

# **EFSA 7th Stakeholder Forum**

## **27 November 2024, Brussels**

### **“Innovation in food safety: navigating the future together”**

# **STAKEHOLDER FORUM**

THE ANNUAL GATHERING OF THE EFSA REGISTERED STAKEHOLDER  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS!

**27 November 2024**

**Brussels, Belgium**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The [7th EFSA Stakeholder Forum](#), held on Wednesday 27 November 2024, in Brussels, focused on "Innovation in food safety: navigating the future together." This in-person event brought together 107 participants, including representatives from EFSA's Registered Stakeholders, the European Commission, EU Agencies, and EFSA staff. It was moderated by Barbara Gallani, Head of EFSA's Communication and Partnerships Department.

With the invaluable support and input from the EFSA Registered Stakeholders' community to shape the programme, we worked together towards a shared vision: "Empowering food systems risk assessments to drive a sustainable and innovative future that safeguards the health and prosperity of all citizens while protecting our planet."

The key objectives of [this year's Forum](#) were to collectively explore the impact of innovation on food safety risk assessment, to address the challenges and opportunities presented by technological advancements, and to foster dialogue among industry, civil society, and other stakeholders. It featured plenary sessions with pitches and panel discussions, as well as dedicated workshops and networking opportunities throughout the day, fostering a rich exchange of ideas and insights. There was also a stand to answer questions about EFSA's application process and to present [a new community designed to engage partners and stakeholders](#).

During the morning session, Bernhard Url, EFSA's Acting Executive Director, emphasized the need for faster authorization processes and building trust through transparency. Throughout the day, participants discussed the future of health and food systems, highlighting the role of innovation in medicine, regulatory frameworks, and sustainability. A panel discussion focused on balancing safety with speed in EU food safety risk assessments and gathered insights from various stakeholders on how to improve efficiency and trust.

The Forum also featured three parallel workshops. The first workshop on digitalization in food risk assessment covered the integration of bioinformatic and cheminformatic services, artificial intelligence (AI), stakeholder engagement, and regulatory compliance. The second session delved into innovating the methodologies of food risk assessment, stressing the importance of stakeholder engagement and the development of clear, harmonized guidance documents. The third one addressed science and innovation for sustainable and competitive food systems, tackling regulatory science gaps and the need to enhance collaboration.

The closing plenary session summarized the highlights and discussions from the workshops. Key conclusions from the Forum underscored that innovation is essential for advancing food safety and competitiveness. There is a pressing need for faster, more transparent risk assessment processes, while maintaining robust collaboration and stakeholder engagement to drive effective innovation.

The Forum participants provided several recommendations, such as improving communication with more regular updates, expanding, and enhancing training and digital support tools, further engaging stakeholders through expert hearings and workshops, standardizing data formats for improved interoperability, simplifying guidance documents with public input, and increasing funding and expertise development for risk assessment bodies.

The event was complemented by the work of a digital artist, who captured the essence of the discussions in a unique manner. The drawings of the day are crystallised in this report, and pictures as well as a video highlights can be found on the [Forum webpage](#).

For more insights and to discover the next steps, we invite you to read this report!



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The event in a glimpse.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Morning plenary session.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Opening statement by Bernhard Url, EFSA acting Executive Director.....	5
Pitches - A glimpse into the future: what innovation means for our health and food systems.....	6
Panel discussion - Balancing safety and speed: innovation in EU food risk assessments .....	8
Fire-side chat - How is EFSA navigating the tension between innovation, safety, and speed? .....	10
<b>Afternoon sessions .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Workshop 1 - Digitalisation in food risk assessment .....	11
Workshop 2 - Innovative methodologies in food risk assessment .....	13
Workshop 3 - Science and innovation for sustainable and competitive food systems .....	15
Closing plenary .....	17
<b>Recommendations from the Stakeholder Forum participants .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>What's next? .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Participants' pulse check.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>ANNEX.....</b>	<b>21</b>
List of organisations participating to the event .....	21

## THE EVENT IN A GLIMPSE



Photo collage of the day



Portrait of the plenary speakers

## MORNING PLENARY SESSION

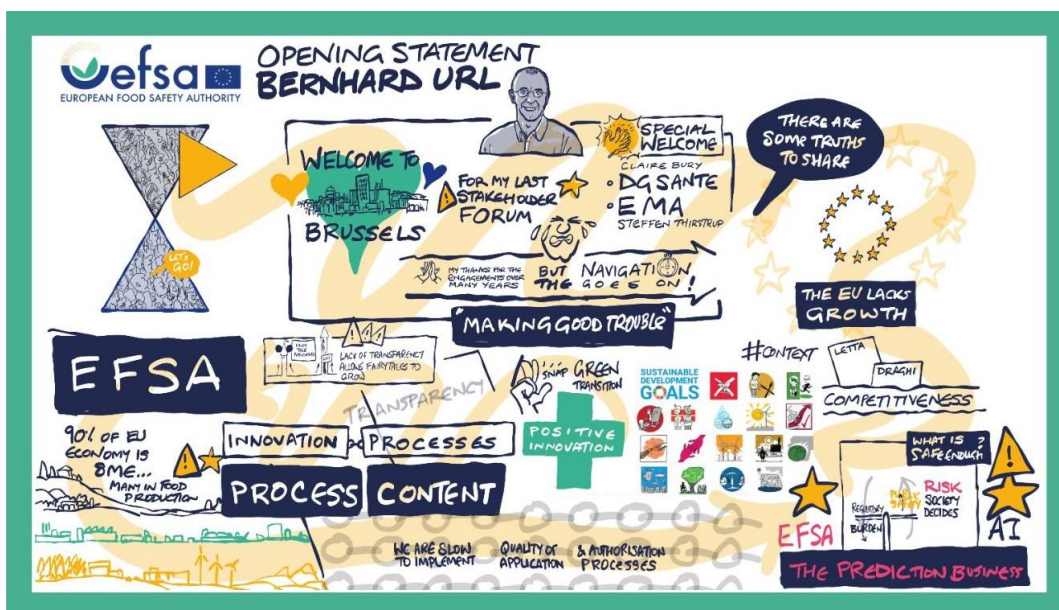
The event was introduced by the moderator of the day, Barbara Gallani.



Drawing capturing the Welcome & introduction by the event moderator

## OPENING STATEMENT BY BERNHARD URL, EFSA ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In his opening speech, Bernhard Url highlighted the economic challenges at the EU level, as well as the need to ensure market competitiveness, emphasizing innovation as a key solution. He stressed the need for faster authorization processes, aligning innovation with market needs, and building trust through transparency. EFSA's Acting Executive Director also highlighted the importance of clear steps in the agri-food production system hand-in-hand with innovation in risk assessment. He emphasized that research should be closely linked to regulatory science, and that EFSA should continue to improve its tools and speed of assessment processes. Bringing EFSA's knowledge closer to stakeholders transparently is crucial.



Drawing capturing Bernhard Url's opening statement at the Stakeholder Forum

## PITCHES - A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE : WHAT INNOVATION MEANS FOR OUR HEALTH AND FOOD SYSTEMS

This session aimed at giving a glimpse into the future of our health and food systems, with a particular focus on the challenges and benefits innovation could bring. Four speakers were invited to present their perspectives, that will be then further discussed in the panel discussion.

- **Steffen Thirstrup, European Medicines Agency's (EMA) Chief Medical Officer**

Steffen Thirstrup emphasized the critical role of innovation in developing medicines for both humans and animals. He highlighted how precision medicine is raising expectations for human health outcomes. Mr Thirstrup noted that while in-vivo treatments are gaining popularity, they remain very expensive and require more investment. He stressed that innovation should prioritize urgent medical needs, such as new antibiotics and treatments for major diseases like cancer and cardiovascular conditions. He underscored the importance of a flexible, modern, and adaptive regulatory framework to address challenges like antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and support the One Health approach.

- **Alessandra Moretti, Liaison Member of the European Parliament for EFSA (via recorded video)**

In her video intervention, Alessandra Moretti, who could not be at the event due to a Parliamentary session happening in Strasbourg, France, on the same day, emphasized the importance of the European Parliament's ENVI and SANT Committees as key entry points to the regulatory food safety environment. She highlighted the need for a sustainable and safe food chain, noting that EFSA's risk assessments are crucial as scientific evidence for the regulatory framework. Ms Moretti also discussed her role as a liaison between EFSA and the European Parliament, aiming to increase stakeholders' trust. She pointed out the new challenges posed by climate change and stressed the significant role of research in addressing these issues, calling for continued collaboration among different parties.

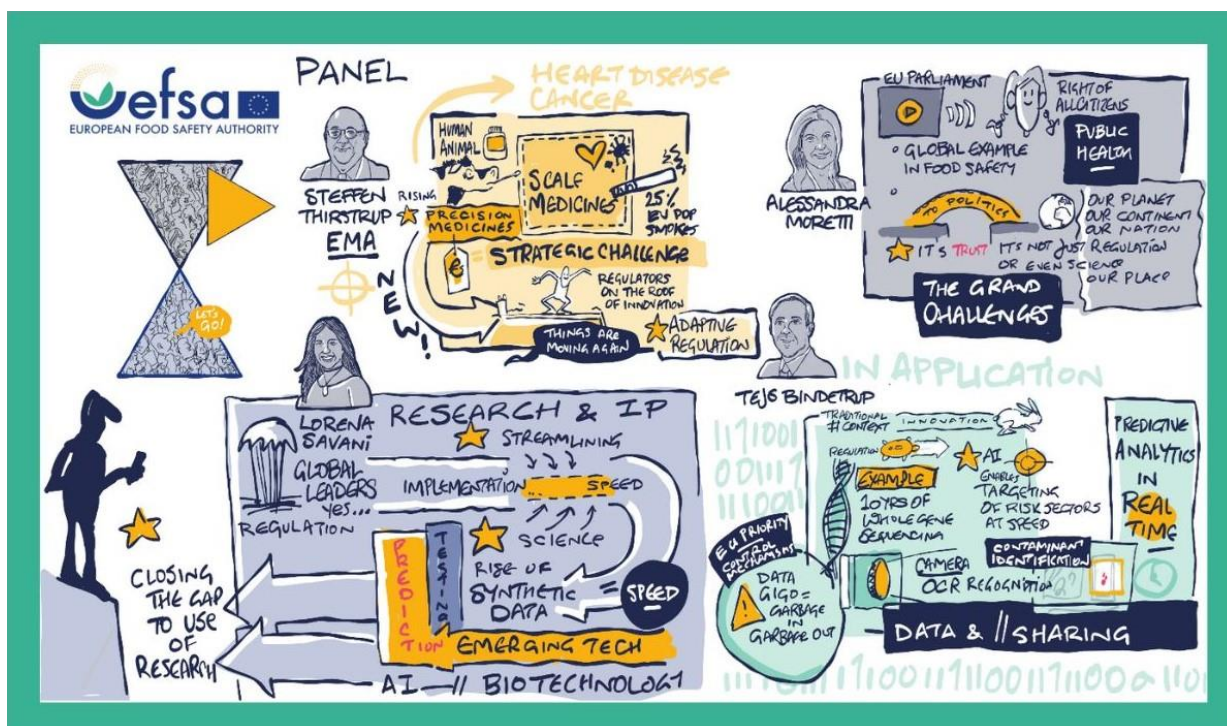


- **Tejs Binderup, Deputy Director General of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration**

Tejs Binderup emphasized the need for national authorities to stay up to date with innovative approaches, as markets often outpace regulatory frameworks. Mr Binderup highlighted Denmark's strong collaboration with industry in what concerns innovation, which currently enables the use of AI and Whole Genome Sequencing in risk management activities, stressing the importance of standardized compliance across the EU. He also noted the current use of AI tools in automating risk mitigation and identifying outbreak origins, with predictive models being shared through databases. A key question was left for reflection of all: how will we be able to ensure a safe and swift uptake of Artificial Intelligence applications?

- **Lorena Savani, Mission Lead Healthier lives through food, EIT Food**

Lorena Savani highlighted the need to maintain standards for novel foods, enable faster risk assessments by reducing administrative burdens, and protect intellectual property. Ms Savani stressed the importance of solid scientific foundations to foster innovation and gain societal support. She advocated for open access to digital tools to promote competitiveness and the integration of sustainability experts. Leveraging emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and blockchain, she pointed out biotechnology's potential under the EU Biotech Act and the need to bridge gaps between research outcomes and regulatory requirements for data-driven sustainable innovation in the EU.



Drawing capturing the essence of the four pitches delivered at the Forum



## **PANEL DISCUSSION - BALANCING SAFETY AND SPEED: INNOVATION IN EU FOOD RISK ASSESSMENTS**

The panel discussion was moderated by Carlos Gonalo das Neves, EFSA Chief Scientist. The debate brought together the pitchers from the session before, and a few other panellists to explore how innovation can enhance food safety while maintaining public trust and regulatory efficiency.

Carlos Gonalo das Neves opened the debate by asking the panellists how current and future food systems can benefit from innovation.

Deputy Director General for Food Sustainability, DG SANTE, European Commission, Claire Bury, acknowledged the existing trust in food safety systems, crediting EFSA for its role. She emphasized the need for efficiency improvements and change management, noting EFSA's ongoing evaluation of processes for novel foods, GMOs, and biopesticides. She also mentioned the potential of the Biotech Act and the importance of innovation for achieving self-sufficiency in food production.

PAN-Europe Executive Director, Martin Dermine, highlighted the importance of early discussions with academia and researchers to speed up risk assessments. He suggested developing a European Risk Assessment culture, possibly through dedicated capacity building or training programs, to foster transparency and knowledge sharing. He stressed that new technologies and novel foods often create mistrust, which can be mitigated through greater transparency.

FoodDrinkEurope Director Food Safety, Research and Innovation, Rebeca Fernandez, noted the gaps between stakeholders and regulators, emphasizing the need for clear, predictable, and trusted procedures for applicants. She advocated for increased and higher quality dialogue and interconnectivity between applicants and EFSA to achieve faster results without compromising transparency. She praised the establishment of the EFSA Community of Applicants initiative and the potential for large partnerships funded by Horizon Europe to improve these mechanisms.

Deputy Director General of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, Tejs Binderup, highlighted the need for enhanced consumer information and more dialogue to build trust in current food systems. He noted that while the regulatory framework allows for innovation, the approval processes, especially for biotech-related products, could be faster.

Mission Lead Healthier lives through food at EIT Food, Lorena Savani, emphasized the dual importance of food safety and food security in terms of sustainability. She highlighted the need for consumer-centric approaches and access to information, mentioning initiatives like think tanks for capacity building.

EMA's Chief Medical Officer, Steffen Thstrup, compared the dynamics of pharma innovation and EMA regulation, noting the balance between privacy and transparency. He pointed out that while the pharma industry is global and the regulatory framework conservative, science remains the common language. He also highlighted the need for academia to better understand the regulatory framework to bridge the gap between innovation and regulation.

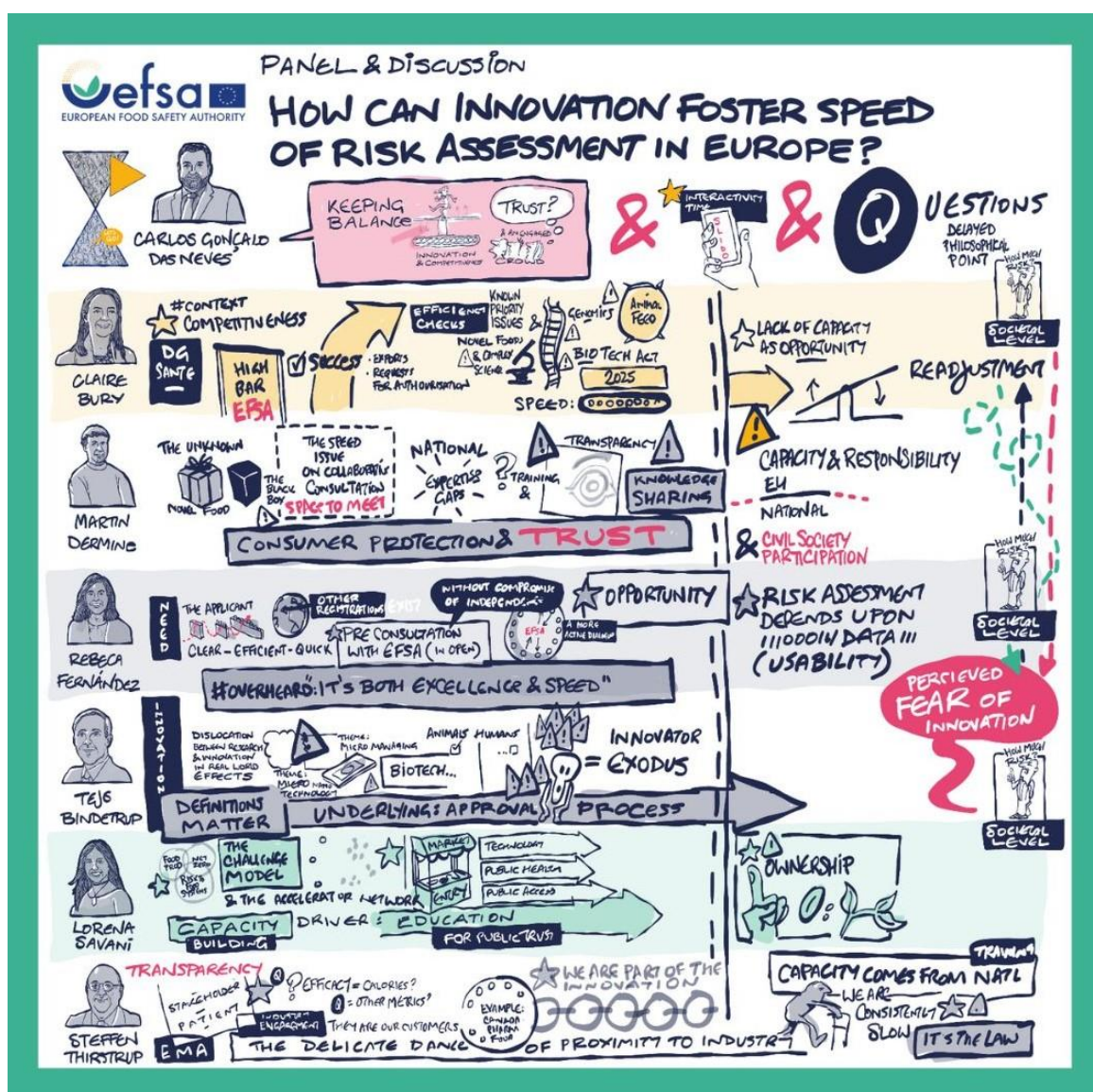
During the panel, the moderator engaged with the audience of the Forum, asking the following question: *In the context of regulatory science and food risk assessments, what are, in your view, the biggest barriers impacting innovation?* More than 70 inputs were given by the participants.





After taking some live questions from the public, the panel moderator highlighted the following key points as final notes to the debate:

- **Maintaining Trust and Speed:** The challenge of keeping public trust while accelerating innovation was a recurring point. The need for clear definitions and a holistic approach that includes all stakeholders was emphasized.
- **Stimulating Innovation and Competitiveness:** Current food systems need to better stimulate innovation and competitiveness. This includes involving academia earlier in the process and encouraging industry to share knowledge and new technologies to predict risks more accurately.
- **Consumer Proximity and Approval:** Consumers should be involved in the innovation process to address their needs and gain their approval - a crucial step for increased success and trust.



Drawing sketching the panel discussion



## **FIRE-SIDE CHAT - HOW IS EFSA NAVIGATING THE TENSION BETWEEN INNOVATION, SAFETY, AND SPEED ?**

The panel discussion was followed by a fireside chat between EFSA's Acting Executive Director, Bernhard Url, and Edward Bray, EFSA Communication Officer, playing the role as the 'event reporter'. The main topic of the interview was formulated as a question: "How does EFSA navigate the tension between innovation, safety, and speed?"

Bernhard Url started the conversation by comparing the public perception of medicines and food, noting that while side effects are perceived as more acceptable in medicines, food is expected to be 'safe.' He highlighted the budget difference between EMA and EFSA, with EMA's funds being reinvested in Member States (MSs), making it more attractive for MSs to work with EMA. In contrast, EFSA's contributions from MSs are voluntary.

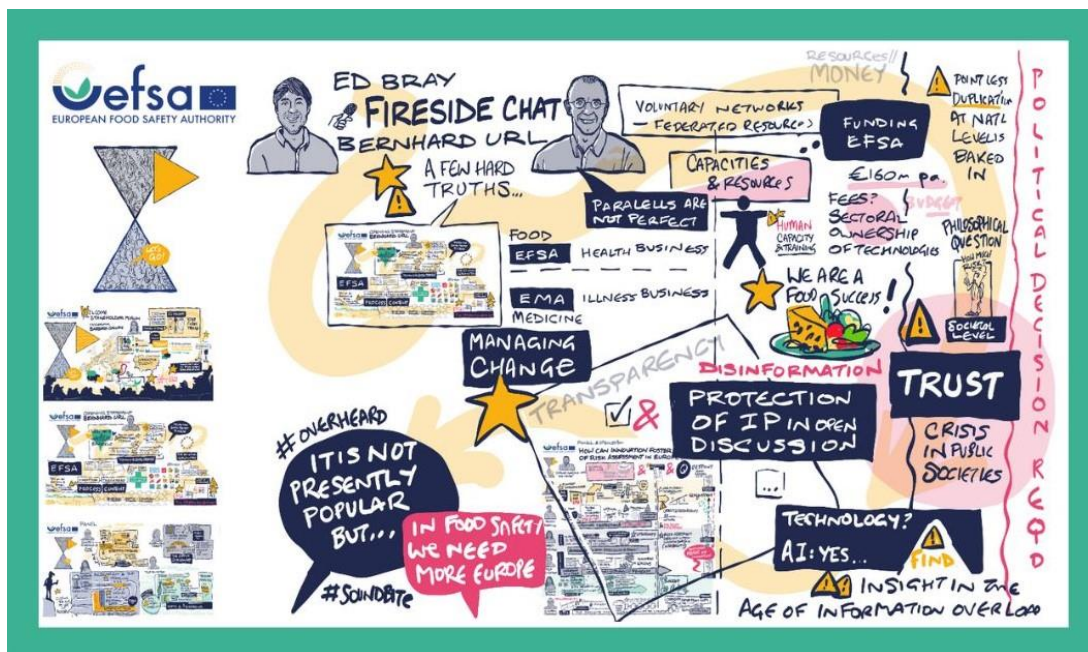
EFSA's Acting Executive Director also emphasized the resource challenges that EFSA faces, particularly in high-priority areas like pesticides. He suggested reconsidering EFSA's funding model, possibly introducing fees to increase the budget and redistribute funds to MSs. He also noted that mandatory cooperation with MSs, as seen with EMA, could benefit EFSA.

Bernhard Url also stressed the need for a political decision to secure more resources for EFSA, estimating that an additional 100 to 200 staff members are necessary. He pointed out the paradox of needing more resources and expertise to improve efficiency and speed in evaluations due to the high pace in technological advancements in areas such as novel foods and pesticides, which are often delayed due to the stop-the-clock mechanism and varying application quality.

The discussion also touched on the emotional difference between medicines and food, the need for transparency in intellectual property rights, and the importance of not leaving society behind in the dialogue between stakeholders and regulators. Bernhard Url highlighted the EU's success in exporting foods, which he considers a good indicator of a high level of trust in EU food systems and of food security.

Finally, the balance between technology and resources was discussed, noting that while AI and technology will help in the future, human expertise remains crucial. Harmonized guidance to support the adoption of innovative approaches across the EU was advocated by Bernhard Url.

At the end of the interview, Edward Bray summarized the key takeaway: "The EU needs to harness innovation, implement a faster assessment process, incentivize innovation with a market approach, and ensure responsiveness to change, with a consensus on the way forward being paramount."



Drawing capturing the fireside chat exchanges between Bernhard Url and Ed Bray

## AFTERNOON SESSIONS

### THREE THEMATIC WORKSHOPS RUNNING IN PARALLEL

After the networking lunch, participants were invited to join the workshop for which they had expressed a preference when registering to the event.

### WORKSHOP 1 - DIGITALISATION IN FOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

**Chairs:** Nikolaus Kriz (EFSA, Head of ENABLE Department) and Inês Grenho Ajuda (Eurogroup for Animals)

**Presenters:** Fabrizio Abbinante (EFSA, iDATA unit), Inês Grenho Ajuda (Eurogroup for Animals), Didier Verloo (EFSA, KNOW unit)

**Agenda:** see [here](#)

This workshop aimed to foster a collaborative discussion on leveraging digitalisation to enhance food safety risk assessment. We explored bioinformatic and cheminformatic services, discussing how these could be best made available to stakeholders to improve outreach and uptake. Additionally, the importance of artificial intelligence (AI) transparency and trustworthiness, stakeholder involvement, change management, and aspects of AI governance, such as the EU AI Act, were examined.

#### Key points discussed:

- Digital Tools: Transition from paper dossiers to digital solutions like e-dossiers and data warehouses.
- AI Integration: AI's potential to enhance accuracy and efficiency in risk assessments, with a roadmap for better evidence accessibility.



- Stakeholder Engagement: Importance of active involvement and feedback to ensure tool effectiveness.

### Potential issues identified:

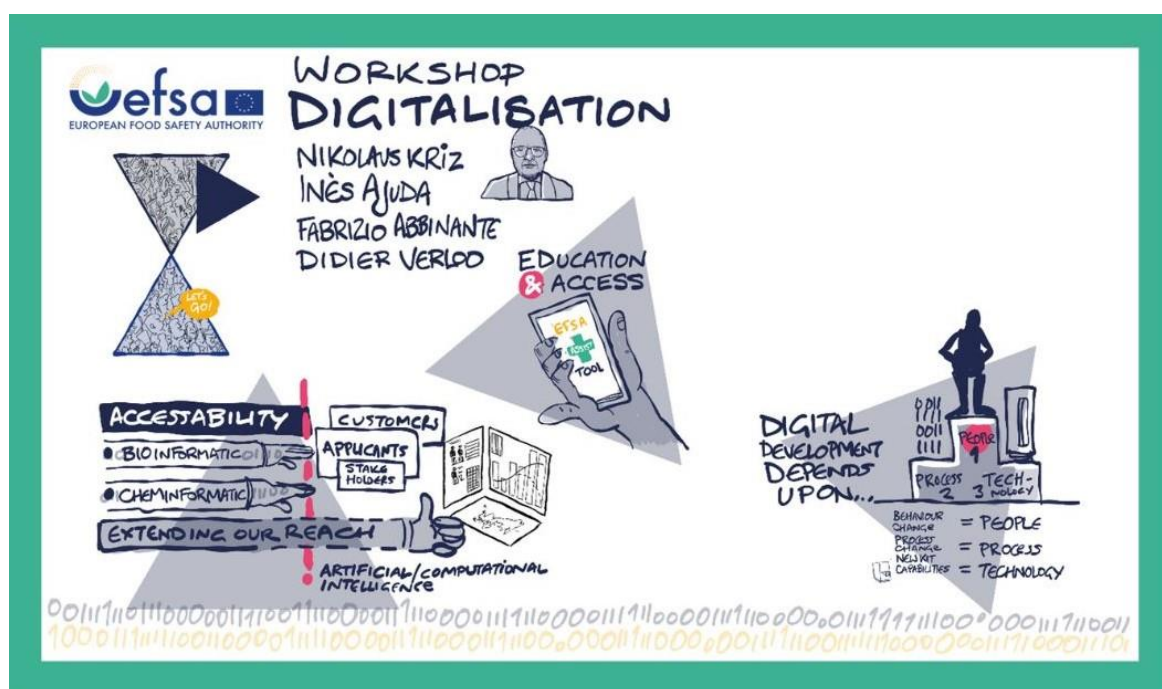
- Accessibility: Ensuring digital tools are accessible to all, especially SMEs.
- Trust and Transparency: Building trust in AI tools, ensuring transparency and compliance with AI governance, while addressing the fear of human bias potentially inbuilt in AI.
- Regulatory Compliance: Balancing innovation with compliance under the AI Act.

### Recommended actions:

- Communication Plans: Regular updates via newsletters, webinars, and workshops.
- Training Programs: Online courses, hands-on sessions, and user manuals for different stakeholders.
- Collaboration: Engage stakeholders through workshops and feedback sessions and encourage partnerships.
- Data Interoperability: Standardize data formats, promote data sharing with privacy measures, and invest in AI and blockchain technologies.

### Additional comments:

- Continuous Feedback: Implement ongoing feedback mechanisms.
- Interoperability: Improve data interoperability with structured formats like IUCLID.
- Support Innovation: Encourage innovation while ensuring safety and compliance, highlighting the benefits of computational tools and AI governance.



Workshop 1 drawing summary



## WORKSHOP 2 - INNOVATIVE METHODOLOGIES IN FOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

**Chair:** Guilhem De Sèze (EFSA, Head of ASSESS Department)

**Presenters:** Davide Arcella (EFSA, MESE unit), Laurent Oger (International Sweeteners Association), Celine Benini, (AMFEP)

**Agenda:** see [here](#)

This session focused on EFSA's forward-looking processes in guidance development, aiming to gather concrete feedback to further enhance the user-friendliness and participatory nature of EFSA's methodological work. In this context, the EFSA guidance architecture project was presented, providing a comprehensive overview of its objectives and current progress. This was also an opportunity to discuss strategies for optimizing stakeholder engagement, ensuring effective input and participation from all relevant parties.

### Key points discussed:

- Engagement is key: Stakeholder engagement throughout the guidance development process is crucial for successful innovation in food risk assessment methodologies.
- Prioritise early engagement (at scoping document phase): face-to-face relations are essential for effective guidance development.
- Guidance documents should be fit for purpose, minimising the time lag between innovation and regulatory guidance. Predictability is fundamental.
- Involvement of stakeholders throughout the guidance life cycle, including post-adoption, is necessary for the successful implementation of guidance documents. The involvement could be organised around permanent dedicated discussion groups, ad hoc communities or collaborative working groups.

### Potential issues identified:

- **Clarity and harmonization:** There is a lack of clarity on the binding nature and mandates of guidance documents, especially concerning innovative products. It is essential to clarify why guidance documents are changed and what updates are made. Additionally, there is a perception of lack of harmonization in how EFSA applies these documents, leading to inconsistencies.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Stakeholders are interested in participating in the development process of guidance documents from the early stages until after adoption. However, public consultation periods are often too short, limiting stakeholders' ability to provide comprehensive feedback.
- **Process and pace:** The current process for revising guidance documents can be slow and may not keep pace with innovation. This lag can hinder the timely integration of new scientific and technological advancements.
- **Confidentiality and intellectual property:** Discussions around innovative products are challenged by concerns over intellectual property and confidentiality breaches. Sensitive data should only be requested when necessary and with proper justification to protect stakeholders' proprietary information.
- **Content and format:** There is a need for more case studies and concrete examples to illustrate guidance documents effectively. Current documents are often user-unfriendly

and too long, typically in PDF format. Alternatives, such as web-based interactive options with hyperlinks, should be considered to enhance usability.

### Recommended actions:

- Create scoping documents for all guidance documents under revision or development, listing planned stakeholder participation opportunities.
- Create ad hoc communities/discussion groups for specific topics/sectorial guidance documents.
- Increase use of expert hearings, interactive workshops, info sessions, and discussion groups.
- Request sensitive data only when necessary and justified.
- Invite contract research organizations to comment on guidance documents.
- Allow peer-review of guidance documents, considering a second draft after controversial comments.
- Explore digital tools to support stakeholders (e.g., chatbots, online live Q&A, online training material, hyperlinked and visual catalogue of guidance documents).
- Provide training and support through webinars, pilot testing, case studies, and hands-on examples.
- Develop a checklist with clear standards for submitting applications.
- Avoid running public consultations during summer and Christmas breaks.



Workshop 2 drawing summary



## WORKSHOP 3 - SCIENCE AND INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AND COMPETITIVE FOOD SYSTEMS

**Chair:** Carlos Gonçalo das Neves

**Presenters:** Matthew Ramon (EFSA, ENREL unit), Annelies Bogaerts (Cellular Agriculture Europe), Camille Perrin (BEUC)

**Agenda:** see [here](#)

This session explored questions emerging from the current global situation, which called for greater competitiveness, interaction, innovation, and sustainability in the EU food system. To meet these goals, it is important to use effective scientific, regulatory, and engagement methods, along with risks communication and monitoring. What does this mean for those involved in the food system, and what steps need to be taken to achieve these goals while ensuring the highest food safety standards?

### Key points discussed:

- The regulatory science gaps collectively identified could be grouped into three main clusters: science for preparedness; sustainability; engagement and communications.
- Several target areas were identified to address gaps in regulatory science: enhancing pre-submission and risk assessment processes, improving collaboration and stakeholder engagement, working towards regulatory coherence and multi-stakeholder alignment, building capacity and expertise, and fostering innovation. Among these areas, three solutions were voted as the most feasible and impactful:
  - Enhance engagement, coordination, and collaboration among all relevant actors.
  - Increase the capacity and technical expertise of EU and Member State staff working in risk assessment.
  - Increase transparency along the risk assessment, risk management, and risk communications axis.

### Potential issues identified:

- **Integration of sustainability and risk assessments:** To integrate sustainability into risk assessments there is the need for transparent environmental sustainability indicators (e.g. how do fossil-based assessments compare to bio-based ones?).
- **Health and environmental interconnections:** The impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on food safety are critical, necessitating a link between climate, health, and sustainability through a true One Health approach. The role of microbiome and gut microbiota in health and sustainability is significant, with valuable lessons learned from past failures in applying the precautionary principle.
- **Scientific and analytical advancements:** Advanced scientific methods, such as omics technologies, are vital in risk assessments. There is a need for standardized analytical methods and commonly agreed standards for scientific evidence. Tackling and completing long-term inter-agency cooperative aspirations, like the case of OSOA, is important.
- **Communication and societal engagement:** Effective communication of both risks and benefits is crucial. Addressing risk perception and societal values in innovation, integrating risk communication with risk assessment, and adopting transparent and inclusive approaches to risk and sustainability frameworks are key strategies to enhance societal engagement.

- **EFSA's scope and priorities:** EFSA's extensive workload needs prioritization. This needs to be matched with developing flexible mandates, enhancing collaboration and stakeholder engagement, aligning regulatory efforts, increasing funding and expertise, and fostering innovation through progressive regulatory approaches. Additionally, incorporating sustainability into the risk assessment process requires adequate resources for EFSA.

### Recommended actions:

- Enhance risk assessment processes by providing regulatory consultancy to scientists, developing flexible EFSA mandates, rethinking safety definitions, funding regulatory data collection for emerging areas, and improving communication between risk assessors and managers.
- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration, public-private dialogue, developing joint guidelines, and ensuring transparency in public consultations.
- Align efforts across EU agencies and Member States, strengthening inter-agency collaboration and aligning strategic goals across EU Directorates-General (DGs).
- Build capacity and expertise in risk assessment bodies. This includes increasing funding, staff expertise, cataloguing regulatory science research needs, and further enhancing EFSA panels with expertise in food science and technology.
- Align regulatory frameworks with scientific developments and increase funding to translate scientific topics into regulatory applications.

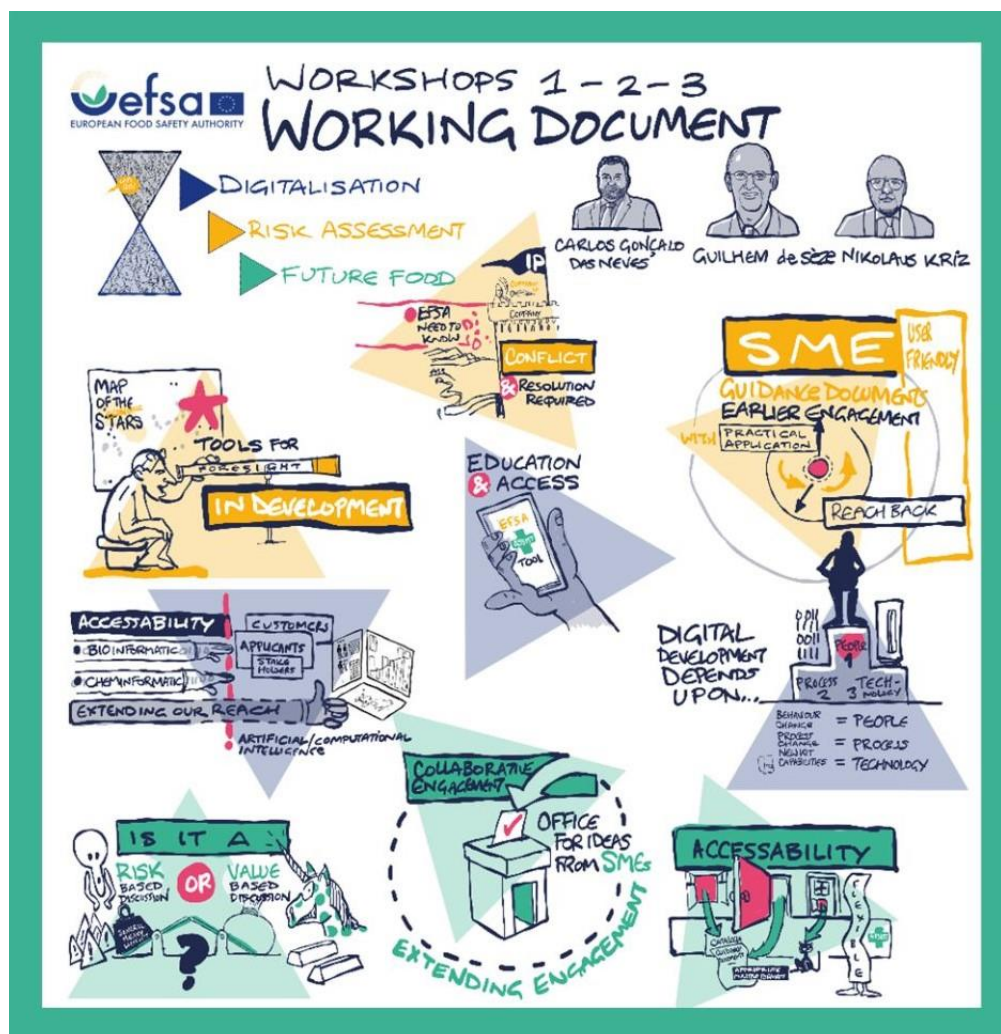


Workshop 3 drawing summary



## CLOSING PLENARY

The closing plenary started with a brief reporting by the three Workshop Chairs on the main highlights from their session. See the main highlights captured in the drawing below.



Drawing capturing key messages from the three workshops

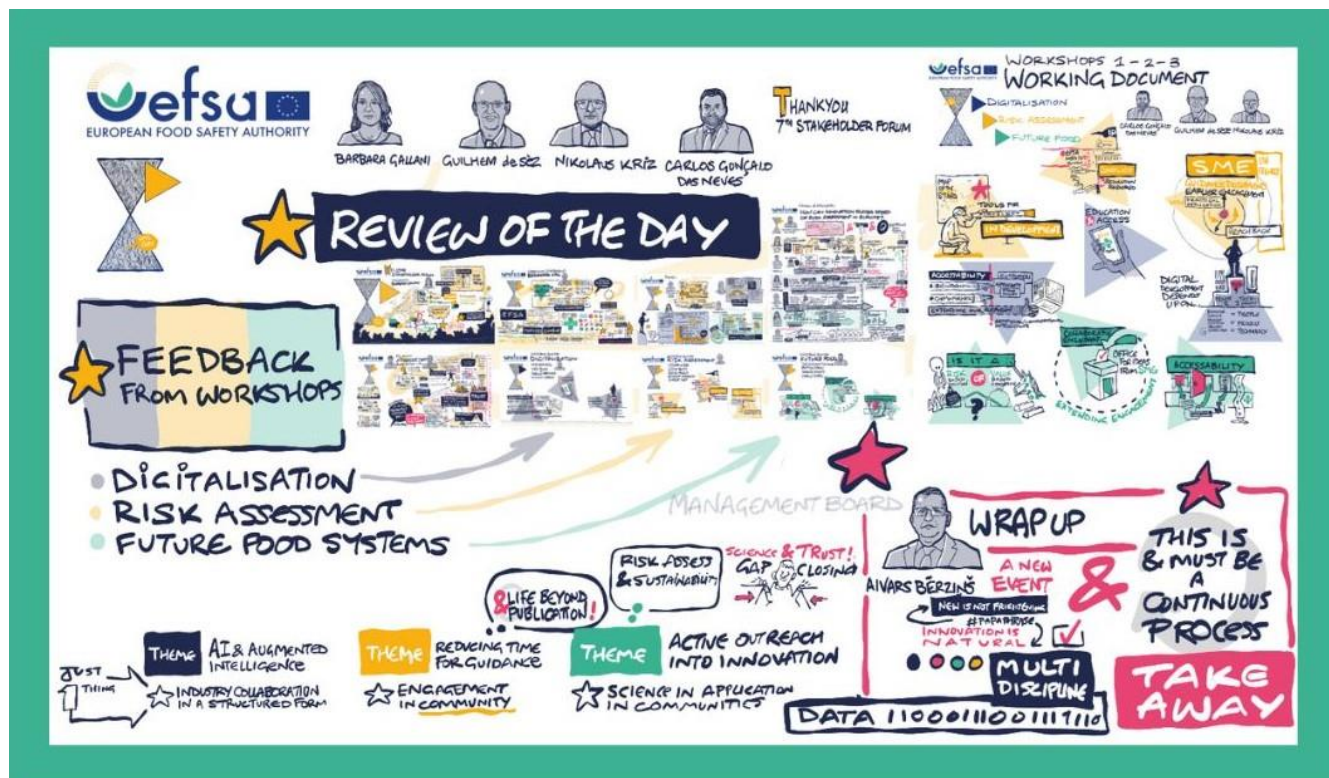
Barbara Gallani, the event moderator, then called to the stage Aivars Bērziņš, Chair of the EFSA Management Board, to initiate a brief question-and-answer dialogue to conclude the 7<sup>th</sup> EFSA Stakeholder Forum.

Mr Bērziņš expressed his appreciation for the new format of the Forum, highlighting its success in fostering rich discussions in an open and transparent atmosphere. He noted that the focus on unusual topics was a refreshing change, welcomed by all participants.

Mr Bērziņš praised the high quality of the programme and the engaging format of the event, which significantly contributed to its success. He emphasized the importance of innovation and the enhanced use of digital tools in risk assessment and communication, stressing the need for continued reflection on advancing this journey. This will be a key message for the next Management Board meeting.



The moderator closed the 7<sup>th</sup> EFSA Stakeholder Forum by thanking all the organizers, speakers, and participants for their contributions to a successful and inspiring event.



Drawing summarising the main highlights of the Stakeholder Forum



## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STAKEHOLDER FORUM PARTICIPANTS

<b>STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish regular updates through newsletters, webinars, and workshops to keep stakeholders informed about ongoing developments and initiatives.</li> <li>• Align efforts across EU agencies and Member States to ensure predictability and strengthen inter-agency collaboration, creating a unified regulatory approach.</li> </ul>
<b>PROVIDE MORE TRAINING AND SUPPORT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and deliver comprehensive training programs that include online courses, hands-on sessions, and detailed user manuals tailored for different stakeholder groups.</li> <li>• Offer specific training on the use of guidance documents through webinars, pilot testing, case studies, and hands-on examples, utilizing data available from all EFSA sources.</li> <li>• Provide enhanced pre-submission support to improve the quality and compliance of submissions.</li> <li>• Develop and implement digital tools, such as chatbots and live Q&amp;A sessions, to support stakeholders in understanding and using guidance documents effectively. Additionally, provide training materials publicly available and maintain logbooks on commonly reported issues.</li> <li>• Develop a checklist with clear red lines and minimum standards required for submitting applications to ensure consistency and quality.</li> </ul>
<b>ENHANCE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the use of expert hearings and host interactive workshops, information sessions, and discussion groups to facilitate stakeholder engagement and collect timely feedback.</li> <li>• Establish ad hoc communities or discussion groups to focus on specific topics or sectorial guidance documents, ensuring targeted and relevant dialogue.</li> </ul>
<b>IMPROVE DATA INTEROPERABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardize data formats across the board to facilitate data sharing while ensuring robust privacy measures.</li> <li>• Invest in advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain to enhance data interoperability and security.</li> <li>• Improve data interoperability by adopting structured formats like IUCLID to streamline data management and usage.</li> </ul>
<b>DEVELOP AND MANAGE GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule public consultations strategically, avoiding summer and Christmas breaks to maximize stakeholder participation.</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive catalogue of guidance documents with hyperlinks and visual aids to facilitate easy navigation and understanding for all users.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILD CAPACITY AND EXPERTISE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance staff expertise in risk assessment bodies to strengthen their capability to address complex scientific issues.</li> <li>• Enhance EFSA panels by incorporating experts in food science and technology to ensure a comprehensive and informed approach to risk assessment.</li> </ul>



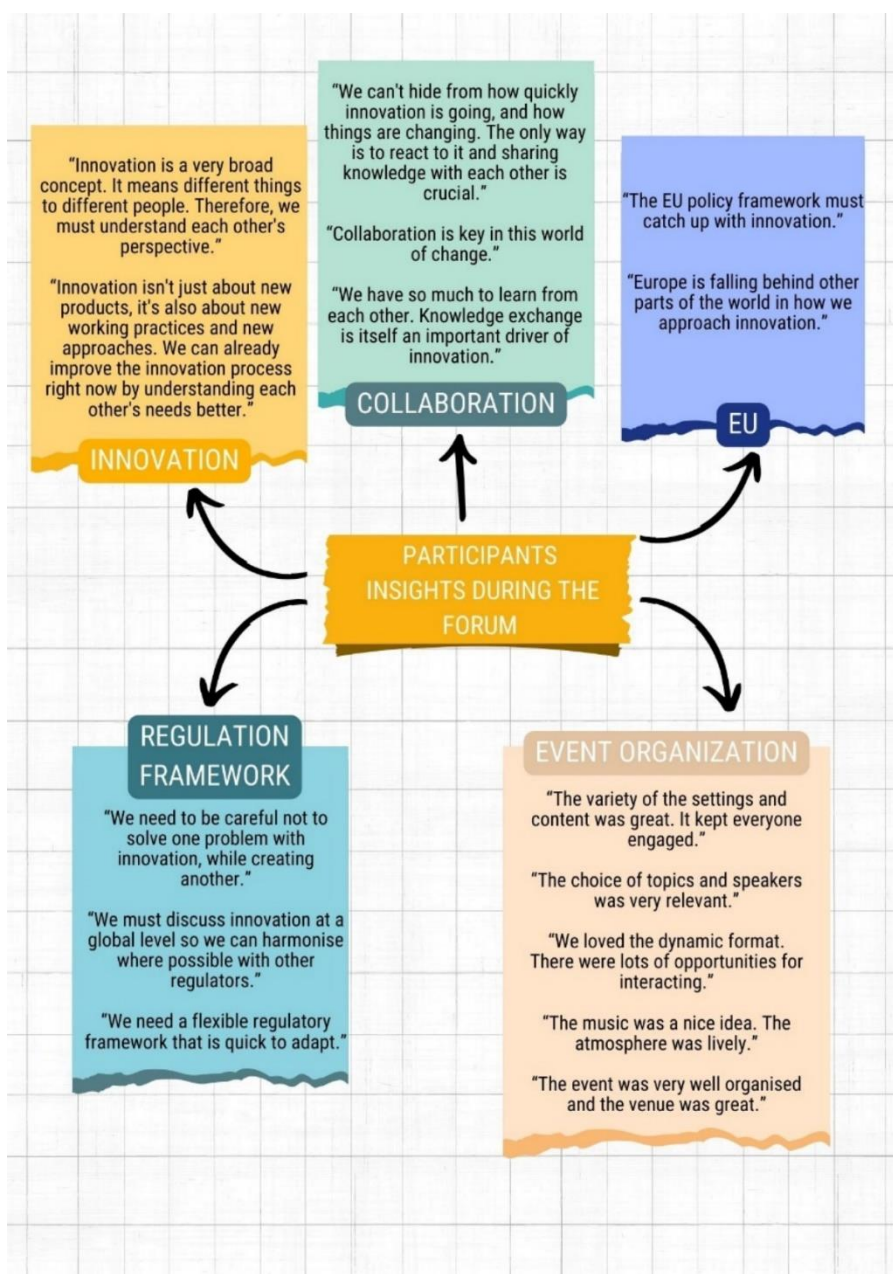
## WHAT'S NEXT?

EFSA has taken good note of the recommendations provided by the participants at the event and will follow up on them in early 2025. We will examine each of them in more depth to determine what can be integrated into the current strategic cycle's priorities and into the multi-annual work plan for 2025 and beyond. They will also be discussed at the next Bureau meeting of EFSA's Registered Stakeholders which will take place in the first quarter of 2025.

For any questions on the content of this report, please contact EFSA Stakeholder team: [stakeholders@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:stakeholders@efsa.europa.eu).

## PARTICIPANTS' PULSE CHECK

To have a glimpse of the participants' pulse on the day and get some more insights which were captured live by our event report during the event, see below!





## ANNEX

### LIST OF ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING TO THE EVENT

Up to two representatives per EFSA Registered Stakeholder's organisation were allowed to register to the Stakeholder Forum 2024 and attend.

AnimalhealthEurope
Association of Chocolate, Biscuits and Confectionery (CAOBISCO)
Association of the European Self-Care Industry (AESGP)
Association of Manufacturers and Formulators of Enzyme Products (AMFEP)
Association of Specialty Feed Ingredients and their Mixtures (FEFANA)
Association of Veterinary Consultants (AVC)
Cellular Agriculture Europe
COPA COGECA
Energy Drinks Europe (EDE)
EU Specialty Food Ingredients
EuroCommerce
Eurogroup for Animals
EUROMALT
EuropaBio
European Association of Chemical Distributors (FECC)
European Association of Sugar Manufacturers (CEFS)
European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic)
European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)
European Coffee Federation (ECF)
European Commission – DG AGRI
European Commission – DG SANTE
European Consumer Organisation (BEUC)
European Environmental Agency (EEA)
European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA)
European Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC)
European Food & Fermentation Cultures Association (EFFCA)
European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA)
European Medicines Agency (EMA)
European Potato Processors' Organization (EUPPA)
European Potato Trade Association (Europatat)
European Dairy Association (EDA)
EUsalt
Federation of European Manufacturers and Suppliers of Ingredients to the Bakery, Confectionery and Patisseries Industries (FEDIMA)
Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)
FEDIOL
FoodDrinkEurope (FDE)
Food Fermentation Europe
Food Lawyers' Network (FLN)
Food Supplements Europe
FRUCOM
Good Food Institute Europe
IFOAM Organics Europe



International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA)
International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF)
International Sweeteners Association (ISA)
Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)
Plastics Europe
Primary Food Processors (PFP)
Probiotic Association Europe (IPA Europe)
SAFE Food Advocacy Europe
Soft Drinks Europe (UNESDA)
Specialised Nutrition Europe (SHE)
Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)