European Food Safety Authority

How do we communicate about risks?

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Communication and Risk Perception in the Field of Food Safety
Prague, 29 May 2013

Purpose

Provide appropriate, consistent, accurate and timely communications on food safety issues to all interested parties, stakeholders and the public at large, based on the Authority's risk assessments and scientific expertise.

Growing media & public interest

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nature

European food authority to open up GMO data

FOOD INGREDIENTS FIRST

EFSA Promotes Public Access to Data in Transparency Initiative

AFP

Abeilles: Bruxelles recommande une interdiction ciblée des pesticides

Agence Europe

SANTÉ ANIMALE: rapport de l'EFSA sur le virus de Schmallenberg

The Economist

The proof of the pudding

adnkronos Agenzia

Alimenti: Efsa, al via iniziativa trasparenza su valutazione rischio

ep europa press

UE.- La CE pedirá hoy que se prohíba el uso de tres neonicotinoides en algunos cultivos por riesgo para las abejas

FoodBev.com INNOVATION WINNER

EFSA report on antimicrobial resistance affecting food

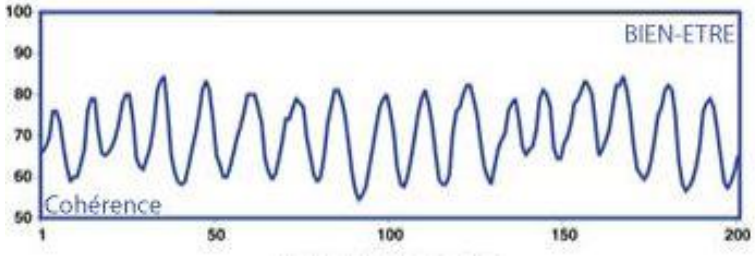
The Sunday Telegraph

What's in your meat? All the answers lie in Europe

How we work

Understand **CONSUMER PERCEPTION** of food and food safety risks
(Eurobarometer report, 2006 and 2010)

Bridge the **GAP** between science and the consumer
(Advisory Group on Risk Comms)



Promote **COHERENT** risk communications
(Advisory Forum WG on Comms;
Pre-notification of press releases)

Risk perception: Country differences

Top concerns in Member States

Pesticide residues: GREECE, LITHUANIA, ITALY, LUXEMBOURG, BULGARIA, HUNGARY, FRANCE, MALTA, SLOVENIA, GERMANY, BELGIUM, AUSTRIA

Antibiotics residues in meat: CYPRUS, THE NETHERLANDS

Pollutants like mercury: FRANCE

Quality and freshness of food: LATVIA, LITHUANIA, PORTUGAL, SPAIN, DENMARK, MALTA, ESTONIA, IRELAND

The welfare of farmed animals: SWEDEN, UNITED KINGDOM, FINLAND

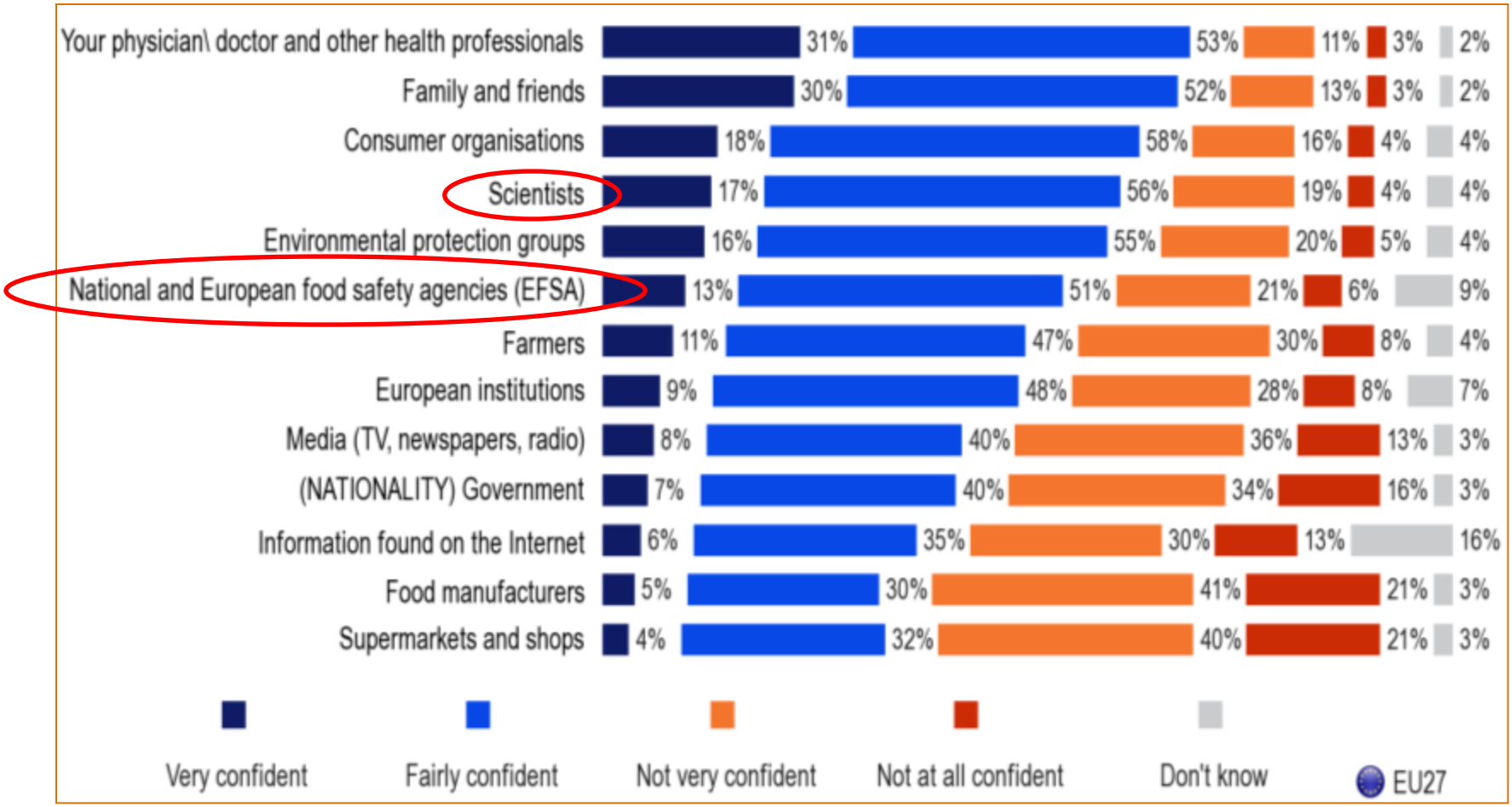
Additives in food and drinks: POLAND, ROMANIA

GMOs: AUSTRIA

Food poisoning from bacteria: BULGARIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA

QF4: Please tell me to what extent you are worried or not about the following issues.

Who do consumers trust? (Eurobarometer, 2010)



QF5 Suppose a serious food risk were found in a food you eat regularly such as fish, chicken or salad. How much confidence would you have in the following sources to give you accurate information about this risk?

Key strategic priorities: 2010-2013

- **Simplicity and transparency**: increase relevance and understanding of EFSA communications for key target audiences and informed lay audiences, in co-operation with MS

- **Independence**: augment proactive communications on the independence of EFSA's risk assessment advice

- **Visibility and outreach:** enhance outreach, in the EU and beyond (increase awareness and recognition of EFSA)

- **Coherence:** further increase…across EU and beyond

- **Dialogue:** enhance dialogue with stakeholders and increase audience interactivity

⇨ Support by continuing to **strengthen capacity** for effective risk communications

Integrated communications: the thematic approach

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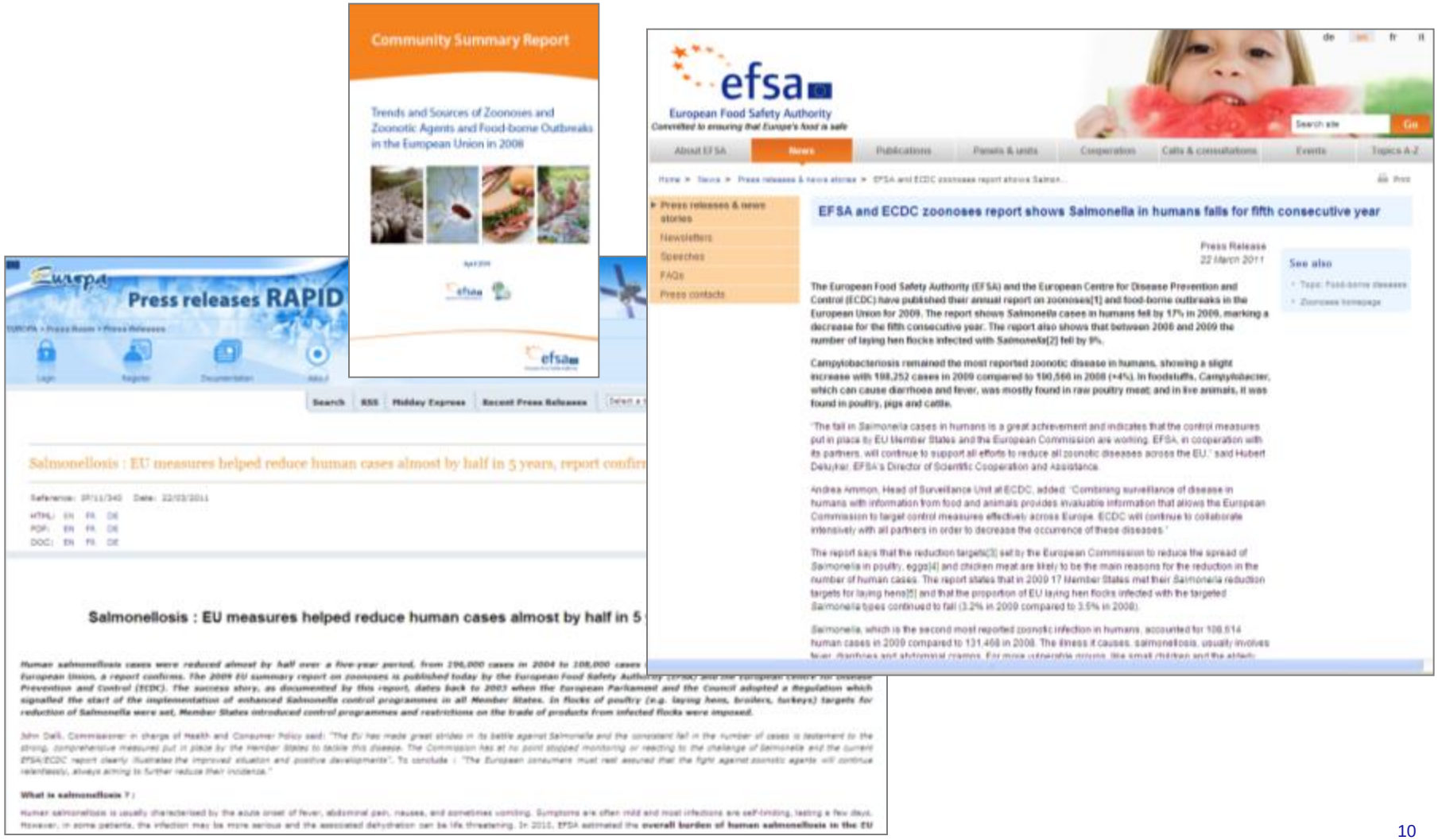
⇨ **Increase impact & effectiveness**

- more meaningful and relevant communications
- themes reflecting both consumer concerns & public health priorities
- continous “campaign” approach with key milestones
- more “occasions to see” (across all channels & tools)
- opportunity to strengthen co-operation with key partners
- more efficient/effective use of resources

Public health: bringing the themes to life online

Coordination with risk managers:
Joint EU action to protect consumers

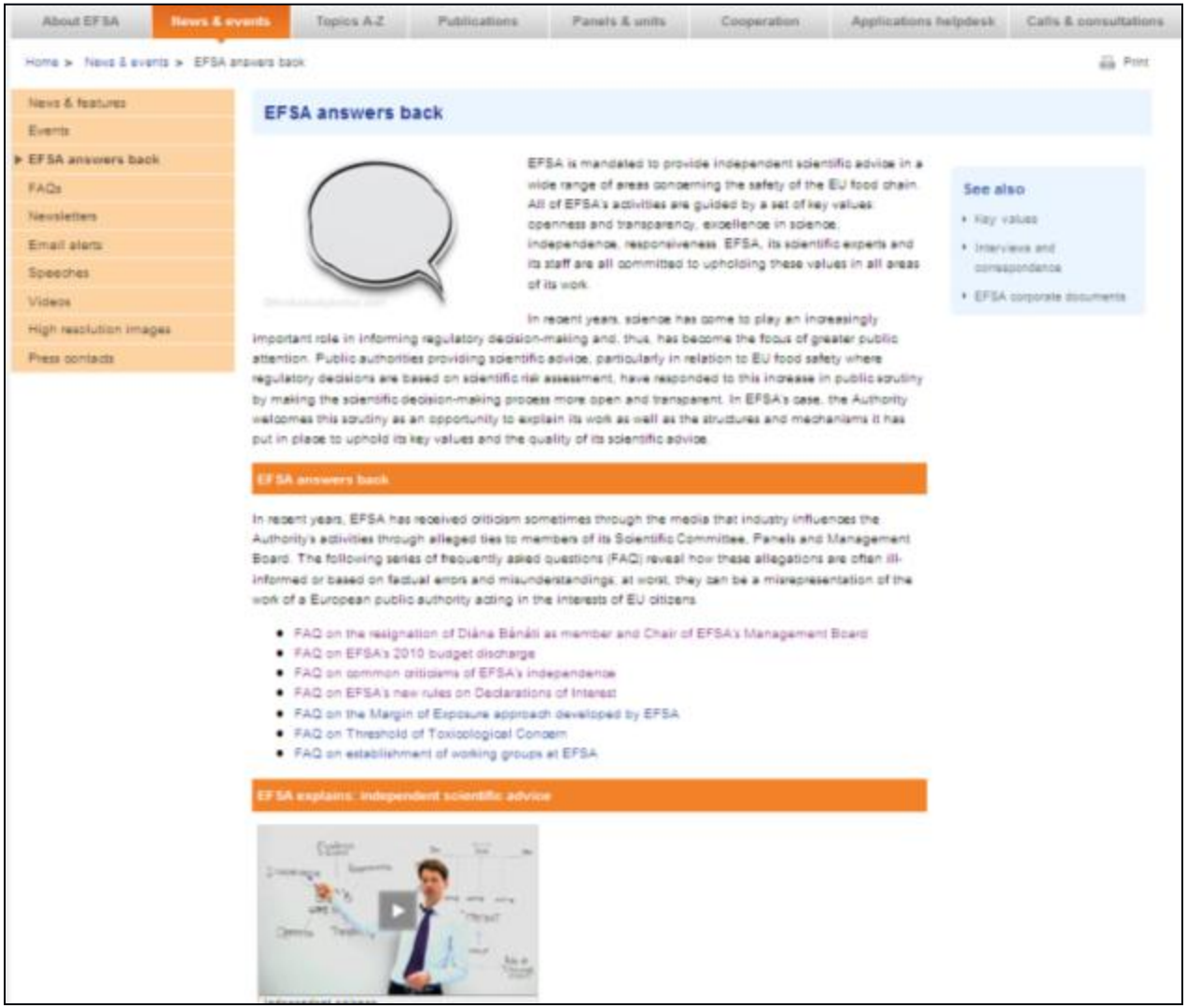


Transparency online

- **Main interface with outside world**
- **Key vehicle for transparency**

- ✓ **Visits per year: over 4.5 million**
- ✓ **Newsletter subscriptions: 30,000 +**
- ✓ **Independence workshop web casting:**
  - 1600 views;
  - 2800 + on demand

EFSA Answers Back



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EFSA answers back

EFSA is mandated to provide independent scientific advice in a wide range of areas concerning the safety of the EU food chain. All of EFSA's activities are guided by a set of key values: openness and transparency, excellence in science, independence, responsiveness. EFSA, its scientific experts and its staff are all committed to upholding these values in all areas of its work.

In recent years, science has come to play an increasingly important role in informing regulatory decision-making and, thus, has become the focus of greater public attention. Public authorities providing scientific advice, particularly in relation to EU food safety where regulatory decisions are based on scientific risk assessment, have responded to this increase in public scrutiny by making the scientific decision-making process more open and transparent. In EFSA's case, the Authority welcomes this scrutiny as an opportunity to explain its work as well as the structures and mechanisms it has put in place to uphold its key values and the quality of its scientific advice.

See also

- Key values
- Interviews and correspondence
- EFSA corporate documents

EFSA answers back

In recent years, EFSA has received criticism sometimes through the media that industry influences the Authority's activities through alleged ties to members of its Scientific Committee, Panels and Management Board. The following series of frequently asked questions (FAQ) reveal how these allegations are often ill-informed or based on factual errors and misunderstandings; at worst, they can be a misrepresentation of the work of a European public authority acting in the interests of EU citizens.

- FAQ on the resignation of Diána Bánáti as member and Chair of EFSA's Management Board
- FAQ on EFSA's 2010 budget discharge
- FAQ on common criticisms of EFSA's independence
- FAQ on EFSA's new rules on Declarations of Interest
- FAQ on the Margin of Exposure approach developed by EFSA
- FAQ on Threshold of Toxicological Concern
- FAQ on establishment of working groups at EFSA

EFSA explains: independent scientific advice

New tools:
explaining risk assessment

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Social media outreach

EFSA Twitter account launched January 2012

- Followers: 2628 (general public, experts, media and stakeholders)

EFSA YouTube channel launched July 2012 (*Understanding Science* videos, corporate videos)

Events/scientific outreach: 2011-2012

EFSA Anniversary

- Scientific conference, 7-8 November 2012, Parma
- EFSA/DG SANCO conference in November, Parma (taking stock and looking to the future)

Joint EFSA-ECDC-DG SANCO event at the European Parliament (2011)

Visit of ENVI Committee delegation (2012)

Congress of the European Societies of Toxicology

13th Conference of the International Society for Veterinary Epidemiology

…Scientific Colloquia | Joint EFSA-EC events | Major international scientific conferences | Technical meetings | Workshops | Local events…

Best practice:
Risk Communications Guidelines

"You don't need luck to communicate well!"

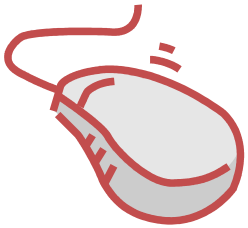
EFSA & Member States launch Risk Communications Guidelines on Friday 13th

Includes case studies on:

- EFSA's risk assessment on animal cloning
- EFSA's communications on zoonoses
- FSA's salt campaqign
- FSA's Southampton study
- VWA on Q-fever
- NFA Sweden on food supplements
- FSAI Dioxin crisis

Make a difference to European Food Safety – Join EFSA's Scientific Panels!

- EFSA seeks high-calibre expertise in the field of toxicology and chemistry:
  - Experts are sought to join the Panel on Food Additives & Nutrient Sources (ANS) and the Panel on Food Contact Materials, Enzymes & Flavourings (CEF).
  - Successful applicants will be appointed as member of one of the panels for a three-year term starting in July 2014.
  - Those not appointed will join EFSA's reserve list to be used to fill future vacancies.
- Selection through an open procedure based on a proven track record of providing high-calibre independent scientific advice
- Apply online **from 15 April to 15 June 2013** to:
  - Help protect European consumers
  - Deliver high-quality scientific advice to European decision-makers
  - Gain knowledge and ideas for future research



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THANK YOU!

Questions?