



EFSA
European Food Safety Authority

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**MINUTES OF THE 1st PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL
ON
FOOD ADDITIVES, FLAVOURINGS, PROCESSING AIDS
AND MATERIALS IN CONTACT WITH FOOD
Held in Brussels on 22 May 2003**

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Robert Anton, Susan Barlow (chair); Dimitrios Boskou; Laurence Castle; Riccardo Crebelli; Wolfgang Dekant; Karl-Heinz Engel; Werner Grunow (2nd vice chair); John Christian Larsen (1st vice chair); Catherine Leclercq; Wim C. Mennes; Maria Rosaria Milana; Ivonne Rietjens; Kjetil Svensson; Paul Tobback; Fidel Toldrá

Apologies

Stephen Forsythe

EFSA

Geoffrey Podger¹ (Executive Director), Christine Majewski¹, Hanne Pedersen (administrative secretary of AFC Panel), Torben Hallas-Møller (scientific co-ordinator of AFC Panel), Claudia Heppner (scientific co-ordinator of CONTAM Panel)

Commission

Michael Walsh¹, Taina Säteri (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

I. GENERAL MEETING

(MORNING SESSION IN PLENUM WITH PPR AND BIOHAZ PANELS)

The Executive Director welcomed all attending the meeting. The objective of the first part of the meeting was to brief the Members of the Scientific Panels and Committees on their role, the role of EFSA and the joint interrelationship with other European Institutions and with National Authorities. The first session was intended to provide opportunities for everyone to participate in the discussion. It was hoped that there would be strong and lively interaction between EFSA and

members of the Scientific Committee and Panels on all future dealings, as this was the way to build mutual confidence and make best use of the very considerable scientific expertise which was available.

The Executive Director stressed that EFSA wished to build on the many achievements of the previous scientific committee system. Equally EFSA had not been created to simply replicate the previous system but to make innovations in a number of key areas. In particular, there was a need:

- (i) to develop and make open and transparent the science of risk assessment. The Scientific Committee would have a particular role in this;
- (ii) to provide greater opportunity for stakeholder participation in the risk assessment process before the delivery of a final opinion;
- (iii) to provide public and realistic timeframes for work which was undertaken and, except in exceptional circumstances, to adhere to these;
- (iv) to engage, in liaison with national authorities, in more timely and meaningful communication of risk assessments. This would in itself require considerable dialogue between EFSA and its Scientific Committee and Panels
- (v) to ensure that the best expertise available was used. The Scientific Committee and Panels should be ready to form Working Groups or use other means to obtain the external expertise they needed.

In concluding his opening remarks, the Executive Director took the opportunity of congratulating the members of the Scientific Committee and Panels on their selection by the EFSA Management Board. The standard of selection had been high and many very good candidates had unfortunately had to be disappointed, although it was hoped there might be opportunities for them to participate in Working Groups. EFSA staff very much looked forward to working with and supporting those present.

The participants were then given practical information on the internal rules of procedures (by Christine Majewski) and on the role of the Interface Unit of the Commission (by Michael Walsh).

II. 1ST PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON FOOD ADDITIVES, FLAVOURINGS, PROCESSING AIDS AND MATERIALS IN CONTACT WITH FOOD (AFC) (AFTERNOON SESSION)

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The scientific co-ordinator welcomed all the participants and congratulated the panel members with their nomination on the panel. All members were present, except for one member whose apologies for absence had been received.

¹ Attending morning session only

2. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The members were invited to submit all documents in relation to declarations on confidentiality, commitment of independence and annual declaration of interest to the administrative secretary during the meeting.

The mandate of the panel was briefly presented by the scientific co-ordinator: The Scientific Panel will be responsible for providing the scientific opinions of the Authority, within its own sphere of competence. Under Article 18 of the Decision concerning the establishment and operations of the Scientific Committees and Panels, adopted by the Authority's Management Board on 17.10.2002, the mandate of the Panel is set out as follows: "Safety in use of food additives, flavourings, processing aids and materials in contact with food; associated subjects concerning the safety of other deliberately added substances to food and questions related to the safety of processes.

3. ROUND TABLE INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

Members as well as EFSA and Commission representatives were invited to introduce themselves. A short resume of the CV of the panel members was included in the documentation package. These CV's will be placed on the EFSA website.

4. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRS

Susan Barlow was elected chairman and John C. Larsen and Werner Grunow first and second vice-chairmen respectively

5. WORKING PROGRAMME

Draft Working Programme was briefly presented.

The draft Working Programme consists of questions from the Commission addressed previously to the Scientific Committee on Food (SCF) but which had not been completed during its mandate or which the SCF had not yet addressed at all. The panel was informed that EFSA had received a request to evaluate the use of nitrite and nitrate in meat products. As the key questions were related to microbiological safety it had been decided to allocate the question to the Biohazard Panel, but the participation from the AFC panel would be required in the working group, which had to be established.

A detailed discussion of the programme was deferred to a later meeting.

6. ORGANISATION OF WORKING GROUPS

Following working groups were established and chair elected:

Food Additives. Chair John C. Larsen

Flavourings. Chair Karl-Heinz Engel

Food Contact Materials. Chair Paul Tobback

The Panel was informed that two ad hoc working groups had been arranged on 4-6 June and 18 June to discuss Food Contact Materials and Nutrient Sources respectively. The Panel recognised that that these meetings fell well within the mandates of the Working Groups on Additives and on Food Contact Materials and endorsed the meetings.

7. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2003

Next plenary meetings of the AFC Panel are scheduled for 9 July, 30 September-1 October and 9-10 December 2003. The meeting dates for 2004 should be discussed in the September Plenary.

Following dates were decided for the first meetings of the working groups:

Food Contact Materials: 4-6 June; Additives: 10 July; Flavourings 18-19 September

8. MISCELLANEOUS

The issues of improved ways of working, use of guidelines and organisation of work were mentioned but due to lack of time the discussion was postponed to a future meeting.