



European Food Safety Authority

Minutes of the Management Board Meeting 27 October 2005 Palazzo Ducale, Parma

Members of the Management Board present

- Angeliki Assimakopoulou
- Ernst Bobek
- Giorgio Calabrese
- Carlos Escribano-Mora
- Peter Gaemelke
- Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle
- Matthias Horst
- Deirdre Hutton
- Robert Madelin
- Pirkko Raunemaa
- Bart Sangster
- Stuart Slorach
- Roland Vaxelaire

Staff of the European Food Safety Authority present

- Antoine Cuvillier
- Anne-Laure Gassin
- Herman Koëter
- François Monnart
- Geoffrey Podger
- Nicole Poupart
- Lionel Rigaux
- Ingela Söderlund

PUBLIC SESSION

Preliminary Formalities

Stuart Slorach opened the meeting by welcoming the Board members, the Authority's staff, those watching on the webstream and the live audience in the room.

The Chair asked if members wished to make any declarations of interest for any agenda items beyond those already made in the annual declarations of interest. The Chair informed the Board that he was no longer the Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Vice-Chair Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle announced that she would like to make an addition to her declaration of interest. She was participating, in an experimental manner, in an initiative launched by the French food industry in the area of communication about matters of nutrition. This envisaged the setting up of a self-regulating body. The initiative was still recent and there was no formal framework yet, she added.

1. Adoption of Agenda (Document MB 27.10.2005 - 1)

1.1 The Chair announced that there would be a number of points of information added to agenda item 7. The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Adoption of draft minutes of the previous meeting and matter arising from the minutes (Document MB 27.10.2005 -2)

MB 2 15.12.2005 – 2 Adopted minutes

- 2.1 The Chair stated that the minutes would be edited linguistically.
- 2.2 The Chair asked the Board for suggestions for subjects which could be discussed during the Away Day in March 2006. He reminded the Board that the March meeting would be organised at the Food Standards Agency of the UK. The Board discussed whether the strategic positioning of EFSA with regard to nutrition policy and the outcome of the EFSA review could merit the invitation of external experts to the meeting with the view to discuss the subject matter in depth. The Board agreed that this was a good proposal and the Chair suggested that the issue should be put on the December meeting agenda in order to get more detailed proposals.
- 2.3 The Chair announced that the Board had discussed an additional meeting date in February 2006 but that no date had yet been agreed. The Secretariat would send around alternative meeting dates as soon as possible. The meeting will be held in Brussels.
- 2.4 The minutes of the meeting of 13 September were adopted and would be published on the Authority's website as soon as the linguistic editing had been finalised.

3. For information: Functioning of Scientific Committee and Scientific Panels (Document MB 27.10.2005-3)

- 3.1 The Director of Science introduced the paper and specified that it was a scoping paper, descriptive in nature and aimed at highlighting issues for discussion. The paper had been discussed with the Scientific Committee which had indicated that it would like to see it back before making recommendations to the Board. The paper would also be shared with the Advisory Forum. A paper with recommendations would then be drafted and brought back to the Board, possibly at the December meeting but it would more likely be ready for the January meeting.
- 3.2 The Chair explained that the Board was not being asked to take any decision at the present meeting but would see another document with recommendations, probably at the January meeting. The Board asked the Scientific Committee to give a clear signal to the Board in its comments and recommendations and that the comments from the external evaluation of EFSA should be taken into account when the Paper was drafted. Together the comments would give the Board a better basis for taking decisions.
- 3.3 The Board discussed the document and reminded the meeting that when the Panels had been set up the Board had said clearly that contemporary risk assessment should be practiced right across the panels. The Board asked how the work on the Panels was divided between the members and whether the panels could be more effective. The work should not be too subdivided within each Panel. It was suggested that the Panels could be helped with the task of carrying out the literature searches to free the Panel members for more qualified work.
- 3.4 The Board stressed the need to safeguard consistency in the application of the risk assessment approach across Panels, especially in the context of splitting Panels, and the need to advance the science of risk assessment. Roles and responsibilities of Panels were important. Panels are responsible for their opinions, and that responsibility could be compromised if outsourcing was overused. The Board stressed that the Panels should remain responsible for their opinions even when the work was done by external experts through outsourcing. Roles and responsibilities were linked with workload and transparency issues.
- 3.5 Some Board members expressed reservations against using outsourcing when there were many national authorities with the same capabilities as EFSA. EFSA could activate part of the network of national authorities in order to achieve its objective of delivering an opinion. There could be opportunities to achieve this in a more transparent way.
- 3.6 The Board asked for point 2 of the Annex of the Paper to be corrected and requested that the paper be discussed again at the December meeting before any decisions were taken at the January meeting. The Board also suggested that some work be carried out

MB 2 15.12.2005 – 2 Adopted minutes

on the Progress Indicators so that they would be more in line with the requirements of the Scientific Committee, and for the role and remit of the Scientific Committee to be clarified in the paper. The role of the Scientific Committee in coordinating the work of the Panels to prevent overlap was stressed.

- 3.7 The Director of Science informed the Board that the Chairman of the Scientific Committee had been invited to attend the Board meetings in December and January.
- 3.8 The Board said that it was important that the work of the Scientific Committee and the work of the evaluators on similar issues could be tied together for the Board to look at simultaneously. Therefore it was suggested that the Scientific Committee might want to look at the work of the evaluators and consider some of their views. One area where this might be helpful was the extent to which Panels could use more systematic cooperation with national authorities, not just as a part of the article 36 network to share work, but also to share information about best practices.
- 3.9 The Director of Science stated that the overlap between different panels is discussed frequently by the Scientific Committee, and that overlap is sometimes a positive element. It is outlined in the paper. The cooperation and coordination with other international bodies and other EU agencies working in related areas was not addressed in the paper and would be added. The current paper would not be further developed but a new one would be produced, based on the current one and incorporating the ideas expressed by the Board.
- 3.10 The Chair closed the discussion by stating that the issue would be raised again, at the latest at the January 2006 meeting.

4. For information: Progress Indicators (Document MB 27.10.2005-4)

- 4.1 The Executive Director introduced the paper and made a small adjustment to the number of staff residing in Parma, which should be 150.
- 4.2 The Chair asked for a clarification to the first indicator and suggested that the first sentence should be changed and the text in the heading of column 3 and 4 clarified.
- 4.3 The Director of Science clarified the date in indicator 1 and stated that in fact there is so much data behind what is shown in the indicators that the full usefulness of them is not always clear.
- 4.4 A new set of indicators would be proposed in December to be used next year, including data by Panels and with a more extensive narrative to explain the data. Changes to the timetables of questions would be taken into account to include the stop-the-clock mechanism, legal and negotiated deadlines and Opinions which were adopted earlier or later than scheduled.
- 4.5 The Board asked the Director of Science to develop at least one indicator for the quality and impact of EFSA's work.
- 4.6 The Board proceeded to discuss the Staff Indicators. The Director of Human Resources stated that she expected to be able to recruit up to 75 per cent of the projected staff need for temporary agents for 2005, and that some 12 per cent of staff had left the organisation in connection with the move to Parma. The Board enquired whether money had been allocated from the budget to reinforce the Human Resources unit, and the Director of Human Resources said that 2 new staff members had been added in the recruitment area.
- 4.7 The Board enquired about the numbers for the website and whether it was possible to indicate which parts of the website were being hit and what information was sought. The Director of Communications said that EFSA would be able to provide more qualitative information about the website early next year as work was ongoing to improve the information extracted from the site. She added that science is the first part of the site which visitors go to.
- 4.8 The Board took note of the paper.

5. Geoffrey Podger: General update on developments (Document MB 27.10.2005-5)

MB 2 15.12.2005 – 2 Adopted minutes

- 5.1 The Executive Director updated the Board on EFSA's advice on Avian Influenza. The Authority had been about to post this information on its website in consultation with national authorities, when a report had appeared in a UK newspaper which seemingly presented EFSA's advice differently. It was clear, he said, that this had led to some confusion which he hoped had been rectified by the press release issued by EFSA, reflecting the same, consistent advice as had been given previously. The Commission's press statements had been closely coordinated with those of the Authority and a large number of media interviews had been given.
- 5.2 The Executive Director stated that the first meeting of the Stakeholder Platform had been held in Parma in October and the general meeting, the Colloque, would be held on 9-10 November in Parma.
- 5.3 The Executive Director was delighted to welcome the newly appointed EFSA internal auditor, Alexandrine Maviel-Sonet, to the organisation. It would now make sense to move towards an Internal Audit Committee, as discussed before by the Board. The first step would be to bring a paper to the Board in January, reflecting earlier comments and suggestions made. Work needed to be done before then, which would normally be done by an internal audit committee, eg the setting of the work programme for the internal auditor. The Executive Director hoped that until the Internal Audit Committee was instituted, this function could be filled by the Board. The Board would then set up the internal audit committee.
- 5.4 The Chair asked if the Board found this acceptable and the Board agreed, adding that this should be done quickly. The Board said that the roles of the internal and the external auditors needed to be clarified. The Executive Director said that the new internal auditor was already analysing the various work areas within EFSA.
- 5.5 The Board stated that the role of the Internal Audit Committee had to be made very clear. The Chair asked whether it was possible for a paper to be produced for the December meeting.
- 5.6 The Board asked for EFSA's communication strategies to be discussed. The Chair said that the Communications Department would work on a paper in the light of the report from the external evaluator, taking the recommendations on external communications into account.
- 5.7 The Chair had written to the Secretary General of the Commission on the subject of the extension of the term of office of the Executive Director. The Chair had received a reply from David O'Sullivan dated 10 October which had been distributed to the Board.
- 5.8 The Chair of the EFSA Steering Group monitoring the external review of EFSA reported that the Group had met three times and had examined a draft version of the final report for the first time the previous day. The final report would be ready by the beginning of December and would be sent to the Board before the next Board meeting. The Report would be made public and would be sent to the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council.

6. Final update on the move to Parma

- 6.1 The Executive Director informed the Board that Viale Piacenza project had been accepted by the European Parliament and the Council. The Board asked if local authorities could take the Board around the future building site at Viale Piacenza to explain what it would mean as a project in human terms.

MB 2 15.12.2005 – 2 Adopted minutes

The Chair informed the Board that he had received a letter from Germany inviting the Board to hold a future meeting there.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the members of the Board, the audience, the Authority's staff for the preparatory work, the interpreters and the team responsible for the web streaming.