

International Round Table
“The Role of Science in Food Policy”

Brussels, 20 October 2010

GENERAL INFORMATION

Objectives

As part of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and on the initiative of the Belgian Federal Minister for Agriculture, Sabine Laruelle, the Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and the Environment is holding a round table on the role of science in food-safety policy. This event will take place in Brussels in conjunction with EFSA's Management Board meeting.

In most cases, decisions to protect consumers from the risks associated with foodstuffs are based on scientific evidence. Sometimes there is uncertainty, which leads to the precautionary principle being applied. These concepts are enshrined in the European law – Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 – and in international standards.

At the round table, international experts from the worlds of politics, science, economics and philosophy will debate the role of science in the public domain. They will particularly look at the idea of using science in setting policies and in decision making.

The speakers will focus on three main themes: the relationship between science and truth (the objectivity of science), between science and democracy (the role of scientific experts in politics) and between science and uncertainty, (particularly with respect to the precautionary principle). Current topics relating to the food chain will serve as examples or points of reference for these three themes. The public will be invited to actively take part in the debate.

The Belgium's Federal Minister for Agriculture, Sabine Laruelle, and the Executive Director of EFSA, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, will introduce the round table.

The discussions will be led and chaired by Mr. Rodolphe de Borchgrave of Arcadia International and the Philosophie & Management association and Mr. Roland Vaxelaire of Philosophie & Management.

Who should attend?

The round table is intended primarily for all those who are involved in food-safety policy making and regulation. In the wider context, it should be of great interest to everyone who is concerned about the legitimacy and effectiveness of policies based on science.

Venue

The round table will take place in the Lippens Room of the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, 4 Boulevard de l'Empereur, 1000 Brussels, on the morning of 20 October 2010.

How to get there? [Google Maps](#)

Languages

The discussions will be held in English and French. Simultaneous translation into French, Dutch and English will be provided.

Lunch

After the round table, a buffet lunch will be served close to the meeting room, where participants will have the opportunity to mingle and meet the speakers on a more informal basis.

Registration

Participation is free of charge. Registration, however, is essential. Please register by completing the [registration form](#).

Please register before 8 October. We advise you to register as early as possible, since the number of places is limited.

Your registration will be confirmed by the secretariat.

Contact

Secretariat
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PROGRAMME

8:30	Registration and coffee
9:30	Welcome and introduction by Dirk Cuypers, President of the Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and the Environment
9:35	Welcome and introduction by Sabine Laruelle, President of the Council of Agriculture Ministers of the European Union
9:45	Introduction and presentation of EFSA by Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, Executive Director of EFSA
10:00	Introduction to the round table by Rodolphe de Borchgrave et Roland Vaxelaire, Philosophie & Management – the invited experts will be questioned on the three themes in turn.
10:10 - 10:30	Theme 1: science and truth
10:30 - 10 :50	Theme 2: science and democracy
10:50 - 11:15	Break
11:15 - 11:40	Theme 3: science and uncertainty – the precautionary principle
11:40 - 12:30	Debates and conclusion
12:30 - 13:30	Buffet lunch

Invited experts

MARION GUILLOU (FR)

President and Director-General of the National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA)

PIET VANTHEMSCHE (BE)

Chairman of the Flemish Farmers' Union (*Boerenbond*)

FRANÇOIS EWALD (FR)

Professor at the French National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts (CNAM) and President of the French Precautionary Principle Monitoring Centre (*Observatoire du principe de précaution*)

DAVID BYRNE (IR)

Former European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection – Founding father of the new food safety system of which EFSA is an integral part