FSA in Europe

We represent England, Wales and Northern Ireland on food safety and standards issues in the European Union. We are also involved in the nutrition and health agenda at a European level.

We consult widely in seeking to help develop a framework of well founded, proportionate and effective European food law, taking into account the principles of better regulation.

As well as working in close collaboration with other Government departments, the Agency has regular contact with the Council of the European Union, the Commission, Standing Committees, the European Parliament and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The FSA's role representing the UK also enables it to share knowledge and expertise with other member states and to work with them to improve food safety within the EU. The Agency has built up a good network with counterpart authorities and works with the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) unit of the Commission to provide assistance to new member states.

European Food Safety Authority

EFSA is an independent source of scientific advice on existing and emerging risks associated with the food chain. In Europe risk assessment is separate from risk management.

As the risk assessor, EFSA produces scientific opinions and advice to provide a foundation for European policies and legislation and to support the European Commission, European Parliament and EU member states. EFSA works in close collaboration with national authorities and in open consultation with its stakeholders. EFSA's remit covers food and feed safety, nutrition, animal health and welfare, plant protection and plant health.

Focal Points

The Focal Point in each member state acts as a contact between EFSA and the different national food safety authorities, research institutes, consumers and other EFSA-related stakeholders.

Each national Focal Point feeds into the Advisory Forum and helps promote stronger networking and cooperation. They help raise EFSA's profile and ensure the exchange of scientific information between EFSA and the member states. Each Focal Point also provide advice on joint projects, such as the database of experts and the list of competent organisations capable of assisting EFSA with its tasks (in line with Article 36 of EFSA's founding regulation).

Scientific committee and panels

EFSA's scientific committee and panels carry out EFSA's scientific risk assessment work. The committee and panels are made up of experts from across Europe, appointed through open selection.

Advisory Forum

Through the Advisory Forum, member states advise EFSA on scientific matters, its work programmes and priorities and to identify emerging issues as early as possible. Its members
represent the national body responsible for risk in each of the EU member states.

Applications Helpdesk

EU legislation requires various food products, and other substances used in food, to have EU-wide approval to ensure they are safe and that any claims made about them are not misleading.

Food businesses are required to make an application for approval, which the competent authority, for example the FSA, will forward to the European Commission and to EFSA so they can undertake the necessary scientific evaluation. The EFSA Applications Helpdesk allows applicants, member states and other stakeholders to access information about applications and submit specific questions related to the legal and technical requirements for evaluations. More about the helpdesk can be found at the link below.

EFSA explains risk assessment of food and feed

An EFSA step by step interactive explaining the risk assessment of food and feed can be viewed on the EFSA website.

Get in touch

For more information, please contact the Agency’s EU and International Strategy Team. Email us for more information on the UK focal point.

Find out more

- Britain in the EU
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office

External sites

- EFSA: Call for tenders
- EFSA Applications Helpdesk
- EU Food Safety Almanac
- Visit the BfR website
- European Food Safety Authority