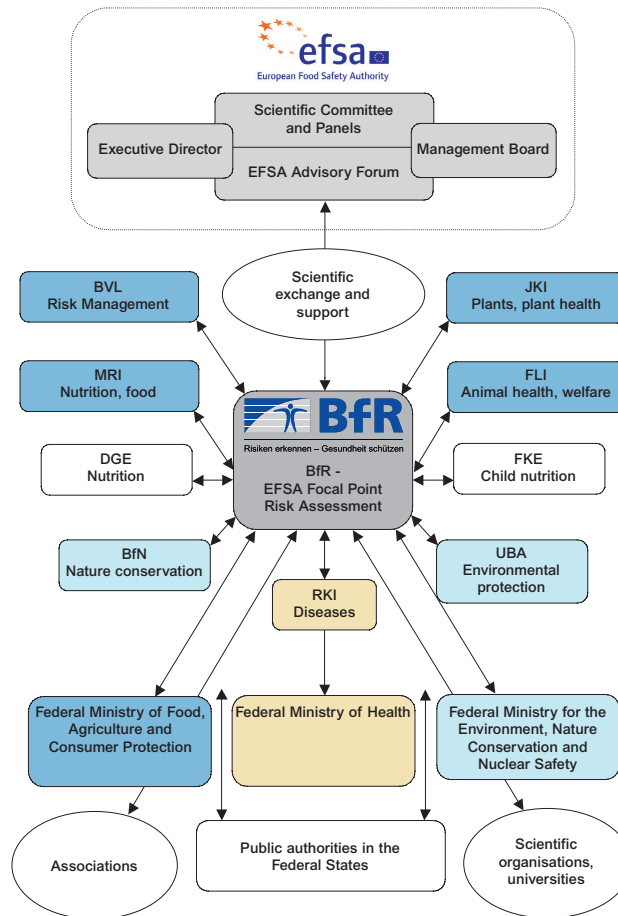


Building up networks

As the Focal Point, BfR establishes a network of representatives of public institutions, science, industry, political circles and consumer associations in Germany to support EFSA in its tasks for the EU. At the same time, information from Europe is distributed in a targeted manner in Germany via the Focal Point. Focal Points have been set up in all EU Member States. The goal of these activities is to make even more extensive use of existing European knowledge about health risks associated with foods and, by extension, to ensure that food safety in Europe is on the highest possible scientific level.

BfR Committees

In its scientific work on food and product safety for the Federal Government and European bodies, BfR is advised by 14 Committees. The objective of this expert network is to bundle scientific expertise for BfR risk assessments on the highest scientific level and to input it into international bodies. The structure of the BfR Committees is very similar to that of the EFSA Panels. The Committees are an important component in co-operation between the German Focal Point and EFSA.



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BfR –
 EFSA Focal Point



Risiken erkennen – Gesundheit schützen

The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment – An EFSA Focal Point

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has initiated national Focal Points in the Member States to act as an interface between EFSA and the different national food safety authorities, research institutes, consumers and other EFSA related stakeholders.



In Germany the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has been appointed as the Focal Point for this scientific co-ordination work by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV).

BfR

BfR assumes central tasks in consumer health protection. It identifies and assesses potential risks using scientific criteria and then proposes ways of reducing them. The BfR assessments and recommendations are not influenced by any economic, political or social interests. The scientific independence of BfR is anchored in law. BfR is responsible for carrying out research that is closely linked to its activities. BfR's main areas of work are food and feed safety, biological safety, chemical safety, the safety of consumer products and risk communication. Risk assessment is an essential element in the work of the EFSA Focal Point. BfR has the statutory task of informing consumers about possible, identified and assessed risks which are linked to foods, substances or products. Besides the timely provision of comprehensive information to the public at large, other activities that are the key to successful risk communication include a participatory dialogue with the various BfR stakeholders and the carrying out of research projects.

EFSA

EFSA is the keystone of food and feed safety risk assessment in the European Union (EU). EFSA has its headquarters in Parma. It is run by an independent Management Board whose members are appointed to act in the public interest and do not represent any government, organisation or sector. EFSA'S Executive Director is its legal representative. He is assisted by an Advisory Forum composed of representatives from all 27 Member States. In close collaboration with national authorities and in open consultation with its stakeholders, EFSA provides independent scientific advice. The Scientific Committee and 10 Panels are responsible for drawing up the scientific expert reports and opinions of EFSA.

Interface between authorities and institutions

In its capacity as the national Focal Point, BfR is an important interface between EFSA and the competent federal ministries: the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV), the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG) and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

Likewise, the federal research institutes within the portfolio of the federal ministries and public institutions, to which EFSA's remit extends, are also actively involved:

- ▶ Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)
- ▶ Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL)
- ▶ German Nutrition Society (DGE)
- ▶ Research Institute of Child Nutrition (FKE)
- ▶ Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI)
- ▶ Julius Kühn Institute (JKI)
- ▶ Max Rubner Institute (MRI)
- ▶ Robert Koch Institute (RKI)
- ▶ Federal Environmental Agency (UBA)

Furthermore, the Focal Point is the link to the ministries of the Länder responsible for monitoring consumer protection measures. All the scientific institutions involved in Germany in tracing, identifying, assessing and managing risks in the field of food, feed, animal welfare and plant health are included in this exchange of scientific information.

Exchange of scientific information

The activities of the Focal Point include support for EFSA in the development and optimisation of a database populated with experts who deal with various aspects of food safety. The goal is to input German expertise to a greater degree into EFSA.



In its capacity as the national Focal Point, BfR also ensures that there is a direct exchange of scientific information by means of initiatives, ongoing processes, research projects and results on the risk assessment of food and feed.

In cases in which EFSA differs in its assessment of a risk from that of the competent institutions in Germany or in other European Member States, the Focal Point helps to clarify the situation.