

Communication, Engagement and Cooperation Department

Stakeholder Engagement

2nd Meeting of the EFSA Stakeholder Bureau

Brussels, 18 April 2018

1. Introduction

The Stakeholder Bureau is one of two permanent mechanisms under EFSA's Stakeholder Engagement Approach¹. It is made up of seven members representing different stakeholder categories that advise EFSA on stakeholder engagement and dialogue on civil society's concerns regarding food safety, health, the environment, risk communication and other issues in the Authority's remit. Members of the Bureau act in the interests of the whole stakeholder category that they represent.

An additional task of the Bureau is to contribute to the general understanding of EFSA's scientific risk assessment process among stakeholders, thereby improving trust in decisions taken. The Bureau helps to shape the agenda of the Stakeholder Forum, the annual gathering of all registered stakeholder organizations.

The initial composition of the Bureau has been renewed, since two Bureau members had resigned, due to leaving the stakeholder association that they represented. Following a call for renewal of the Bureau, two new representatives have been elected, namely Ms Camille Perrin (BEUC) in the Consumer category and Ms Beate Kettlitz (Food Drink Europe) in the Business and food industry category.

The first meeting of EFSA's Stakeholder Bureau² took place in September 2017 and was an opportunity to agree on several operational issues such as the framework for interaction between EFSA and the Bureau and the follow-up on recommendations arising from the meeting of the Stakeholder Forum. In addition the Bureau discussed on how the Bureau could act as an advocate for science and for EFSA, and exchanged views on setting-up of a discussion group for the framing of questions related to EFSA self-mandates and guidance documents. The Bureau has agreed to meet twice a year.

2. The 2nd Meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau

The second meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau took place in Brussels on 18 April 2018. It was chaired by EFSA's Executive Director and welcomed by the Vice-Chair of EFSA's Management Board. Representatives of the European Commission (DG SANTE) attended and took part to the discussions regarding the recent legislative proposal on transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain³.

¹ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/partnersnetworks/stakeholder>

² <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/event/170919-3-report.pdf>

³ [COM \(2018\) 179: Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain](#)

The agenda of the meeting was co-drafted with the Bureau members and designed with a view to allow space for interaction and questions during the meeting.

The second meeting of the Bureau was an opportunity to exchange views on the activities carried out in the frame of the SEA so far and to follow-up on the recommendations arising from the previous meeting.

It was also a chance to take stock of the results of the pilot phase, as well as to agree on several operational issues linked to future initiatives like organisation of the Stakeholder Forum 2018. Finally, the Bureau was informed on the upcoming EFSA communication and engagement initiatives and on the results of the first Reputation Barometer.

3. Discussion Points

The Bureau took stock of the results of the interim evaluation of the SEA pilot phase and discussed on the best ways to further develop the processes. It was recognised that SEA is a two-way engagement that allows both EFSA and stakeholders to learn from each other and exchange views; moreover, the Bureau is perceived as a dynamic platform for dissemination of information on EFSA work and to provide advice on how to make the engagement more proactive. There was an extensive discussion on how to address the risk communication issue and how to target messages to particular stakeholder groups.

The European Commission presented the main elements of the proposal on transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment regulatory process. The Bureau had the opportunity to exchange views on the future EU Member State involvement in EFSA's governance structure and scientific panels; increased transparency of scientific studies and greater citizens access to the information they contain; and the creation of a common European Register of studies commissioned by companies as part of their application to EFSA. In addition, the Bureau discussed issues related to the proposal to empower EFSA to request additional scientific studies, upon request of the Commission and financed by the EU budget and how to further strengthened risk communication to citizens through increased coordination with EU and national risk managers.

The Bureau discussed the setting-up of the next Stakeholder Forum that will take place on November 20 in Brussels. Bureau members exchanged views on the priority topics, ways to further promote the role of the science and how to encourage interactions between stakeholders via targeted discussions in break-out sessions.

As a follow-up of the previous meeting, Bureau members were updated on the progress with shaping of stakeholder discussion group on framing of questions and EFSA self-tasks. The Bureau acknowledged the importance of this engagement model where stakeholders would have an opportunity to provide input on EFSA's self-mandates and guidance documents from an early stage of the process.

As an additional way to ensure early stakeholder engagement, EFSA invited the Bureau to contribute in shaping the next three-year priority plan of EFSA's Scientific Committee, taking the societal concerns in consideration.

Bureau members were also updated on the results of the Reputation Barometer 2017⁴ and on the upcoming communication and engagement activities. The Bureau recognised the importance of clear and targeted communication and called EFSA to intensify its efforts related to strengthening the understanding of the risk assessment process among different stakeholder categories.

4. General Remarks and Next Steps

The Bureau provided recommendations on how to reduce complexity and avoid over-information, as well as on how to improve communication tools in order to better engage with stakeholders.

Bureau members also shared their views on priority topics to be discussed at the next Stakeholder Forum. EFSA will launch a survey to collect input from all registered stakeholder organisations in order to better understand their expectations and needs.

The Bureau acknowledged the importance of stakeholder engagement in framing of questions related to EFSA's self-tasking mandates, and encouraged EFSA to continue using current tools and exploring new engagement possibilities.

Based on the proposal by the Academia representative, EFSA has committed to organise a dedicated info-session on risk assessment methodologies.

The Vice-Chair of the Management Board acknowledged the work of the Bureau so far, and committed to report his impressions to the next meeting of the Management Board. EFSA's Executive Director thanked the Bureau Members for their active participation, recalling that science needs to be anchored in the society and that we need to understand how society can contribute to the advancement of EFSA science.

The next meeting of the Stakeholder Bureau will take place in October 2018.

⁴ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/event/mb180321/mb171212-i2.pdf>

Annex 1. Members of the Stakeholder Bureau

1	Consumers - BEUC	Camille Perrin Senior Food Policy Officer
2	NGOs and Advocacy Groups - Pesticide Action Network Europe	Martin Dermine (apologies) Angeliki Lyssimachou Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) & Glyphosate Campaign Coordinator
3	Farmers and Primary Producers - COPA-COGECA	Pekka Pesonen Secretary General of COPA and COGECA Javier Valle (attending the morning session) Senior Policy Advisor at COPA-COGECA
4	Business and Food Industry - FoodDrinkEurope	Beate Kettlitz Director for Food Safety, Science and R&D
5	Distributors and HORECA - Euro Commerce	Els Bedert Adviser, Product Safety (Food & Non-Food)
6	Practitioners - European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians- EFAD	Ayla Gulden Pekcan Professor at Faculty of Health Sciences, Hasan Kalyoncu University, Gaziantep, Turkey
7	Academia - Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry Europe- SETAC	José Julio Ortega Calvo Immediate Past-President of SETAC, Researcher at the Spanish National Research Council, Department of Agro-chemistry and Soil Conservation