

Food safety in Europe: Supporting cooperation and young talent in risk assessment

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On 7 December 2022 the second Risk Assessment Research Assembly (RARA) of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) took place in Berlin. The event served as a meeting point for experts from institutional and academic science as well as from risk management and politics. The main focus of the RARA event, in whose programmatic design the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) played a major role, was to strengthen cooperation in international risk assessment in the field of food safety. In workshops, panel discussions and breakout sessions, experts debated about how to reach the highest scientific standards with international collaboration and how to secure resilient food chains in the present and future. They also discussed challenges and potential solutions in accomplishing these aims, and their dialogue sought to highlight how reliable research results can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals of the EU Green Deal.

Among the guests were numerous alumni of EFSA's EU-FORA fellowship programme – a comprehensive training programme for young scientists in the field of risk assessment, which the EU member states have carried out since 2017. The BfR was actively involved in setting up the EU-FORA programme and is part of the consortium that implements the EU-FORA training modules over seven weeks each year. In addition, as a host organisation, the BfR has already supported 15 international scientists on their path to professional specialisation.

EFSA has made the full recording of the event available on its YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20UgbPf878g>

The event was also flanked by the 86th meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum on 6 December 2022. The Advisory Forum, which is composed of members from EFSA and EU Member States, meets four times a year and identifies areas where cooperation in risk assessment can be supported and where cooperation priorities should be set.

At the 50th meeting of the Focal Point Network on 8 December 2022 in Berlin preparations were also made for the implementation of the new framework agreement between EFSA and the Focal Points for the period 2023-2027. In addition to existing core tasks, the new agreement foresees tailor-made projects that can be proposed by both EFSA and the member states. In this way, the Focal Points' range of tasks is increased. The new tailor-made projects include, for example, work on the European Excellency Label (EEL), an EU seal of quality for training in risk assessment in the field of food safety, and on the [BfR World Food Safety Almanac](#).

In order to promote knowledge transfer and to make effective use of synergies in tasks and approaches in risk assessment, each EU Member State has so-called EFSA Focal Points that disseminate information at the national level. For Germany, the BfR has been performing this coordinating task as EFSA Focal Point since 2008, efficiently facilitating the contribution of German expertise at the European level. The EFSA Focal Point ensures the exchange of information about initiatives, ongoing procedures, the results of risk assessment and of risk communication for food and feed, as well as on other topics in EFSA's remit. The exchange of scientific information takes place, for example, via EFSA's Knowledge Junction.

As EFSA Focal Point, the BfR answers questions from member states on risk assessments or distributes these questions to the relevant ministries, authorities or institutions. The EFSA

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Focal Point regularly hosts meetings at the national level. The BfR participates in EFSA public consultations and informs German institutions about ongoing consultations. The German network also participates in EFSA crisis exercises and contributes to the exchange of information within Europe in the event of national food crises. The national EFSA Focal Points and EFSA organise several joint meetings per year within the European framework.

Further information on the BfR website on EFSA Focal Point

Topic page: https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/activities_of_bfr_as_national_efsafocal_point_in_germany-24975.html



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About the BfR

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is a scientifically independent institution within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) in Germany. The BfR advises the Federal Government and the States ('Laender') on questions of food, chemicals and product safety. The BfR conducts independent research on topics that are closely linked to its assessment tasks.

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