

Declaration of Commitment

of the Members of the Advisory Forum
of the European Food Safety Authority

INTRODUCTION

The Advisory Forum (AF) of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is an integral part of EFSA, the main link between EFSA and the food safety institutions in the member states tasked with a similar remit and one of the four constituent bodies provided for in the founding Regulation (EC) No. 178 of 2002.

The Forum brings together, in a roundtable setting, representatives of the member states, candidate countries, the Commission and the EFSA Executive.

Since its inaugural meeting in March 2003, the AF has worked to forge closer links between the member states' food safety institutions and EFSA to maximise the sharing of scientific information with a view to protecting Europe's citizens. This has been achieved through improved risk assessment, better collaboration, avoidance of duplication, open communication on and contribution to the resolution of divergent scientific opinions, early identification of potential or emerging risks, and greater consistency in risk communications.

The AF members work together to inform the work programme of EFSA in the areas of risk assessment, exchange of scientific information, development of scientific networks and communication.

To strengthen its effectiveness and the dissemination of the aims and outputs of EFSA, the AF has appointed national focal points and established a working group on risk communication.

The AF recognises the merit and importance of collaboration and collective effort and, at the same time, acknowledges that it has legal responsibilities to discharge as set out in the founding regulation.

In 2006 the members of the Advisory Forum signed a Declaration of Intent concerning the enhancement of the exchange of scientific information amongst its members and EFSA.

In 2012 the members of the Advisory Forum also declared their confidence in the independence and scientific decision-making processes of EFSA and their commitment to strengthening science-based policy-making.

The Advisory Forum wishes to reaffirm and update these declarations.

In the light of the foregoing and the ever changing challenges to food safety, taking account of the need for continuous improvement in its operation and in the spirit of on-going shared determination to protect the consumers of Europe and at the same time contribute to the global reports on food and feed safety, the members of the AF make the following Declaration of Commitment.

DECLARATION

The Members of the AF agree to:

- I. Act independently in the public interest
- II. Strengthen the relationships between EFSA and the food safety institutions in the member states
- III. Share information on risk assessments which are being planned or concluded
- IV. Promptly inform each other about notifications of communications to the public on matters of high interest, where possible providing advance notification
- V. Share data, including the level of uncertainty, which would be beneficial for risk assessments
- VI. Pool knowledge on potential or emerging risks to food safety
- VII. Disseminate the work programmes and risk assessments of EFSA
- VIII. Provide early warning of potential divergence of scientific opinion
- IX. Work to review and resolve any real or potential divergence of scientific opinion between member states or between member states and EFSA
- X. Promote scientific excellence and scientific networking
- XI. Promote the active engagement of national institutions in support of EFSA's mission, as envisaged by Article 36 of the founding regulation
- XII. Ensure a coherent approach between member states and EFSA to the communication of science and risk assessment
- XIII. Contribute to the EU risk assessment agenda
- XIV. Identify grant and procurement opportunities to improve risk assessment across Europe
- XV. Promote life-long learning initiatives that can strengthen the capacity for risk assessment and risk communication in the member states
- XVI. Support joint international cooperation for the improvement of food safety and risk communication
- XVII. Identify areas for research on food safety and associated opportunities for collaboration
- XVIII. Provide advice to the Executive Director on EFSA work programmes and research needs
- XIX. Support the mission and the merging of strategic goals of EFSA and the member states in order to meet the challenges in the area of food and feed safety in all its forms

28 September, 2016
Bratislava, Slovak Republic