

**Minutes**  
**FIFTH MEETING BETWEEN FOCAL POINTS AND EFSA**  
**LISBON (PORTUGAL), 13-14 MAY 2009**

**Participants**

Chair: Bernhard Berger

Austria	<i>Johann Steinwider</i>	Latvia	<i>Dace Santare</i>
Belgium	<i>Maxime Didat</i>	Lithuania	<i>Albertas Barzda</i>
Bulgaria	<i>Teri Vrabcheva</i>	Luxembourg	<i>Nathalie Welschbillig</i>
Cyprus	<i>Popi Ziegler</i>	Malta	<i>Ingrid Busuttil</i>
Czech Republic	<i>Miroslav Elckner</i>	Netherlands	<i>Jacqueline Castenmiller</i>
Denmark	<i>Arne Büchert</i>	Poland	<i>Iwona Wisniewska</i>
Estonia	<i>Piret Priisalu</i>	Portugal	<i>Manuel Barreto Dias</i>
Finland	<i>Kirsti Savela</i>	Portugal	<i>Lubelia Maria Martins da Silva</i>
France	<i>Philippe Prigent</i>	Slovakia	<i>Marica Theiszova</i>
Germany	<i>Michaela Nürnberg</i>	Slovenia	<i>Blaza Nahtigal</i>
Greece	<i>Stamatina Louka</i>	Spain	<i>Cristina Alonso-Andicoberry</i>
Hungary	<i>Judit Sali</i>	Sweden	<i>Anita Strömberg</i>
Ireland	<i>Anne-Marie Boland</i>	United Kingdom	<i>Alisdair Wotherspoon</i>
Italy	<i>Agostino Macri</i>		

## Observers and Invitees

Switzerland	<i>Judith Beck</i>
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## Staff of the European Food Safety Authority

<i>Bernhard Berger</i>	
<i>Stef Bronzwear</i>	<i>Torben Nilsson</i>
<i>Monika Adamova</i>	<i>Saadia Noorani</i>
<i>Paul Dragan</i>	<i>Sérgio Potier Rodeia</i>
<i>Kerstin Gross-Helmert</i>	<i>Andras Szoradi</i>

### 1 WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

Manuel Barreto Dias, Scientific Director of the Economy and Food Safety Standards Authority (ASAE) and Portuguese Focal Point (FP) opened the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting between Focal Points and EFSA on behalf of ASAE's Inspector General, Dr. Antonio Nunes.

Bernhard Berger from EFSA's Scientific Cooperation Unit (SCO) thanked the Inspector General for his words of welcome and for hosting the meeting. He also thanked Manuel Barreto Dias and his team for their support in organising this event.

Bernhard Berger welcomed the participants and expressed his appreciation that representatives from 26 Member States (MS) and Switzerland participated at the meeting. He particularly welcomed those participants who attended the Focal Point meeting for the first time. Apologies for this meeting were received from the Romanian and Norwegian Focal Points.

### 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Two new items were raised by FPs and have been placed on the agenda under *Any Other Business* (AOB), namely 1) feedback from the Conference on Food Safety in Prague in April 2009 and 2) feedback from the exchange of experiences between FPs before the 5<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting. EFSA raised three additional items under AOB: 1) future FP Meetings, 2) EFSA's call for external review experts and 3) information on Article 36. The agenda was adopted without further comments from participants.

The draft minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting were distributed to FPs in March 2009. The minutes were approved without comments from participants and will shortly be placed on EFSA's website. Participants were reminded that EFSA needs to receive approval of the draft minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting in writing by at least two thirds of participants to allow the minutes to be placed on the web before the following meeting.

The Chair stressed the importance of filling in the Declarations of Interest (DoI). SCO screened the Annual DoI (ADoI) filled in by the FPs invited to this meeting, in

accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests. The Chair invited participants to orally declare any further conflicts of interest. With regard to the ADoIs and this meeting, no other interests than those already declared in the ADoI and screened by EFSA in accordance with its Policy on Declarations of Interests and implementing documents thereof were declared by experts.

Participants were reminded that FPs should not hesitate to contact SCO whenever they feel a topic/subject would be of interest for discussion at a FP Meeting. To give enough time for discussions and exchange of experiences, FPs agreed that future FP Meetings could be longer or held more frequently, depending on necessity.

FPs were also reminded that all e-mail messages related to FP activities (incl. questions) should be sent to the scientific cooperation mailbox ([Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu)) rather than to a single person, and that e-mail messages sent by one FP to all other FPs (e.g. requesting information from one another) should be copied to the scientific cooperation mailbox. Furthermore, any changes in FP contact persons and/or details should be communicated to SCO as soon as possible.

*Action 1: FPs to inform SCO (scientific cooperation mailbox) if they have any items for an upcoming FP meeting 5 weeks in advance of the next meeting.*

*Action 2: FPs to send/copy all e-mail messages related to FP activities (incl. questions) to scientific cooperation mailbox rather than to a single person at SCO/EFSA and to copy the mailbox whenever one FP sends a message to all other FPs (e.g. requesting information from one another).*

*Action 3: FPs to inform SCO (scientific cooperation mailbox) of any changes in FP contact persons and/or details ASAP.*

### **3 PRESENTATION OF ASAE**

Manuel Barreto Dias gave an overview of ASAE, describing its creation, structure and main tasks. Further he described how ASAE and EFSA worked together closely over the past years. The discussion showed that there is a general interest among FPs in finding out more on how risk assessment is organised in the different MS, like on this occasion in Portugal.

### **4 FOCAL POINT ACTIVITIES 2009**

#### **4.1 EDB update and demonstration of search tool**

Sérgio Potier Rodeia from SCO updated FPs on the growth of EFSA's Expert Database (EDB) since its launch in June 2008 and presented the plan of activities for 2009. FPs were encouraged to identify national expert databases related to EFSA's remit, if not already done so, to help further populate EFSA's database with experts. SCO will contact relevant FPs individually about further actions on input received so far, namely on national expert databases already identified and/or lists of experts provided.

Sérgio Potier Rodeia then demonstrated the search tool of the EDB to FPs, as they had received access to the tool in March 2009, following the AF Meeting in February 2009. FPs were invited to use the information in the EDB for their own scientific activities, provided they observed the applicable data protection legislation. It was clarified that FPs will only see the profiles of those experts who have agreed to share their details with MS. All other profiles included in the EDB are only visible to EFSA.

It was also clarified that the EDB has no closing date for registration/application. The use of the EDB and other aspects, such as the coverage of the different fields of competence or the distribution of nationalities, will be summarised in an annual report by the end of the year.

*Action 4: FPs to look for national expert databases, if not already done so, and inform SCO accordingly.*

*Action 5: SCO to contact relevant FPs individually about further actions on input received so far concerning national expert databases.*

#### 4.2 Country profiles – current status

Michaela Nürnberg from the German FP gave an overview of the current status of BfR's "EU Food Safety Almanac" country profiles project related to risk assessment of food and feed, animal health and welfare, GMO, nutrition and plant health. She described the procedure and indicative timelines. The establishment of country profiles was one of the recommendations of the ESCO Working Group on Harmonisation of Risk Assessment Approaches in MS. At the last FP Meeting there had been a proposal to set up a FP Working Group on country profiles. As BfR is already well advanced with the draft country profiles, the establishment of a FP Working Group on this subject was found not to be appropriate for the time being. In the coming weeks the BfR will send the missing draft country profiles to the relevant FPs for comments and validation.

As part of the discussion, the main difference between the country profiles of the Food and Veterinary Office's (FVO) and the country profiles of BfR were stressed: while the former targets risk management and control, the latter targets risk assessment. In addition, the latter should give a simple summary, with the same overall structure and layout for each participating country (MS, Norway, Switzerland and Iceland). It was stressed that it was concluded at the AF Meeting on 18/19 February in Ljubljana that the FPs should support the BfR with the country profiles, mainly to update the information. It was also stressed that the work of the FPs would be acknowledged in the preamble of the EU Almanac.

*Action 6: FPs to validate and update country profiles whenever appropriate.*

#### 4.3 Information Exchange Platform (IEP)

Saadia Noorani from SCO summarised the progress on the IEP and gave a demonstration of both, modifications and new features. It was pointed out that uploading documents onto the IEP increased the visibility of the work of the respective countries.

FPs found the monthly report of newly uploaded documents on the IEP very useful. SCO will therefore continue to produce and distribute monthly reports and continue to send monthly reminders to upload new document 5-7 days prior to the end of each month. It was suggested that the reports should be placed on the IEP. In addition, FPs asked if the monthly reports could also be uploaded onto the FP webpages, as it would help wider dissemination. SCO will check with the AF if they agree to freely distribute the monthly reports via the Internet.

As the AF had decided to expand the group having access to the IEP, AF Members had been requested to send a list of people they wish to give access. SCO would then summarise the information and present it to the AF at its next meeting.

Regarding copyright issues, it was pointed out that FPs should clarify the situation with authors/owners of the document before uploading it onto the IEP. It was reiterated that no confidential documents shall be uploaded onto the IEP.

*Action 7: SCO to check with the AF if they agree with the FP proposal to freely distribute the monthly IEP reports within their countries (e.g. by placing on their FP websites).*

*Action 8: SCO to provide feedback on the decision of the AF on who should have access to the IEP.*

#### 4.4 Work Programmes

Paul Dragan from SCO gave an overview of the exchange of work plans, explaining the background of the request and presenting the current status of the shared information. Due to the relatively low number of available documents and their high diversity, it was suggested to establish a FP Working Group to develop a reporting table which could be used to share the necessary information. FPs were invited and encouraged to express an interest to participate in this working group by sending a message to [Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu) by the end of May 2009.

*Action 9: FPs to express an interest in case they wish to participate in the FP Working Group on National Work Programmes by sending an e-mail message to the scientific cooperation mailbox by the end of May 2009.*

## 5 FOCAL POINT REPORTING

Andras Szoradi from SCO and Monika Adamova from EFSA's Communications Department presented the reporting template for the 2009 Report on FP activities. The template had been slightly revised according to the activities foreseen for 2009, comments received from FPs and EFSA's Communications Directorate, and experiences with reporting in 2008. Andras also presented the anticipated timelines for the 2009 reporting, which would also be presented to the AF at its next meeting.

In the following discussion FPs pointed out that it would not be feasible for them to fill in the annex to the reporting template related to communication activities, for the following reasons: 1) the FP e-mail lists are too long; 2) the documents are, in general, distributed

further and FPs have no knowledge and influence to whom they are being forwarded to; and 3) in cases when documents are disseminated via national FP webpages, no information is available who has accessed them. The feedback of FPs would be reported to the Communications Department to consider revising the annex.

Regarding funding, it was clarified that only the amount of EFSA funding indicated in the FP Agreement needed to be fully justified. Nevertheless, it would be beneficial if FPs could indicate in the comments section of the reporting template if the listed costs do not cover the actual, full costs incurred by the MS. The question was raised whether it would be possible to submit an audit certificate instead of providing proof of all costs in the form of sending copies of invoices. SCO will check with EFSA's Finance Unit.

FPs were invited to send any comments on reporting procedure for 2009, 3 weeks before the next FP meeting to [Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:Scientific.Cooperation@efsa.europa.eu).

*Action 10: SCO to inform the AF about timelines for FP reporting.*

*Action 11: Communications to consider revising the annex to the FP reporting template to accommodate the FP comments received at the 5<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting.*

*Action 12: SCO to check with EFSA's Finance Unit if they would accept an audit certificate as proof of spending.*

*Action 13: FPs to send comments on reporting procedure for 2009 to scientific cooperation mailbox 3 weeks before the next FP meeting.*

## **6 RELEVANT ISSUES FROM THE AF MEETING**

Torben Nilsson, from the Scientific Committee & Advisory Forum Unit, Advisory Forum Team Leader, informed participants of relevant issues from the AF Meeting held in Ljubljana (18-19 February 2009) and Bucharest (22-23 April 2009) and the special AF Meeting on Animal Health in Vilnius (12 May 2009). Participants were informed that the minutes of the meeting in Ljubljana were already available on EFSA's website.

For FPs to most effectively prepare the briefing notes for their AF Member, the AF Secretariat was asked whether it would be possible to indicate a contact person for each distributed paper. The Secretariat will look into the possibility of indicating a contact person.

*Action 14: SC&AF to investigate the possibility of indicating a contact person when sharing documents for AF Meetings.*

## **7 COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES**

Monika Adamova informed participants about EFSA's communications work, including recent and upcoming publications, press activities, EFSA's website, and upcoming events.

## 8 ASPARTAME

Marica Theiszova from the Slovakian FP gave an overview of the conclusions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of National Experts on Aspartame, which took place on 2-3 April 2009 in London. She explained the background and preparation of the meeting, gave a brief overview of the endpoints covered in peer-reviewed information, and informed participants of the next steps of the Organising Team. More information on the expert meeting will be published on EFSA's website. The final report of the Organising Team on Aspartame will be presented to the AF after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of National Experts.

## 9 EXTRANET PRESENTATION

Kerstin Gross-Helmert from SCO gave a demonstration of the FP Workspace on Extranet and showed how to access and handle documents. The link to the FP Extranet Manual is: [https://sciencenet.efsa.europa.eu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS\\_0\\_51500\\_28627\\_0\\_0\\_18/Extranet%20User%20Manual%20vs2.pdf](https://sciencenet.efsa.europa.eu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_51500_28627_0_0_18/Extranet%20User%20Manual%20vs2.pdf). Some FPs pointed out that the links to the AF and FP contacts were not visible for them. SCO will check with IT and inform FPs accordingly.

*Action 15: SCO to check with IT why the AF and FP contacts are not visible to all FPs.*

## 10 AOB

### **Feedback from the Conference on Food Safety in Prague on 21-22 April 2009**

Miroslav Elckner from the Czech FP gave an overview of the background of the conference, its programme and participants, as well as the conclusions reached. It was agreed that the presentation would be placed on the Extranet for information.

### **Feedback from the exchange of experiences between FPs before the 5<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting**

Philippe Prigent, French alternate FP, summarised the short discussion attended by four FPs before the 5<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting. The objective of the discussion was to exchange experiences and practical information covering the following areas:

- IEP: copyright issues, creation of new folders, and how FPs utilise the information on the IEP;
- Article 36: the timeframe for submitting proposals is in general short and varies from one call to the next, intellectual property rights related to delivered reports/outputs, and interest of Article 36 organisations to receive detailed feedback on unsuccessful applications;
- networking between FPs: sharing a summary of findings with all FPs when requesting feedback on certain topics.

Regarding the questions raised by FPs on intellectual property rights and feedback of the evaluation of calls, SCO will contact EFSA's Legal Unit to seek clarification. The Chair

proposed that these questions could be discussed in detail at the next FP Meeting, where a larger session on Article 36 is planned.

*Action 16: FPs to share a summary of replies/findings with all other FPs whenever a request for information was sent out by a FP.*

*Action 17: SCO to ask EFSA's Legal Unit to give FPs feedback on intellectual property rights with regard to Article 36 calls for proposals.*

*Action 18: SCO to check with EFSA's Legal Unit if it is possible to provide detailed feedback on why applications for calls were not successful.*

### **Future FP Meetings**

Kerstin Gross-Helmert presented the provisional dates of future FP Meetings in 2009 and 2010. FPs were invited to contact SCO if they wished to host a meeting in 2010. FPs were reminded only to book tickets once they receive a formal invitation from EFSA.

*Action 19: FPs to inform SCO (scientific cooperation mailbox) if they wish to host a FP Meeting in 2010.*

*Action 20: SCO to ensure that meeting documents are shared via Extranet at least 10 working days before the meeting.*

### **EFSA's call for external review experts**

Torben Nilsson explained the background of the call for external review experts, the selection criteria and deadline for applications. In the following discussion it was stressed that the applications will be assessed by a Committee. At the beginning of the review process, the number of opinions to be reviewed is expected to be limited. Once proven successful, the number of reviewed EFSA scientific outputs could be increased.

### **Information on Article 36**

Bernhard Berger informed participants that Article 36 would be an important item on the FP Meeting agenda in September 2009. In addition, training on Article 36 would be offered to FPs to support their training initiatives of Article 36 organisations. Planned activities include:

- development of an Extranet platform for Article 36 organisations, which would contain information on calls and guidance documents, and would provide the possibility of creating discussion fora, for example to look for consortium partners;
- consolidation of the Article 36 List, which will be sent to FPs in the near future for review;
- development of a database for contact details of Article 36 organisations (in 2010).

*Action 21: SCO to include Article 36 on the agenda of the 6<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting.*



Action 22: SCO to offer FPs training on the envisaged Article 36 platform on Extranet.

## 11 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Manuel Barreto Dias expressed his pleasure to have hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting in Lisbon and thanked all participants for coming.

The Chair closed the meeting. He thanked the Portuguese FP for hosting the meeting and for their excellent support in organising it. He also thanked participants for attending the meeting and for their active contribution in the various discussions. He stressed the continued commitment of the SCO Unit to cooperate with, and support, the FPs in their work.

### SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Reference	Who	What
Action 1	FPs	<i>to inform SCO (scientific cooperation mailbox) if they have any items for an upcoming FP meeting 5 weeks in advance of the next meeting</i>
Action 2	FPs	<i>to send/copy all e-mail messages related to FP activities (incl. questions) to scientific cooperation mailbox rather than to a single person at SCO/EFSA and to copy the mailbox whenever one FP sends a message to all other FPs (e.g. requesting information from one another)</i>
Action 3	FPs	<i>to inform SCO (scientific cooperation mailbox) of any changes in FP contact persons and/or details ASAP</i>
Action 4	FPs	<i>to look for national expert databases, if not already done so, and inform SCO accordingly</i>
Action 5	SCO	<i>to contact relevant FPs individually about further actions on input received so far concerning national expert databases</i>
Action 6	FPs	<i>to validate and update country profiles whenever appropriate</i>
Action 7	SCO	<i>to check with the AF if they agree with the FP proposal to freely distribute the monthly IEP reports within their countries (e.g. by placing on their FP websites)</i>
Action 8	AF	<i>SCO to provide feedback on the decision of the AF on who should have access to the IEP</i>
Action 9	FPs	<i>to express an interest in case they wish to participate in the FP Working Group on National Work Programmes by sending an e-mail message to the scientific cooperation mailbox by the end of May 2009</i>
Action 10	SCO	<i>to inform the AF about timelines for FP reporting</i>
Action 11	COMM	<i>to consider revising the annex to the FP reporting template to accommodate the FP comments received at the 5<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting</i>

Action 12	SCO	<i>to check with EFSA's Finance Unit if they would accept an audit certificate as proof of spending</i>
Action 13	FPS	<i>to send comments on reporting procedure for 2009 to scientific cooperation mailbox 3 weeks before the next FP meeting</i>
Action 14	SC&AF	<i>to investigate the possibility of indicating a contact person when sharing documents for AF Meetings</i>
Action 15	SCO	<i>to check with IT why the AF and FP contacts are not visible to all FPS</i>
Action 16	FPS	<i>to share a summary of replies/findings with all other FPS whenever a request for information was sent out by a FP</i>
Action 17	SCO	<i>to ask EFSA's Legal Unit to give FPS feedback on intellectual property rights with regard to Article 36 calls for proposals</i>
Action 18	SCO	<i>to check with EFSA's Legal Unit if it is possible to provide detailed feedback on why applications for calls were not successful</i>
Action 19	FPS	<i>to inform SCO (scientific cooperation mailbox) if they wish to host a FP Meeting in 2010</i>
Action 20	SCO	<i>to ensure that meeting documents are shared via Extranet at least 10 working days before the meeting</i>
Action 21	SCO	<i>to include Article 36 on the agenda of the 6<sup>th</sup> FP Meeting</i>
Action 22	SCO	<i>to offer FPS training on the envisaged Article 36 platform on Extranet</i>