitability of plant pests with EU interpolated climatic data, will be completed in February 2011. Riitta Maijala confirmed that also PRASSIS and MoPest would be opened after testing. The United Kingdom asked if these new tools would be useful to predict emerging risks. Olaf Mosbach-Schulz said that MoPest could be of use in taking a structured approach and choosing the appropriate existing model. Riitta Maijala concluded that these tools can reduce the time needed to address urgent issues.

Exchange of views and discussion on data collection and data sources for facilitating pest risk assessment activities in EU

Alessandro Carletti presented EFSA's work on data collection and harmonisation and said that the comparison of data from different sources is a general problem affecting data quality due to a lack of a standardised approach to data collection and formatting.

Germany said that Member States would like clarity on who should receive their data, so a discussion within the European Commission was recommended, since also the Food and Veterinary Office is collecting data. Germany also mentioned that some data gaps exist. Riitta Maijala confirmed that EFSA is liaising with the European Commission, as it is acknowledged that there are gaps in the data supporting risk assessments.

6 GUIDELINES FOR EC COORDINATION ON THE PEST RISK ANALYSIS PROCESS BY THE WORKING PARTY OF CHIEF PLANT HEALTH OFFICERS (COPHS)

Svetla Kozelska (COPHS representative) presented the guidelines for EC coordination on the pest risk analysis process agreed by the working party of COPHS. The presentation contained information as outlined in document nos. 11184/08, 17021/08 and 10828/09 available at www.consilium.europa.eu.

Riitta Maijala said that the guidelines reflects well EFSA's role in the field of plant health of which some examples had already been provided at this meeting. She commended the development of the guidelines during the Slovenian, French and Czech EU Presidencies. The United Kingdom found that the guidelines were slightly less clear due to their spread over three documents reflecting the evolution of different views. Svetla Kozelska replied that different aspects were covered by the three documents, that all three documents were valid and that the last document summarised the main content.

7 EFSA ROLE IN THE FIELD OF PLANT HEALTH

Elzbieta Ceglarska presented EFSA's role in the field of plant health under the Council Directive 2000/29/EC and thanked the Member States for their comments during the recent public consultation on the guidelines presented under agenda item 6. The types of tasks of EFSA would comprise the evaluation of pest risk assessments made by other parties, the extension of the scope of a national pest risk assessment to the whole EU territory, and the performance of new pest risk assessments. She emphasised the importance of scientific quality as well as the need for fast-track responses in emergency situations.

The United Kingdom said that an economic analysis is essential for decision-makers and asked who would do the economic analysis if EFSA will not do it. Riitta Maijala said that the question would need to be discussed between the European Commission and Member States, since economic analysis clearly falls outside EFSA's remit. The European Commission confirmed that EFSA should not perform a detailed economic impact assessment, but aspects relating to yield and quality reduction in crop production are included in a pest risk assessment. However, the economic impact assessment would depend on trade and production, so every Member State should assess this at national level, while in exceptional cases, when there are common features, the European Commission could contract out the economical analysis. Belgium enquired about cases such as *Ambrosia*, where both human health and plant health issues were relevant. Riitta Maijala referred to the terms of reference of mandates received from the European Commission. The European Commission explained that the Council Directive 2000/29/EC focus on the impact on plants and plant products, while human health risks are not covered. Germany thanked for the clarification about EFSA's role and said that EFSA's opinions provided a scientific basis to make decisions. Germany commended EFSA for addressing effects on biodiversity and strongly recommended that the European Commission would reconsider its view on invasive plants. The European Commission replied that the plant health regime had been created to protect agriculture, while it is currently under an evaluation which could include consideration of a role in environmental protection.

8 DISCUSSION 3: SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

EFSA collaboration with plant health activities

Sharon Cheek provided an overview on EFSA's scientific activities including cooperation with the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) and European research projects (such as PRATIQUE).

Upon request from Ireland, Riitta Maijala provided further information on EFSA's coordination with EPPO, highlighting the exchange of annual work programmes to avoid duplication of activities and invitation to participate in working groups and meetings as appropriate.

Member State cooperation with EFSA

Bernhard Berger presented the cooperation between EFSA and Member States, particularly the networking under article 36 and the Information Exchange Platform (IEP). He encouraged the inclusion of more institutions working in the plant health area on the article 36 list. Riitta Maijala invited the Member States to use these tools that have been developed to enhance the cooperation. Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands indicated that they would share information through the IEP. The Netherlands also asked how long time the information would remain accessible through the IEP and whether there was a link with EPPO. Bernhard Berger explained that the IEP was still in its initial phase and comments and suggestions for improvement were welcome and archiving of information would be a future consideration.

Exchange of views on scientific cooperation to facilitate data collection and information exchange and collaboration with Member States to support EU-wide pest risk assessment

Riitta Maijala informed the representatives on plant health about a proposal to consider them as a scientific network on plant health. This proposal would be tabled at the Advisory Forum meeting in November 2009. It would allow a further strengthening of the cooperation in the plant health area and the previous special Advisory Forum meetings on plant health would be replaced by network meetings which could be convened to address specific aspects of interest.

9 DISCUSSION 4: EMERGING RISKS – MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE

Current plant health challenges and EFSA activities

Jan Schans presented current plant health challenges, highlighted the need to cooperate with EPPO on identifying emerging risks and to develop guidance to Member States on pest surveillance.

Exchange of views on identifying and responding to emerging risks, methodology and coordination of pest surveillance activities

Riitta Maijala introduced this topic by referring to the opinion on emerging risks adopted by EFSA's Scientific Committee in 2007, the subsequent cooperation with Member States through an ESCO working group, and the establishment of EFSA's emerging risks unit in 2008.

Tobin Robinson provided an update on EFSA's strategy for the identification of emerging risks in the food and feed chain.

Olaf Mosbach-Schulz presented EFSA's current monitoring and surveillance in the plant health area.

Poland shared experiences on the identification of emerging risks of plant pests through rapid reporting from inspections. Latvia agreed that EFSA should take into account new pests or new situations and confirmed that the importance of the task was clear, but asked about the interaction between the Member State, the European Commission and EFSA in practise. Riitta Maijala said that information provided to EFSA would not substitute notification of the European Commission and suggested that EFSA could be involved after discussion in the Standing Committee. The European Commission agreed that EFSA role was primarily to perform longer-term evaluations and assessments. Latvia emphasised the need to react fast. Germany appreciated EFSA's horizontal approach to the identification of emerging risks, flagged that trade develops faster than statistics, and proposed a systematic approach and feedback between different organisations. Germany also saw a need for fast EU assessments of emerging risks in the plant health area, since the present approach is too dependent on the assessment performed by individual Member States and risks may differ from one Member State to another. Riitta Maijala took note of the need for consultation. Tobin Robinson confirmed that EFSA cooperates closely with other organisations on the identification of emerging risks. The United Kingdom commented on the cooperation between many different parties in surveillance, including also industry and stakeholders, and invited the European Commission to clarify the responsibilities. The United Kingdom further said that there were numerous examples of organisms that could have been stopped, if appropriate legislation had been in place. Sweden thanked EFSA for initiating the discussion on this important aspect and for clarifying EFSA's role. Riitta Maijala thanked MS for the fruitful discussion.

10 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FOLLOW-UP

Riitta Maijala concluded the meeting by thanking the EFSA PLH Panel members for their valuable work during its first three years and wishing it continuing success, acknowledging the greater clarity on its role. She then summarised the following main action points:

- 1. EFSA to provide access for the Member States to the outcomes of PRASSIS and MoPest projects on plant health.*

2. *EFSA to organise a workshop on pest risk assessment with Member States in 2011.*
3. *EFSA to establish a scientific network on plant health.*

Finally, she thanked the representatives, observers, invitees, Panel members, EFSA staff and translators for contributing to the fruitful meeting.