

Guidelines for Observers

The following Guidelines provide a framework for the attendance of Observers at open plenary sessions of EFSA's Scientific Committee and the Scientific Panels.

1. Registration and Accreditation

Observers, who wish to attend an open plenary session of EFSA's Scientific Committee or Scientific Panels, held at EFSA's premises in Parma, must request accreditation with EFSA in advance of the meeting they wish to observe. To this end, applicants will be asked to complete and sign a registration form¹, which must be returned by e-mail to publicmeetings@efsa.europa.eu at least 20 days prior to the start of the meeting. Applicants must provide details of the organisation which they represent/work for, their current activities in relation to EFSA activities in general, as well as their specific interest in attending the meeting. Pertinent interests will be systematically disclosed to the meeting participants. The accreditation request will also include the formal commitment of the Observer to behave with due and proper respect for the meeting proceedings, by signing the registration form.

2. Confirmation of attendance/non-attendance

EFSA shall confirm attendance/non-attendance to each and single applicant at least 10 days before the meeting takes place. Practical details regarding access to the meeting venue will be communicated to the Observers at this occasion. Available places will be distributed on a first come, first served basis taking into account seating capacity (maximum of 10 Observers per meeting). Should more than one Observer apply from an organisation for the same plenary meeting, the second, and any subsequent seats, for that organisation will only be confirmed upon seating availability. EFSA will not reimburse the travel and subsistence costs of Observers. The Scientific Committee / Panel members (incl. the Chair of the meeting) will be informed at least 5 days in advance of the meeting on the list of confirmed Observers.

¹ as available on the EFSA website under: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/stakeholders/observers.htm>

3. Code of conduct, before, during and after attendance

Observers shall abstain from: (i) attempting to influence the meeting by contacting/lobbying the meeting participants at any time and by any means; (ii) making public, disclose or otherwise disseminate, use for commercial or other purposes any confidential documents (or parts thereof) that may have been obtained during the session that has been opened to Observers; (iii) making a written transcript, audio or video recording, or audio or video transmission of any part of the meeting.

Observers may not attend plenary discussions on confidential documents or data.

Observers shall note that: (i) the misuse of scientific experts' names participating in the meeting may lead to liability actions for violation of personal rights and that (ii) opinions of individual experts expressed during the plenary session observed cannot be considered to be and do not represent the EFSA opinion.

Experts will be asked to report any contact or attempt to influence that they may encounter, either before, during or after the meeting.

Without prejudice to further legal actions, lack of compliance with these Guidelines may result in an Observer being asked to leave the meeting and the reason for this action will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

4. Opportunity for questions and feedback

The Chair will grant Observers an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the session opened to Observers. Only those questions can be raised that have been registered at the time of returning the registration form to EFSA. The Chair and the Scientific Committee / Panel members will be informed at least 5 days in advance of the meeting on the questions that may be raised by attending Observers.

Observers and members of the Scientific Committee / Scientific Panels will be invited to fill in a feedback form at the end of the session opened to Observers. Comments and suggestions will be used to improve future open plenary meetings organised by EFSA.

5. Concluding remarks

EFSA reserves the right to decide which part or session of the selected plenary meeting (the entire meeting or parts thereof) is open to Observers by clearly indicating it on the draft or preliminary draft agenda published on the EFSA website.

The names of attending Observers, the organisation which they represent/work for, as well as the questions raised by Observers and the answers given to these questions will be published in the minutes of the meeting. EFSA will process this information for the purpose of the meeting only.