

## Minutes

### 29<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM WORKING GROUP ON COMMUNICATIONS

VIENNA (AUSTRIA), 1-2 DECEMBER 2010

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY FORUM WORKING GROUP ON COMMUNICATIONS:

**Chair:** GASSIN Anne-Laure, Communications Director

**Members:**

Austria	PUBLIG Elisabeth	Italy	TARANTO Mirella
Austria	URL Bernard	Ireland	RYDER Jane
Austria	GROSSGUT Roland	Luxembourg	HAU Patrick
Austria	STEINWIDER Hans	Norway	BJERKÅS Astrid
Belgium	CASSART Pierre	Poland	WISNIEWSKA Iwona
Cyprus	PARTASSIDES Dora	Portugal	SEABRA Maria João
Czech Republic	BALGA Josef	Slovak Republic	HANZALIKOVA Martina
Denmark	KORNHOLT Heidi	Slovenia	VRDELJA Mitja
Estonia	PRIISALU Piret	Spain	GARCÍA GOMEZ Juan Julian
France	THOMANN Carole	Sweden	GUSTAFSSON Karin
Germany	FIACK Suzan	The Netherlands	KRIKKEN Chris
Hungary	CSEH Júlia	United Kingdom	Collis Terence

**Observers:**

European Commission	SOMOGYI Beata	Croatia	MIKRUT Sara
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**European Food Safety Authority Staff:**

ADAMOVA Monika	GASSIN Anne-Laure	TESTA Elena
AVANZINI Francesca	NILSSON Torben	VAN DE VYVER Stijn (via conference call)
BULLER Christoph	SMILLIE Laura	



**Apologies:**

Bulgaria	PCHELINSKA Mariela	Lithuania	NALIVAIKIENE Elena
Finland	LAESLEHTO Marja	Romania	MONEA Alina-Ioana
Greece	TSIGARIDA Eirini	Turkey	AYDIN Gokalp
FYROM	JONOVSKA Katerina		

**DAY 1: 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2010 - 14H00 – 17H30**

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Anne-Laure Gassin opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and thanking the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES) for hosting the event. Then she gave the floor to Bernard Url, Director of AGES and EFSA Management Board member, who in his welcome speech highlighted the importance of cooperation in food safety and the role of EFSA in the EU food safety system. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked Bernard Url for the supportive words and mentioned that AGES' contribution to the EU food safety has been significant. She also complimented the Austrian Agency on its informative video.

- 1.1 She then welcomed Beata Somogyi, the new observer from the European Commission. Anne-Laure Gassin also mentioned that apologies were received from Bulgaria, Greece, Finland, Lithuania, Romania, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

**2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

(Doc AF Comm WG 1 12 10 – 1)

- 2.1. She thanked the members who had already filled in their Declarations of Interests and reminded the remaining few that they should complete the electronic form as soon as possible. As no additional items were indicated by the members, the agenda was adopted as proposed.

**3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 6-7 OCTOBER AND MATTERS ARISING**

(Doc AF Comm WG 1 12 10 – 2)

- 3.1. Anne-Laure Gassin asked the members to provide their feedback on the minutes of the last meeting. They were adopted with minor comments. She informed the group that the approved minutes will be published on the Extranet and the EFSA website early next week. (*done on 8 December*)



She then outlined the matters arising from the AFCWG meeting in Brussels that would be discussed with the group during the day.

#### **4. KEY POINTS ARISING FROM THE ADVISORY FORUM MEETING (25-26 NOV, BRUSSELS)**

- 4.1. Torben Nilsson summarised the outcome of the Advisory Forum meeting in Brussels, mentioning among other items the discussion on the medium-term planning for scientific cooperation between EFSA and Member States. He pointed out that a summary document will be available in January 2011. He informed the group that the Advisory Forum expressed strong support for the International Risk Communications conference planned to take place in autumn 2011. The Advisory Forum also discussed possible future topics for strategic discussion which include: Novel foods, Food safety research funding in Europe, Data collection, Hazard database (chemical and biological) and Alternative risk assessment approaches.
- 4.2. Torben Nilsson then added that the Eurobarometer survey findings provided a lot of interesting data from both the EU and national perspective. He also made reference to discussions of the Advisory Forum on the independence of risk assessment advice and the related issue of quality of science, acknowledging that the group would further discuss this issue. EFSA's cooperation with Member States and taking a more thematic approach to its communications was discussed, particularly in the area of Zoonoses.
- 4.3. In addition, Torben Nilsson updated the group on the exchange of views with DG Research on research priorities. The Member States' proposals were shared with DG Research; a strong focus was placed on research and innovation (2020 Strategy). The Advisory Forum plans to finalise the proposals, highlight 3-4 key priorities that will be then submitted to the DG Research together with all proposals collected from the Member States. Torben Nilsson also reported on the work the Scientific Committee (SC) is undertaking on the harmonisation of risk assessment terminology and expressed the Advisory Forum's support for the development of the Working Group's lexicon initiative. He mentioned that a new Scientific Committee network on the harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies is to be established in close cooperation with Member States.
- 4.4. Lastly, Torben Nilsson reported on the issues raised by Member States. France presented a methodology for the prioritisation of animal diseases and outlined the importance of this work for EFSA. Belgium provided feedback from the international round table on the role of science in food policy (conference organised by the Belgian Presidency of the European Union on 20 October 2010 in Brussels); a report will be available soon. Denmark reported on allergic reactions caused by 'easy to bake' products with hydrolysed wheat protein and the UK highlighted the media attention around cloned



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animals following the publication of the FSA Advisory Committee's opinion on food safety aspects which concurs with the EFSA opinion on cloned animals.

## **5. INDEPENDENCE IN RISK COMMUNICATIONS – UPDATE ON SURVEY AND AF DISCUSSION**

- 5.1. Laura Smillie briefly introduced the topic and thanked the members for completing the online survey on independence-related communications activities. She informed the group that the results of the survey (completed by 17 AFCWG members) and the work carried out to date by the small task force comprising EFSA, France, Norway and the UK (set up to reflect on a possible strategy to further promote/communicate on the independence of risk assessment advice) were presented at the last Advisory Forum meeting.
- 5.2. The Advisory Forum welcomed the initiative and found the results very interesting and useful. The survey highlighted that different countries experience different degrees of pressure on the topic of independence. Laura Smillie provided an overview of the key survey findings. She mentioned that the main communication tools used by Member States to convey independence messages are their websites and annual report(s). She also pointed out that over a half of Member States has general information about independence posted on their website. In this regard, members were reminded that the Independence Key Topic on EFSA's website may be used and adapted by them accordingly and/or posted on the Focal Point websites.
- 5.3. Furthermore, Laura Smillie mentioned recent EFSA initiatives, among the most recent ones she highlighted an EFSA's Executive Director Commentary on "Scientific integrity & independence" that was published in EFSA's EP newsletter for MEPs, inserted in the CIAA conference pack and is planned to be placed in some selected media. She informed the members that it will be made available for them on the Extranet for further outreach.
- 5.4. She concluded by highlighting proactive communication initiatives on independence as outlined in the Authority's revised communications strategy:
  - Strengthening cooperation with Member States on independence of scientific advice/EFSA's work
  - Promoting understanding of best practices in science and the risk assessment process
  - Researching the relationship between independence, openness & transparency in collaboration with partners (e.g. AF, DG RTD) to enhance understanding of stakeholder perception
- 5.5. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked Laura Smillie for a very interesting presentation and opened up the debate. Sweden pointed out that it has been a good idea to provide Member States

with direct links to EFSA's website. This allows members to highlight relevant information meeting specific market needs. The Swedish member also explained that when appropriate, the information is also translated. This has two advantages; it highlights the national organisation's European cooperation and enhances EFSA's visibility in the Member States. Norway highlighted that the survey did not mention who questioned EFSA's independence and suggested that this information should be included. Anne-Laure Gassin pointed out that the independence of science is a broader societal debate and suggested that the transparency/independence of science become a standing agenda item at the AFCWG meetings. Laura Smillie concluded that the created task force would continue its work and will keep the members posted on the progress made.

***Action 1:** Transparency/Independence of science: A standing agenda item at the AFCWG meetings. Task force would continue its work.*

***Action 2:** EFSA to post on the Extranet EFSA's Executive Director Commentary on Independence (done).*

***Action 3:** EFSA's webpage on Independence – members are reminded that they are welcome to use and adapt this content as appropriate.*

## **6. COMMUNICATING RISK – JOURNALIST'S PERSPECTIVE**

- 6.1. Wolfgang Wagner, an experienced correspondent from Austrian Press Agency (APA) reporting on science and health-related issues, talked about the challenges media encounter when writing for tight deadlines (press agency) and having to translate scientific language into laymen's terms. He reported on how reporting has changed in the recent years, touching on global trends and then elaborating more on risk communications.
- 6.2. He mentioned different channels and sources of information available to media, pointing out what media would like to get but what they seldom receive, e.g. immediate information, information based on expert knowledge, basic information, background information, pictures/graphics/images. He also pointed out the importance of building trust on sound/correct data and why communicators should develop good media relations.
- 6.3. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked Wolfgang Wagner for his very interesting presentation and opened up the floor for questions. A fruitful discussion followed addressing: timely responses to urgent media enquires; reporting scientific uncertainty; the evolution of scientific opinions over time in a crisis situation; selection of experts by the media; media's attitude towards different stakeholder groups including General practitioners, NGOs and government / authorities.



## 7. CO-OPERATION IN COMMUNICATIONS

- 7.1. Anne-Laure Gassin updated the group on EFSA's medium-term planning, namely in risk communications. She reminded the members that promoting coherence in risk communications is a key priority area for EFSA requiring close cooperation and networking between EU Member States and EFSA and in this regard highlighted the role of the Advisory Forum Communications Working Group. Cooperation has been strengthened through: a proactive exchange and liaison on key issues (e.g. cloning, GMOs, food colours, BPA); exchange of information on key and emerging media issues in Member States; organisation of joint events and publications support; and by the outreach of focal points at national level (e.g. good practice guide for focal point website management).
- 7.2. Then Anne-Laure Gassin highlighted ongoing and future initiatives, such as the risk communications guidelines, the forward planning communications calendar, as well as further opportunities to communicate on the Eurobarometer findings on food-related risks. She highlighted that EFSA's revised communications strategy (2010-2013) will provide an opportunity to strengthen public outreach in cooperation with Member States (e.g. cooperation in communications in key thematic areas), sharing ideas/views on ways to enhance communications in a variety of areas.
- 7.3. Furthermore, Anne-Laure Gassin informed the members that the Advisory Forum strongly supported the organisation of a joint EFSA – Advisory Forum risk communications conference on food-related issues, planned to be launched in October 2011 and subsequently held every 3 years. The aim is to share best practice on risk communications related to the food chain, learn about effective and efficient communication overall and foster networking and collaboration. Over time, the conference would become the international reference for communications professionals seeking access to the most recent thinking and experiences in risk communications. She highlighted that the programme will be split in two parts: 1) for decision makers and communication practitioners and 2) for communications practitioners.
- 7.4. During the subsequent debate members supported the idea of organising the international risk communications conference. They were asked to comment on the draft programme. Roland Grossgut from AGES proposed to include in the agenda the outcome of the independence of scientific advice debate and the topic of transparency. Anne-Laure Gassin indicated that a related issue of building trust is also on the agenda. The UK proposed the inclusion of the consumers' perspective/voice in the programme. It has been agreed that EFSA will send the members the draft agenda for their further comments and confirm the date of the conference. EFSA will also provide more information on the speakers committee that will be established shortly and contact 2-3 AFCWG members

regarding their participation in the speakers committee. However, all members were asked to propose good speakers from their Member States and to inform EFSA about similar conferences on a national level to benefit from learning and to avoid any potential clashes.

- 7.5. Monika Adamova updated the group on EFSA's communication activities with Member States (including FPs) and specifically focused on the results relating to communications on the 2010 Eurobarometer (EB) on food-related risks. She mentioned the creation of a dedicated page on EFSA's website that contained the EB report and its summary as well as the EFSA press release and national factsheets in 23 EU languages. She also pointed out that printed copies of the report, the summary and the factsheets will be provided shortly to FPs and AFCWG members for further dissemination. She thanked the 17 AFCWG members for helping EFSA to promote the results of the EB survey by posting information on their websites and creating a link to EFSA's webpage on EB. Then Monika Adamova informed the members that the EB findings had generated extensive media coverage in the EU and beyond. It has been agreed that EFSA will share with the group a media coverage analysis report (not the articles for copyright reasons). Anne-Laure Gassin mentioned that EFSA is pursuing a further analysis of the EB results that will be prepared by a Professor from the London School of Economics. Lastly, Monika Adamova reported on the ongoing FP activities and reminded the AFCWG members to coordinate their activities with FPs.
- 7.6. During the subsequent discussion the AFCWG members commented that they found the EB survey very interesting and useful and many of them have already benefited from the findings. They were particularly grateful for the different language versions made available. The members reported on their communications activities, e.g. Spain organised a press conference, and some members highlighted that the EB results received a lot of media coverage in their Member States, different angles were picked up by different media.
- 7.7. Anne-Laure Gassin informed the group that the EB survey received a positive feedback from the AF and mentioned that the generic EB presentation will be posted on the Extranet for members to adapt and to use to present the Eurobarometer results in their Member States. Rolland Grossgut from AGES pointed out that the Advisory Forum requested the AFCWG to draft a report analysing the national data based on the Eurobarometer findings. It has been agreed that EFSA will draft a questionnaire to help Member States to prepare their analysis of national data. Members will provide EFSA with their national reports before the next meeting in March and EFSA will then present an overview of the reports at the June AFCWG meeting.

- 7.8. Christoph Buller updated the group on the future FP workshop planned to be organised in May 2011. The aim of the event is to identify the most useful EFSA's and Focal Points' communication tools, if they can be improved and if new tools would be desired. This will then lead to a set of communication tools (toolbox) available for FPs. EFSA will send a questionnaire to all FPs, helping them to prepare feedback on their needs/opportunities with respect to communications.
- 7.9. Lastly, Christoph Buller presented the EFSA video "EFSA explains risk assessment of food and feed". He informed the members that they are welcome to adapt and use the video, translate it and post it on their websites. For this purpose the raw data files and the transcript of the video will be posted on the Extranet in EN, FR, DE, IT for members to translate and use accordingly. Anne-Laure Gassin pointed out that EFSA developed this video to better explain what is risk assessment and EFSA's role in this regard. Austria suggested creating a database where footage from EFSA and other EU Agencies would be available to Member States. Luxembourg asked whether it was possible for Member States to have access to EFSA's image database. Christoph Buller confirmed that he will look into the possibility of sharing the footage and also providing the Member States with access to EFSA's image database. EFSA will also provide the script of the video so that members may translate for their own use.

***Action 4:** International risk communications conference: EFSA to provide more information to AFCWG members on Speakers Committee + send them the draft agenda for their comments + provide an exact date of the conference.*

***Action 5:** EFSA to contact 1-2 AFCWG members regarding their participation in the Speakers Committee.*

***Action 6:** Members to propose good speakers from their Member States for the conference programme.*

***Action 7:** Members to inform EFSA about similar conferences on national level to benefit from learning and to avoid any potential clashes.*

***Action 8:** Results of 2010 Eurobarometer study: EFSA to share with the AFCWG the media coverage analysis report (not the articles for copyright reasons).*

***Action 9:** EFSA to post on the Extranet the generic Eurobarometer presentation for members to adapt and to use to present the Eurobarometer results in their Member States. (done)*

***Action 10:** At the request of Advisory Forum, AFCWG to provide EFSA with a report analysing national data (Eurobarometer findings).*

***Action 11:** EFSA to draft a Questionnaire to help Member States to prepare their analysis of national data.*

***Action 12:** EFSA to present an overview of the reports at the June AFCWG meeting.*

***Action 13:** EFSA to keep AFCWG updated on the Questionnaire for the Focal Points on the needs/opportunities of FPs with respect to communications.*



*Action 14: EFSA video “EFSA explains risk assessment of food and feed”: Raw data files to be posted on the Extranet.*

*Action 15: The script of the video to be posted on the Extranet in EN, FR, DE, IT for members to translate and use accordingly.*

*Action 16: EFSA image database: EFSA to provide access to AFCWG to the EFSA image database.*

## **8. DG RESEARCH PRIORITIES**

8.1. EFSA presented at the last Advisory Forum meeting in Brussels a consolidated proposal on the Authority’s research priorities (discussed at the meeting with DG RTD). Laura Smillie provided an update on two projects that would likely be of specific interest to group members:

- FoodRisC project (Evaluating perceptions and communication of food risks & benefits across Europe) <http://www.eufic.org/article/en/rid/foodris/>
- EatWell project (project aims to provide Member States with best practice guidelines to develop appropriate policy interventions that will encourage healthy eating across Europe) <http://www.eatwellproject.eu/en/>

8.2. It has been agreed that learnings from the FoodRisC project, in particular the use of social media in food safety and risk communications guidelines will be shared with the AFCWG when projects results will be available in 2011.

*Action 17: DG Research - FoodRisC project: Learning from this project, i.e. use of social media in food safety and risk communications guidelines will be shared with the AFCWG when projects results available.*

## **DAY 2 – 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010 – 09H00 - 12H30**

### **9. FOLLOW UP OF THE DISCUSSIONS ON RISK COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

9.1. Laura Smillie informed the group that all comments from the last meeting were integrated in the document. She proposed to go through the document and review namely the chapters on the principles guiding good risk communication, principles in practise, tools and channels, case studies, and check lists (included in the guidelines, following the discussion at the last meeting). She also mentioned that the aim is to finalise the guidelines by the next meeting in March 2011 and use them as a reference document for the International Risk Communications conference.

- 9.2. During the subsequent discussions many Member States made valuable contributions to the development of the guideline document. Suggestions included:
- More clearly defining the purpose of the document in the introductory section.
  - Include reference to emerging risks and use in a crisis in the introductory section.
  - The inclusion of lessons learned at the end of each case study.
  - Cross-referencing the best practice case studies throughout the main document.
  - The group agreed that it was useful to state when it is/is not appropriate to use certain communication tools.
  - The section on communication tools should include advice on the use of social media.
  - It was agreed that case studies should be transferred into the summary template for inclusion in the main guideline document and that the full texts should be appended.
  - Groups' members felt that this should be a living document and revisited on a regular basis.
- 9.3. Laura Smillie thanked the member for their feedback and suggested that EFSA will present the final draft of the guidelines document at the next meeting in March 2011. The revised version of the guidelines will be sent to the members before the next meeting for their comments. Following the feedback from the members, EFSA will provide the group with the final version of the guidelines in order to support an active discussion at the meeting.

***Action 18:** EFSA to send a revised version of the Risk Communications guidelines to members for comments by 31 January 2011. Members to provide comments before the next meeting in March. A final version of the Risk Communications guidelines to be shared with the AFCWG prior to the meeting and then presented at the next meeting in March 2011.*

## **10. "KEY TOPICS"**

- 10.1. Anne-Laure Gassin informed the group that Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Spain and the Netherlands sent their key country issues (all available on the Extranet) and then gave the floor to Carole Thomann who presented an ANSES report assessing the risks related to dietary weight-loss practices. She pointed out that there was no specific study assessing and monitoring of weight-loss diets in the French population. A wide variety of weight-loss diets were analysed and three main types of health risks identified: bone and muscle mass; kidney and liver function; and disturbances to the body's energy metabolism and eating behaviour (often the cause of a vicious circle of weight regain). The Agency concluded that weight-loss treatment must be provided under the supervision of a medical doctor or dietician. Regarding communications activities, ANSES presented the report to the French Ministry of Health, relevant stakeholders and

the media. They also created a dedicated webpage and produced a press release and press kit. ANSES received 132 media requests and 260 articles were published in the French media. ANSES is currently drafting an opinion in response to the initial solicited request from 2009. Carole Thomann asked the members if they could inform her whether similar research has been carried out in their Member States. It has been agreed the further follow up will be done bilaterally.

- 10.2. Julia Cseh reported on the eco disaster - burst of toxic sludge in Hungary. She provided an overview of what became Hungary's largest ecological disaster and the subsequent measures taken by the Hungarian Authorities. Communications activities were coordinated at the highest national level (disaster category). All parties involved provided direct communication; regular comprehensive information was given to the public on what to do. She concluded by saying that an effective Disaster Situation Plan both at company and governmental level is essential in taking appropriate measures, in mobilising resources and effective communication in time. And lastly, true empathy in communication is a must to build trust and moderate bitterness in situations when people have lost everything they have spent their lives working on.
- 10.3. Chris Krikken from the Netherlands presented a report carried out by the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (VWA) investigating the possible health effects of nano-silica particles in food. He explained that Silica (E551), also known as silicon dioxide, is used as an anti-caking agent in dried food, like ready made meals, instant soups, and skimmed milk powder. He explained that the VWA carried out initial research since little is known about the health effects of nano-silica particle intake. The study concluded that further research is needed to establish whether or not nano-silica particles are soluble or insoluble. This study will be published in 2011 and Chris Krikken will inform AFCWG members about the final results and further communications activities. Regarding media relations, Chris Krikken pointed out that despite the research report not yet being finalised, transparency was the main rationale to write a press release announcing the results of the on-going study. Several specialised online publications and a TV channel covered the topic.
- 10.4. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked the members for very interesting presentations and opened up the floor for discussion. Torben Nilsson pointed out that EFSA's Scientific Committee will issue a guidance document for the assessment of nano particles in food and feed in April 2011 and suggested that VWA keeps in touch with EFSA to work in parallel. Germany asked whether EFSA was aware of a high level of nano silica in food. Laura Smillie pointed out that this was a topic discussed at the International nanotechnology symposium held in Brussels in November 2010. Christoph Buller said that the members might be interested in the outcome of a conference on nanotechnologies organised by BfR. Germany pointed out that lots of relevant information on risk perception regarding

nanotechnology can be found on the BfR website. Austria mentioned that it is important that risk communications are well thought through taking into account uncertainties and information gaps.

- 10.5. It has been agreed that Nanotechnology will be an Agenda topic at the next AFCWG meeting in March. A task force consisting of members from the Netherlands, Germany, France and Austria will assist in the preparation of the agenda and discussion points.
- 10.6. Laura Smillie then briefed the members on the first meeting of the Emerging Risks Exchange Network (EREN) held in Parma on 16-17 November 2010. Member States appointed appropriate representatives to address this broad and challenging area. She explained that there is a willingness to share information, methodologies and experiences. Signals of potential emerging risks identified through EFSA's process will be shared with the network, as will issues raised through the Advisory Forum. Similarly, Member States will have the opportunity to share issues coming from their own countries. The next meeting will be held in February, and it is anticipated to hold at least three meetings per year of this network. EFSA's Head of Emerging Risk Unit will attend the next meeting in March to update the AFCWG on the Unit's activities and explain in more detail the role of the network.

***Action 19:** ANSES report assessing the risks related to dietary weight-loss practices: Members to inform Carole Thomann about similar research carried out in their Member States.*

***Action 20:** Nanotechnology: Agenda topic at the next AFCWG meeting in March.*

***Action 21:** Task force on nanotechnology consisting of members from NL, DE, FR and AT to prepare the agenda and discussion.*

***Action 22:** Dutch case study – presence and risks of nanosilica in food products: Chris Krikken to inform AFCWG about the final results of the assessment by VWA and related communications activities.*

***Action 23:** Emerging Risks Network: EFSA's Head of Emerging Risk Unit to attend the next meeting in March to update the AFCWG on the Unit's activities and explain the role of the network.*

## **11. COMMUNICATIONS: INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND FORWARD PLANNING**

- 11.1. Anne-Laure Gassin provided an overview of upcoming scientific issues for which future communications are foreseen. These included: independence of scientific advice; a technical meeting on the scientific requirements for health claims related to gut and immune function; safety of use of betacarotene for heavy smokers; revised exposure assessment of steviol glycosides (stevia); and report on the use of isoflavones in food supplements for women. Furthermore, she reported on the evaluation of possible health

- risks for children related to the presence of nitrates in vegetables; further work on food colours; EFSA's statement on cadmium; recycled plastic; EFSA's revision of guidance for assessing nanotechnologies in the food and feed area; food irradiation; and pest risk analysis of phytophthora ramorum. Other topics for which communication is planned included: salmonella in live broilers and broiler meat – Part B; animal transport; review of the quantitative risk assessment of BSE risk in meat and bone meal derived from mammals; and EFSA/ECDC joint scientific opinion on a possible link between TSEs in animals and humans. Anne-Laure Gassin then informed the group that Zoonoses will be an agenda topic at the next AFCWG meeting in March to discuss an integrated communications approach and receive insights from Member States.
- 11.2. Laura Smillie then reminded the group that the forward planning calendar available on the Extranet is updated every Friday in the early afternoon and reiterated that its purpose is to share information on EFSA's and Member States' upcoming scientific issues/events and related communication activities. She invited all members to update the calendar regularly.
- 11.3. Christoph Buller provided an overview of recent and upcoming corporate and scientific events and invited members to share ideas and provide suggestions for future joint events. Among others, he mentioned: the European Parliament Exhibition (Brussels, 31 Jan-4 Feb 2011) and Stakeholder workshop on non-plastic food contact materials (Milan, 9-10 March 2011).
- 11.4. Christoph Buller then updated the group on EFSA's recently published and upcoming publications. Among others, he mentioned: EFSA in Focus 8, EFSAnews 23, Moving Together 7 and the Eurobarometer Report and Summary 2010. He also informed the group about the Expert compensation guide (to be posted on the Extranet); Antimicrobial Resistance 2004-2007 and EFSA Scientific Colloquium Summary Report 14 on Food. Christoph Buller informed the members that a small survey will follow in Jan/Feb to get members feedback on their use of EFSA's multilingual publications.
- 11.5. Karin Gustafsson from Sweden presented the social media strategy, drafted by the Swedish National Food Administration (NFA) due to a high popularity and a wide use of social media in Sweden. She pointed out that there was a need to add social media to the channels for communication and interaction with their target groups. The Administration wanted to take part in discussions and thus be aware of the target groups' need and knowledge and lastly to get a better rank among search engines. She highlighted that when drafting a policy and strategy on social media, it is important to ask the following questions: What purpose do we have of being there? What kind of obligations do we have? How are we supposed to act? Who will represent us? Through the use of social media, how do we contribute to attaining organisational goals? To date the NFA staff has

become involved in blogging and have created a facebook page on dietary advice to help pregnant and breastfeeding women. In a week 300 people joined the discussion on Facebook. The work will be evaluated after 4 months and Karin Gustafsson proposed to update the group at the meeting in June 2011. She concluded that having the social media strategy and policy in place facilitated the NFA's involvement in social media.

- 11.6. Norway informed the group that their social media strategy is being finalised and will be presented to the group when available. It has been agreed that social media will become a standing agenda item at the AFCWG meetings.
- 11.7. Stijn van de Vyver joined the meeting via conference call and presented the results of the EFSA's 2010 web user survey. He explained that EFSA decided to run the survey in order to complement other forms of (web) user research, such as monthly web statistics reports and, usability testing. The aim of the survey was to i) gauge overall web user satisfaction ii) identify main user roles and top tasks iii) and gather input for prioritisation of new web projects; and to contribute to the development of EFSA's online communications strategy, including consideration of social media. The results of the survey indicate that the main users of EFSA's website are: industry representatives, scientific/ academic staff, public authority representatives and job seekers or contractors followed by citizens interested in food safety issues. The main purpose of the visit was to find information about a food safety issue. Over 92% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with EFSA's website. Content was the best element of the website and search functions the worst aspect. When asked what type of social media and related tools the respondents used regularly, Wikipedia, youtube and facebook were among top ones used privately, while Wikipedia, LinkedIn and RSS feeds were ranked among the most used for professional reasons. Anne-Laure Gassin thanked Stijn van de Vyver for the presentation and suggested that EFSA provides members with the Questionnaire prepared for the survey (via Extranet) should they wish to conduct a similar exercise.

**Action 24:** Zoonoses: agenda topic at the next AFCWG meeting in March to discuss an integrated communications approach and receive insight from Member States.

**Action 25:** EFSA's web user survey: EFSA to provide members with the Questionnaire prepared for the survey (via Extranet).

**Action 26:** Forward planning calendar: EFSA and members to regularly upload information on their communications activities relevant for the group. EFSA's uploading time – every Friday early afternoon.

**Action 27:** EFSA's new expert compensation guide: to be posted on the Extranet. (done)

**Action 28:** EFSA multilingual publications: members to provide EFSA with their feedback on the use of EFSA's multilingual publications.

**Action 29:** Social media: a standing agenda item at the AFCWG meetings.



*Action 30: Norway is currently finalising their social media strategy, which will be shared with the group when available.*

## **12. COMMON PROJECT TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH MEDIA**

- 12.1. Following an agreement at the last meeting to develop a lexicon of food safety related terms that would help members to communicate in a consistent way, Laura Smillie briefly updated the group on the work done to date by EFSA staff and members from Portugal, Greece and Germany who volunteered to be part of the small working group. She presented the proposed processes for developing the lexicon, which will be used as a basis for drafting the Terms of Reference. It has been agreed that at the next meeting in March the small group will present the draft Terms of Reference.
- 12.2. Monika Adamova thanked the members for revising their national media lists and reminded the remaining members if they could do so at their earliest convenience. After receiving replies from all Member States, EFSA will post all revised national media lists on the Extranet.

*Action 31: Common project to strengthen relations with media: Glossary of food safety terms – a small group consisting of EFSA and members from PT, GR and DE to prepare draft Terms of Reference to be presented at the next meeting in Parma.*

*Action 32: Revised national media lists: Members from Belgium, France, Spain, the Netherlands, the UK, FYROM and Turkey to provide EFSA with their revised national media lists.*

## **13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 13.1. Anne-Laure Gassin reminded the group that the next meeting will take place in Parma on 23-24 March. Members were invited to propose agenda topics for the upcoming meetings. The Chair thanked the members for their presence as well as the EFSA staff and the interpreters for their work and the Austrian colleagues for hosting the meeting. As no other points were raised, Anne-Laure Gassin closed the meeting at 12h50.

*Action 33: Extranet training to be organised during the meeting in Parma in March 2011.*

*Action 34: AFCWG meeting in October 2011: EFSA to reconfirm the exact date and venue pending the final date of the International Risk Communications Conference.*