

The European Food Safety Authority: working together

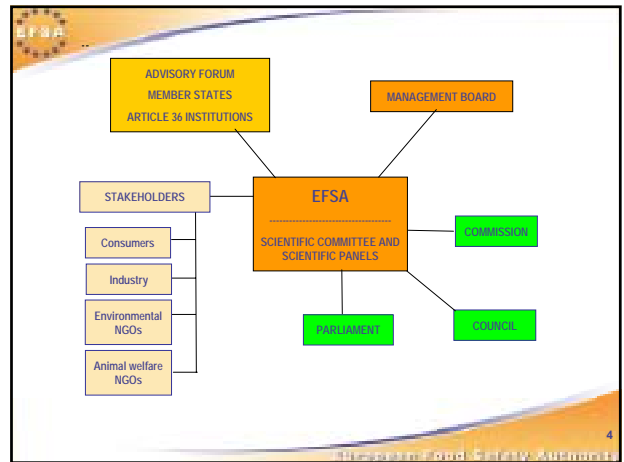
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EFSA's mission

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is the keystone of European Union (EU) risk assessment regarding food and feed safety. In close collaboration with national authorities and in open consultation with its stakeholders, EFSA provides independent scientific advice and clear communication on existing and emerging risks.

Separate risk assessment from risk management

- EFSA is fully independent of the Commission in its scientific work;
- Close cooperation with the Commission and Member States;
- EFSA shares the area of risk communication with the Commission and Member States.



Scientific Panels

- Structure defined in the founding Regulation and copied from the Commission;
- Together covering the whole food chain;
- Expert members appointed by Management Board following a call to express interest;
- Maximum of 21 members per panel selected on the basis of scientific excellence, area of expertise, gender and geographical balance.

The 9 Scientific Panels

- Food additives, flavourings, processing aids, materials in contact with food (AFC)
- Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW)
- Biological hazards (BIOHAZ)
- Contaminants in the food chain (CONTAM)
- Additives and products in animal feed (FEEDAP)
- Plant Protection Products (PPR)
- Genetically modified organisms (GMO)
- Dietetic products, nutrition and allergies (NDA)
- Plant Health Panel (PLH)

Scientific Committee

- Comprises the Chairs of all 9 Panels;
- Additional 6 independent members;
- Provides guidance to all Panels;
- Manages projects involving several Panels;
- Advises EFSA on emerging issues and priorities for scientific work.

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Scientific activities (work themes) :

- Providing scientific opinions, guidance and advice in response to questions;
- Assessing the risk of regulated substances and development of proposals for risk-related factors;
- Monitoring of specific animal health risk factors and diseases;
- Development, promotion and application of new and harmonized scientific approaches and methodologies for hazard and risk assessment of food and feed.

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Providing scientific opinions, guidance and advice in response to questions

A few examples:

- Review of the scientific justification for the import ban on US beef;
- Risks and benefits of wild and farmed fish;
- Evaluation of new evidence suggesting serious health risks of aspartame;
- Perception of pain in unborn vertebrate animals.

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Assessing the risk of specific groups of chemical substances

Chemical categories include :

- ✓ Food additives, smoke flavourings, enzymes;
- ✓ Food processing aides;
- ✓ Food contact materials;
- ✓ Additives for use in animal nutrition;
- ✓ Pesticides; and
- ✓ Genetically modified organisms, food and feed.

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Monitoring of specific risk factors and diseases

- Geographical BSE risk assessment;
- BSE / TSE testing and validation of tests;
- Annual zoonosis report;
- Containment and eradication of animal diseases (e.g. AI, food and mouth disease, rabies).

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Investing in food science: focus areas

- Harmonization of detection methodology for chemical and microbiological contaminants in food/feed;
- Improving the risk assessment process (e.g., environment, transparency, animal health and welfare, specific substances);
- Methodologies to detect and recognise emerging risks;
- Exposure assessment modelling (chemical and microbiological).

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Investing in food science (2)

- Organization of open scientific EFSA meetings, to discuss in-depth topical and sensitive issues related to EFSA's mission : EFSA **Science Colloquiums**;
- Adequate follow-up on EFSA Scientific Colloquiums (e.g. development of Guidance Documents);
- Active participation in and monitoring of scientific projects, conferences and other scientific meetings in Member States.

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EFSA Science

European Food Safety Authority

A Science Colloquium is:

- an interactive event rather than only a passive listening to lectures;
- a platform for scientists to have in-depth discussions on scientific approaches and methods available and tools and data needed for conducting a risk assessment
- an event to explore opportunities and limitations for defining a common understanding of the issue at hand and
- an opportunity to define further research needs.

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EFSA Science

European Food Safety Authority

The Colloquium is not:

- An attempt to agree on the details of a preferred strategy or approach, if any
- An attempt to finalise a blue print for the work ahead of us;
- A "what is right and what is wrong" discussion.

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Science Colloquiums

- Setting threshold levels for Dioxins and PCBs (2004);
- Qualified Presumption of Safety of microorganisms (2004);
- Collection of European Food Consumption Data (2005);
- Principles of risk assessment of animal health and welfare (2005);
- Consumption based dietary guidelines (2006);
- Risk/benefit analysis (June 2006);
- Cumulative risk assessment of pesticides (December 2006)

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Challenges and opportunities

- Timely delivery and communication of scientific opinions and advice;

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Challenges and opportunities

- Timely delivery and communication of scientific opinions and advice:

- ✓ *Staff limitations*
- ✓ *Legal deadlines*
- ✓ *Panel workloads*
- ✓ *Organisation of the work*
- ✓ *Outsourcing*

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Challenges and opportunities

- Timely delivery and communication of scientific opinions and advice;
- **Strengthen relationships with European institutional partners, national food safety authorities and stakeholders;**

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Strengthen relationships with European institutional partners, national food safety authorities and stakeholders

- Relationship with the Commission, Parliament and Council
- Working with Member States
 - a) through the Advisory Forum and Focal Points;
 - b) information exchange: declaration of intent;
 - c) cooperation strategy.
- Working with other national authorities (MoUs)
- Cooperation with international organisations

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Challenges and opportunities

- Timely delivery and communication of scientific opinions and advice;
- Strengthen relationships with European institutional partners, national food safety authorities and stakeholders;
- Recognition and timely address of emerging risks:
 - ✓ *Development of a detection system*
 - ✓ *Networking with all food safety agencies*
 - ✓ *Avoiding crises*

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Challenges and opportunities

- Timely delivery and communication of scientific opinions and advice;
- Strengthen relationships with European institutional partners, national food safety authorities and stakeholders;
- Recognition and timely address of emerging risks;
- Adequate investment in scientific developments;

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Challenges and opportunities

- Timely delivery and communication of scientific opinions and advice;
- Strengthen relationships with European institutional partners, national authorities and stakeholders;
- Recognition and timely address of emerging risks;
- Adequate investment in scientific developments
 - ✓ *Priority setting*
 - ✓ *Cooperation*
 - ✓ *Budget*

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Challenges and opportunities

- Timely delivery and communication of scientific opinions and advice;
- Strengthen relationships with European institutional partners, national food safety authorities and stakeholders;
- Recognition and timely address of emerging risks;
- Adequate investment in scientific developments;
- Building consumers' trust and confidence in EFSA.

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Working towards consumers' trust and confidence in EFSA

- Openness and transparency
- Involvement of Member States' experts in the work
- Consultation of all stakeholders
- Harmonization of methodology
- Common approaches for risk assessment

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Challenges and opportunities: some examples

- GMO assessments
- Aspartame
- Nutrition and health claims
- Pesticides assessment
- Blue Tongue
- Avian Influenza
- Zoonosis report

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Interesting websites :

Register of requested opinions :
http://www.efsa.eu.int/register/qr_panels_en.html

EFSA's general website :
<http://www.efsa.eu.int>

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