

Study Visit to the French Food Safety Agency - AFSSA

Paris, 14/15 October 2009

REPORT

Background information:

This study visit was organised as a part of EFSA Pre-Accession Programme 2009-2010 for Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries*. Representative from different institutions involved in the food safety system from the two Candidate countries, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia will take part in the study visit.

The overall objective of the Programme is to promote the understanding of EFSA's work, share expertise and create information exchange mechanisms in order to ensure that the national authorities of the beneficiary countries can participate effectively in the activities of EFSA both prior to accession and following accession to the EU.

The participation in this Programme may contribute to the beneficiaries in familiarising themselves with the EU policies and working methods particularly focusing on "from field to plate" integrated approach to food safety.

In particular, the study visit to AFSSA gave the participants good knowledge on how the food safety authorities in the EU MS work and by that give them possibilities to improve their own work and also a good starting point for networking and sharing of information.

Relevance of the Study Visit to objectives of the Programme:

- The study visit aimed to provide the participants with an overall knowledge on the role of AFSSA in the area of risk assessment and harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies.
- Experts from AFSSA, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health presented the risk analysis approaches putting an accent on dividing the risk assessment from the risk management.
- In particular following topics of interest for the two beneficiary countries were addressed: General organisation of food safety system in France, Microbiology and the QRA, Contaminants in spring and mineral water, Food control and monitoring, Risk communication, Food crisis management, The importance of scientific cooperation.
- This study visit provided a starting point for networking and creation of information exchange systems as the first step in preparation of the beneficiaries for their future participation in the EU networks.

Participants:

16 participants attended the study tour (8 participants from both the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia) representing competent ministries on national and regional level, food authorities, research institutes and universities.

Detailed list of participants enclosed as an Annex II.

* **Candidate countries:** Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey

Potential Candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia&Herzegovina, Kosovo (under UNSCR1244), Montenegro, Serbia

Conclusions:

This Study visit brought participants responsible for food safety policies together for two days intensive exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise. It was an excellent opportunity to meet experts and specialists from other countries, to learn about and discuss issues of common interest, establish contacts for future cooperation and take ideas back home.

The objective of this study tour was to support the competent authorities of the two Candidate countries in acquiring the necessary knowledge, information and contacts for possible future partnership with French authorities which might support the achievement of goals and targets for deployment of their national food safety systems.

The study tour provided a comprehensive overview on the legal, regulatory and administrative aspects of the AFFSA, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Health, which needed to be taken into consideration for different food safety applications in the Candidate countries at local, regional or national levels.

Study Visit provided a forum for discussion, exchange and learning on themes of common interest and on French and national priorities enriching the flow of information between participating countries and the hosts.

Results of the evaluation questionnaire:

15 representatives answered to the survey. Administrative support, information and assistance before the event were found being excellent by 40%, very good by 20% and good by 40% of the participants. Presentation skills of the speakers (73%), the content of speeches (80%) as well as responsiveness to the questions (86%) were on a high level of satisfaction. 73% of the participants found presentations being on the right level and **86%** of participants felt they had enough opportunity to express their opinion. The participants considered that this seminar was an excellent (**26%**) or very good (**46%**) opportunity for improving their knowledge on this topic. Additional topics they would like to see addressed in possible future study visits include topics such as methodologies of laboratory analysis and sampling, GMO, data collection, institutional cooperation, and monitoring and surveillance of food born diseases and mycotoxins. **26%** of participants found the overall value of the seminar as excellent while **48%** considered it as very good and **26%** as good. The majority of participants found this Study visit a good opportunity for networking and information exchange.

Agenda

ANNEX I

Schedule	N°	Topic	Contents		Person	Service	Organisation
14-Oct	9:30	1	Welcome of visitors; introduction of their French counterparts for the study visit		Lilian Puech Rozenn Saunier Philippe Prigent	International affairs department Risk assessment Directorate	Afssa
	10:00	2	General organisation of food safety in France	Introductory presentation	Lilian Puech	International affairs department	
	10:45	3	Chemical exposure and QRA	Hot topics; methods; general organisation	JC Leblanc F. Héraud	Risk assessment scientific support programme	
	11:30		Case study (bisphenol A)	Nathalie Arnich	Physico-chemical risks assessment unit		
	12:15	Lunch break					
	13:45	4	Microbiology and QRA	Hot topics; methods; general organisation	Sonia Tenailleau Laurent Guillier	Biological risks assessment unit	Afssa
	14:30			Case studies (Listeria project, PCP)	Renaud Laillier Annie Beaufort	Biological risks assessment unit Food quality and agro-industrial processes laboratory	
	15:15	5	Contaminants in spring and mineral water	Hot topics; methods; general organisation	Pascale Panetier Anne Novelli	Water linked risks assessment unit	
	16:00	6	Food control and monitoring	Design of sampling plans	Jean-Luc Volatier	Risk assessment scientific support programme	
	17:00	End of day 1 programme					
15-Oct	9:30	7	Scientific coopération: presentation of 4 different types of scientific cooperation: objectives, methods and procedures	EFSA programmes (CfP, CfT, WG, expertise)	Rozenn Saunier Lilian PUECH Philippe Prigent	Risk assessment Directorate International affairs department	Afssa
				Bilateral cooperation (BfR, Coda-Cerva, Santé Canada)			
				European commission programmes (FP)			
				Support programmes (Balkans)			
	10:30	8	Risk communication	Communication on risk assessment	Valérie Leydet	Communication Department	Ministry of agriculture and food
	13:00	9	Food control and monitoring	Implementation of sampling plans		Directorate general for Food	
	14:00	10	Food crisis management	Hot topics; methods; general organisation		"safety emergencies" mission	
	15:00	11	Risk communication	Communication on risk management		Directorate General of Health	
16:30	Communication on risk management			Madeleine Lesage			
End of day 2 programme							

List of Participants

ANNEX II

LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS FROM MACEDONIA ON THE STUDY VISIT IN PARIS 14th and 15th October 2009			
No.	FAMILY NAME	NAME	INSTITUTION
1	ASIPI	Eljasa	Food Directorate, Ministry of Health
2	BACHANOVIKJ	Angelina	Ministry of Health
3	MIHAILOV	Atanasko	Centre for Public Health- Ohrid
4	PETRESKI	Bozin	Food Directorate, Ministry of Health
5	POPOVSKA-DOMAZETOVA	Marina	Food Directorate, Ministry of Health
6	TALESKI	Vaso	Institute of Preventive Medicine, Department of Microbiology- Military Hospital Skopje / FEMS (Federation of European Microbiological Societies)
7	TASEVSKA	Elizabeta	Food Directorate, Ministry of Health
8	KOLARIKJ	Svetlana	Veterinary Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy
LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS FROM CROATIA ON THE STUDY VISIT TO AFSSA 14th and 15th October 2009			
9	Bašić	Sandra	Croatian Food Agency
10	Gross Bošković	Andrea	Croatian Food Agency
11	Hengl	Brigita	Croatian Food Agency
12	Knežević	Dražen	Croatian Food Agency
13	Lelas	Vesna	The Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology
14	Marinculić	Albert	Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
15	Miloš	Sanja	Croatian Food Agency
16	Stražanac	Danijela	Croatian Food Agency
PARTICIPANT FROM EFSA ON THE STUDY VISIT TO AFSSA 14th and 15th October 2009			
17	Goran	Kumric	EFSA, Policy Officer, Legal and Policy Affairs Unit

