



Brussels, 24 September 2003  
EFSA/BG/MH/ac  
EFSA/BIOHAZ/PLE/M01/MIN VF

**MINUTES OF THE 1<sup>st</sup> PLENARY MEETING OF  
THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS  
Held in Brussels on 22 May 2003**

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**PARTICIPANTS**

Panel Members:

Herbert Budka, Sava Buncic, Pierre Colin, John D Collins, James Hope, Mac Johnston, Günter Klein, Hilde Kruse, Ernst Lückner, Simone Magnino, Riitta Liisa Maijala, Antonio Martínez López, Christophe Nguyen-The, Birgit Noerrung, Servé Notermans, George-John Nychas, Maurice Pensaert, Ivar Vågsholm, Emmanuel Vanopdenbosch

Apologies

Christian Ducrot, Terence Roberts,

EFSA

Bart Goossens (scientific co-ordinator of BIOHAZ Panel), Marta Hugas (scientific co-ordinator of BIOHAZ Panel), Angela Cohen (administrative secretary of BIOHAZ Panel),

Commission

Eric Thévenard (DG Health and Consumer Protection/Interface Unit D5)

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**INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION BY THE EFSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MR GEOFFREY PODGER**

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 in 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:-

1. to develop and make open and transparent the science of risk assessment. The Scientific Committee would have a particular role in this;
2. to provide greater opportunity for stakeholder participation in the risk assessment process and the delivery of a final opinion;
3. to provide public and realistic timeframes for work which was undertaken and, except in exceptional circumstances, to adhere to these;

4. 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
5. 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.

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## **MANDATE OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS**

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:

“Scientific and technical questions concerning consumer health and food safety associated with the consumption of food products and in particular questions on biological hazards relating to food safety and food-borne disease, including food-borne zoonoses and transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, microbiology, food hygiene, and associated waste management.”

### **1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The scientific experts were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were received from Prof. T. Roberts and Dr. C. Ducrot.

### **2. INTRODUCTION OF SCIENTIFIC COORDINATORS AND EXPERTS IN THE PANEL**

The scientific Coordinators and the members of the Panel introduced themselves during a *tour-de-table* session.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF CONFIDENTIALITY, INDEPENDENCE AND MEMBER'S INTEREST**

At the occasion of this first meeting for the Panel, most of the participants completed and signed the “Declaration concerning confidentiality” “Commitment of Independence” and “Annual Declaration of Member's Interest” (Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of the EFSA ‘Decision concerning the establishment and operations of the Scientific Committee and Panels’ MB 17.10.2002 – 3 adopted). If not completed at the meeting, members agreed on sending these forms, duly completed, by mail to the EFSA/BioHaz secretariat.

No member declared an interest in any of the items on the agenda of this specific meeting.

#### **4. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR THE MINUTES WERE ADOPTED**

After secret ballot **Prof. J.D. Collins was elected as Chair** for a term of three years.

Following independent ballots **Dr. S.H.W. Notermans and Prof. Riitta Maijala were elected as Vice-Chairs.**

The newly elected Chair and Vice-Chairs were congratulated with their election and Prof J.D. Collins took over from the Secretariat as Chair of the meeting.

#### **5. INTRODUCTION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME AND CREATION OF WORKING GROUPS**

The draft work programme was presented. It contains questions and issues at the end of the SSC/SCVPH mandate which were initiated by DG SANCO and now are transferred to the Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards. It also contains new questions addressed to EFSA from DG SANCO (listed in Annex 2).

- (1) Tuberculosis in bovine animals.

WG already initiated by SANCO. The members agreed to nominate Chairman Prof. Dan Collins since he was already a member of the old WG and to ask the other members on their agreement to become members of the WG under EFSA. Next meeting is scheduled by July the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- (2) Revision of meat inspection for lambs.

The members agreed to appoint Prof. Johnston as a Chairman and Dr. Buncic as a member. The rest of the members will be appointed by the Chairman of the WG after agreement with the Chair of the panel and the Secretariat.

- (3) Levels of nitrates and nitrites required in meat products.

The members asked for clarification of the mandate with more specific questions to be answered. They agreed to reply with some suggestions to the Secretariat before the 5<sup>th</sup> June. After receiving the suggestions, the Secretariat together with the Interface Unit (D5) from the European Commission will address the clarifications needed so to establish a clear mandate.

The members agreed to constitute a joint working group with the AFC Panel (Panel on food additives, flavourings, processing aids and materials in contact with food.).

Dr. Notermans was appointed as Chair of the Working Group, the plenary also appointed Dr. Nychas and Dr. Roberts as members.

- (4) BSE/TSE issues

The members of the Panel agreed on the constitution of a semi-permanent working group for BSE/TSE matters. Prof. Budka, Dr. Ducrot, Dr. Hope, Prof. Lückner and Dr. Vanopdenbosch were appointed members of the working group. The Chair of

the working group and the names of other members will be appointed during the first meeting to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> June.

## **6. FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

During the plenary several dates for forthcoming meetings were suggested as follows:

29 July

24 September

26-27 November

21-22 January

The members of the panel will report back to the Secretariat with availability for the suggested days.

It was agreed that during the September plenary, the dates for 2004 plenary meetings will be set.

## **7. ANY OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO PANEL**

The Chair suggested to include a new item in the agenda of the next plenary on the identification of emerging issues under the scope of the Panel.

The meeting was closed at 17.00.