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Minutes of meeting



European Food Safety Authority

Minutes

**TENTH MEETING OF THE
ADVISORY FORUM WORKING GROUP ON COMMUNICATIONS**

EFSA, PARMA (ITALY)

2 FEBRUARY 2006

Members of the Advisory Forum Working Group on Communications (in alphabetical order by country)

Chair: *VAN GEEST Irene*, Acting Communications Director, EFSA

Cyprus	<i>ELEFThERIADOU Mary</i>
Czech Republic	<i>ZUZANKOVA Klara</i>
European Commission	<i>BENASSI Marie-Paule</i>
Finland	<i>POHJANPALO Marja</i>
Germany	<i>SCHAUZU Marianna</i>
Greece	<i>KIOKIAS Sotirios</i>
Hungary	<i>SZEGEDI Eva</i>
Ireland	<i>ANDERSON Wayne</i>
Poland	<i>OSMAK Sylwia</i>
Portugal	<i>MIRANDA Ana</i>
Slovak Republic	<i>CHUDY Martin</i>
Sweden	<i>SÖRENSON Jerker</i>
United Kingdom	<i>TALBOT Karen</i>

Observers and Invitees of the acting Communications Director:

Denmark	<i>BENDER Charlotte</i>
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Gallup Europe	<i>DELANEY Niahm</i>
Norway	<i>SOLEM Knut Albert</i>
Romania	<i>SIMIONESCU Luminita Raluca</i>

Staff of the European Food Safety Authority (in alphabetical order)

<i>BLOEMENDAL Jan</i>	<i>FUGA Giovanni</i>
<i>BOL Stephen</i>	<i>JONES Alun Keith</i>
<i>DE LUCA Lucia</i>	<i>SONDERMANN Carola</i>
<i>FANTINI Alessandra</i>	<i>WEATHERLEY Sarah</i>

Apologies (in alphabetical order by country)

Austria	<i>WAWSCHINEK Oskar</i>
Belgium	<i>HOUBAERT Pascal</i>
Bulgaria	<i>VOYNOVA Tsvetanka</i>
Denmark	<i>CHRISTENSEN Gudrun</i>
France	<i>LEYDET Valérie</i>
Italy	<i>AQUILI Massimo</i>
Latvia	<i>SANTARE Dace</i>
Luxembourg	<i>HAU Patrick</i>
Netherlands	<i>LIJDSMAN Annette</i>
Spain	<i>MARTIN Héctor Alonso</i>

1. Introduction and adoption of agenda by Irene van Geest

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- 1.1 Irene van Geest replaced the Chair, Anne-Laure Gassin, absent due to injuries sustained while skiing. Irene van Geest welcomed the attendees to the meeting. She also introduced the new member Mary Eleftheriadou from Cyprus, Eva Szegedi, Hungary, who will replace Eszther Forgács who left her post, Marianna Schauzu, Klara Zuzankova, and Luminita Raluca Simionescu representing respectively Germany, Czech Republic, and Romania for this meeting. Niamh Delaney, from Gallup Europe, joined the group to give a presentation regarding the Eurobarometer survey.

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1.2 The agenda of the meeting was slightly changed to take into account the absence of Anne-Laure Gassin. The new Extranet system is presented after point 4 by Sarah Weatherley and Stephen Bol. The discussions on the Eurobarometer report will not see the contribution of Anne-Laure Gassin, while the discussion on EFSA Communications strategy was moved to the next meeting. The agenda was accepted.

2. Minutes of the meeting 13 10 05 and matters arising

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2.1 The minutes were adopted and will be published on the web.

3. Update by Irene van Geest on EFSA and communications activities

3.1 EFSA had various activities with Stakeholders in the past months such as the Colloque on 9/10 November in Parma where issues such as the Evaluation Report, Communications, fees and transparency were discussed, while the Stakeholder Platform elected its own Chair and is planning its next meeting on 9 March.

3.2 EFSA's Management Board will designate EFSA's new Executive Director on 10 February. A press release will announce the decision of the Board. The Board decided on the launch of a public consultation on the evaluation of EFSA carried out by an external party. The report, published on EFSA's website is open for comments until end of February.

3.3 EFSA expressed its concern about budget cuts proposed by the European Council in December. The approval of such a proposal by the European Parliament could result in a drastic reduction in the growth of the Authority in the period 2007-2013.

3.4 Since the last meeting of the working group, EFSA Communications department issued six press releases on corporate issues and ten on scientific issues, e.g. ITX, EFSA*news* number 9 and 10 were published. Scientific publication on EFSA's work on tolerable upper intake levels for vitamins and minerals and the 2004 Zoonoses Report will be available in printed version and CD-Rom.

4. Key points arising from the Advisory Forum meeting in London by Jan Bloemendal (24-25.11.05)

4.1 Jan Bloemendal, International and Institutional Affairs, EFSA, highlighted key issues discussed at the last Advisory Forum meeting held in London on 24-25 November 2005.

4.2 Regarding Avian Flu, AFSSA and EFSA informed the Forum about the scientific work done or planned. The communications aspects were also discussed and the Forum asked the working group on Communications (AFCWG) for an in-depth study of the current communications experiences to learn lessons for future similar cases.

4.3 The Forum was asked to ensure wide distribution of the recently-issued call for expression of interest in membership of EFSA Scientific Committee and Panels within

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their national scientific communities. In particular new Member States were asked to try and encourage scientists to apply. Closing date for application is 17 February 2006.

5 The use of the new Extranet by Sarah Weatherley and Stephen Bol

- 5.1 The structure of the new Extranet, to be used by members of the EFSA Advisory Forum as well as by members of the AFCWG was explained by Sarah Weatherley. She also presented a document, 'Quick guide to the AFCWG Extranet' which provides users with step-by-step instructions on how to view and add information to the system. Stephen Bol from EFSA's IT department responded to technical questions on the system.

6 Eurobarometer on risk perception

a. Presentation of the results by Niamh Delaney, EOS Gallup Europe

6.a.1 Niamh Delaney presented the main findings of the Eurobarometer survey on risk issues, carried out by EOS Gallup Europe. She also answered questions related to the methodology used in the survey.

b. Information by Marie-Paule Benassi

6.b.1 Marie-Paule Benassi, explained that DG Sanco on 7 February would issue a Press Release at the Midday Briefing and a short memo. She also answered some questions raised by the members regarding aspects of the survey.

c. Presentation of EFSA's communications approach by Lucia de Luca

6.c.1 Lucia de Luca shared with the members the content of the embargoed Press Release, which highlights the major results of the survey with regard to food risks. The press release is to be distributed on 7 February in four languages as well as to be published on EFSA website together with the full copy of the Report and other summaries. Members were asked to consider the press release and to attract the attention of those national media which could be interested.

6.c.2 The Eurobarometer gives interesting information at both the European level and the national level, for this reason Irene van Geest suggested that countries which have conducted consumer research in this field organize press briefings or meetings with experts on this issue and that EFSA could contribute.

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7 Communications: information exchange and forward planning:

a. Key country issues regarding risk communications (country templates to be pre-circulated by members)

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- 7.a.1 Members of the group presented the key issue on their national agendas; a session of questions and answers followed.

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b. EFSA: overview of upcoming scientific/communications issues by Carola Sondermann and Alun Jones

- 7.b.1 Carola Sondermann presented an overview of the chronology and EFSA's communications activities as regards the substance ITX (Isopropylthioxanthone) since September 2005. ITX is used as a photo initiator in printing inks for certain packaging materials; it has been found in foods including infant formula.
- 7.b.2 Alun Jones explained EFSA's communications approach and activities regarding the Authority's scientific assessment on avian flue. An exchange of views with the members followed.
- 7.b.3 EFSA's scientific press officers gave an overview of upcoming scientific issues for which further communications activities are considered. In particular, the members were most interested in EFSA's communications activities on aspartame, on Foot and Mouth Disease, and on EFSA's technical meeting with NGOs on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).

8. Any other business

- 8.1 No other points were raised and the Chair closed the meeting at 15.00.