

Reply from Barbara Gallani dated Thursday 21 April 2016.

Dear Vicky

Thank you for getting in contact with me regarding my appointment at EFSA. I am looking forward to starting my new job and hope to find an early opportunity to meet you to further discuss your views on EFSA's commitment to clear, open and transparent communications.

In answer to your questions, I worked at the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) for approximately eight years and covered different functions, initially as a regulatory manager and then as a director. My latest job title, from October 2015 to the end of March 2016, when I left FDF, was Director, Policy and Sustainability and Chief Scientist and I was responsible for the Regulation, Science & Sustainability team (the two descriptions appear to have been used interchangeably). In my role I ensured that FDF policies on food safety, innovation and sustainability were based on the most up to date and robust science and were communicated clearly and effectively. I also contributed to raising awareness amongst food manufacturers of changes to legislation and to the sharing of industry data and best practice.

I responded to the call for new members of EFSA's Management Board and applied for the role of EFSA's Head of Communications as I considered that the experience I had gained working for a food national authority (the UK Food Standards Agency), a European NGO (BEUC) and the food industry (the British Retail Consortium and the Food and Drink Federation) provided me with the skills required to make a positive contribution to the future of EFSA. As soon as I had received an offer from EFSA for the position of Head of Department I withdrew my application to be a member of the Management Board. I received no contact from EFSA with regards to my application to be a member of the Management Board as the process is not managed by EFSA but members are appointed by the Council – after consulting the European Parliament – from a shortlist drawn up by the European Commission.

Apart from attending the EFSA Science Conference in Milan, as a delegate, in October 2015, I had no direct contact with EFSA while working at FDF, as my role had a UK dimension rather than a European one. My latest direct contact with EFSA's staff or scientific panels was when representing BEUC on the Stakeholder Forum. While at FDF I continued to subscribe to EFSA's alerts and newsletters. FDF, as all other relevant national trade associations, contributed data and comments to FoodDrinkEurope's responses to EFSA's consultations.

The selection process for my appointment required that I attend an external assessment centre and take part in an interview with an independent selection board, which was comprised of non-EFSA staff including officials from the European Commission and other EU organisations. This board drew up a reserve list from which EFSA's Executive Director appointed me. I informed EFSA about my previous employment at FDF in my application form for the job and in the Declaration of Interests I completed, which I expect was thoroughly assessed by EFSA before they offered me the position. I will be keen to follow EFSA's advice on any mitigation measures considered appropriate to address any perception of conflict of interest in relation to my appointment.

I believe it is understandable for Corporate Europe Observatory and others to request clarification and additional information with regard to my experience and career history as the independence of EFSA is an absolutely necessary asset to discharge its responsibility towards European citizens. Through leadership and action I will apply the experience I have acquired working for different organisations in the public and private sector to support EFSA by focussing on the delivery of effective and inclusive communication and engagement.

Kind regards

Barbara Gallani

Dear Ms Gallani,

I work for an NGO called Corporate Europe Observatory which is a research and campaign group concerned with the access and influence enjoyed by corporations and their lobby groups in EU policy-making: <http://corporateeurope.org/>

I would like to ask you several questions about your move from the Food and Drink Federation to EFSA as of 1 May 2016. It would be very useful to understand more about this from your side before we consider publishing an article. I would appreciate receiving a response from you by close of play, Friday 15 April 2016.

1. What are the precise functions of your previous role at the FDF which I have seen described as both Director, Policy and Sustainability and Chief Scientist, as well as Director for Regulation, Science & Sustainability?
2. When you were appointed to the EFSA role as Head of Communications, had you also recently applied, on behalf of FDF, to join EFSA's management board? If yes, what was your rationale for this and had you received a response from EFSA?
3. What formal or informal contact have you had with EFSA, its staff and / or committees and working groups while working at FDF?
4. In the context of your appointment, what discussions have you had with EFSA about your previous role at the FDF and the extent to which it represents a conflict of interest with your new role?
5. Have any restrictions been placed on your activity in your new role at EFSA in the light of your previous work at FDF?
6. How do you respond to concerns that your move from the FDF to EFSA provokes a conflict of interest?
7. Do you have any other comments to make about these issues?

I look forward to hearing from you; thank you in advance for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Vicky Cann

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Vicky Cann  
Lobbycracy campaigner  
Corporate Europe Observatory