

**EXPERTS' OPINIONS – OPINII ALE EXPERTILOR – AVIS DES EXPERTS
МНЕНИЯ ЭКСПЕРТОВ**



**EUROPEAN BIOSAFETY ASSOCIATION (EBSA) – STRENGTHENING
BIOSAFETY AND BIOSECURITY REGIONALLY AND GLOBALLY**

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The European Biosafety Association has been founded in June 1996. The association comprises over 400 members from most of the European countries and from other countries all over the world. EBSA strives to the following objectives:

- Establishment and communications of best biosafety and biosecurity practices amongst its members and encouragement of dialogue and discussions on developing issues
- Representation of the collective interests of its members in all areas relating to biosafety and biosecurity
- Support of emerging legislation and standards, with the objective of ensuring the prevention of harm to man or the environment from biological substances or materials.
- Coordination of actions with national biosafety organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that advocacy efforts are directed efficiently
- Expand participation in global initiatives

To ensure the realization of its objectives and to further foster opportunities to enhance national, regional and global biosafety, EBSA has held, since the foundation, every year, except for 2001, a scientific conference and, since more than a decennia, annual preconference training courses and events. Furthermore, EBSA executive members regularly participate at the scientific conference of the numerous partner organizations.

Annual conferences: dispersion of scientific knowledge in biosafety and biosecurity

Importantly, EBSA needed to install operational bodies to maintain the annual scientific conference and the preconference training activities.

The annual conference is regularly organized by an EBSA working group, the Conference Program

working group (CPWG), in collaboration with a committee on site of the location where the conference takes place (Local organizing committee, LOC). The main task of the CPWG is the planning of the scientific programme of the annual conference. Furthermore, the working group takes care of scientific issues like e.g. the response to consultative documents, the review of articles and setting up liaisons with other organizations and enforcing bodies in relation to scientific affairs.

Since the first conference in London in 1997 to the last virtual online conference in October 2020, a total of 23 scientific conferences have taken place. Among many other topics related to biological safety, selected topics were: safety in microbiological diagnostic laboratories, infectious waste management, use of microbiological safety hoods, biosafety of animal by-products, safety of CRISPR-Cas9, risk related to viral gene therapy vectors, safety of cell cultures, biosecurity related topics, occupational health issues, arthropod containment, risk assessment and sustainability issues.

Training and Education

The preconference training events are set up by the education and training working group (ETWG). The group met initially at the Ljubljana Conference 2010 to review the work programme passed down by the EBSA council. The aim is to strengthen the role EBSA plays in improving biosafety competency and skills among members and to the whole biosafety community and providing information to non-specialists. One major task is to look specifically to align the pre-conference workshops with the CEN CWA 16335 Biosafety professional competence and identify different ways to provide training. Developments in the competency of biosafety advice are driving the urgency of this. Further objectives include the identification of the needs for biosafety/biosecu

rity education and training at different levels; basic life sciences, biosafety professionals in small and large organizations, the identification of training possibilities, pre-conference workshops, workshops in conjunction with events other than EBSA conferences, separate workshops, university arranged courses etc. and identification of training methodology developments and implement if applicable. Since its creation, EBSA has delivered, among other topics, and is still delivering training on these subjects:

- ISO 35001 – An introduction into the bio-risk management standard
- Gene therapy: main approaches and biosafety issues
- Blend your biosafety training – how to produce and use educational technologies
- Biological Risk Assessment – how safe are we in our labs if we apply the risk-based approach according to the new WHO Biosafety manual?
- Disinfection and disinfectants: overview of the biocide regulation and validation procedures
- How to convince and influence for biosafety and biosecurity
- Biorisk Management meets quality management
- Incident & accident investigation: how to apply root cause analysis
- Assessing risks and benefits of viral vectors: understand the underlying Risk assessment
- Cell Culture biosafety: from Bench to Body
- Movement of biological material: all you need to know to ensure safe transport
- Introduction to audits and inspections – a comprehensive and practical introduction
- Biosafety Officer – from basic to expert in one day
- Biological waste management, a clear and practical approach

Networking/liaisons: focal points

Focal Points are EBSA designated subject matter experts (SME), who are the first point of contact for their topic(s). They cover areas that are considered important from an EBSA perspective and/or a biosafety/biosecurity perspective. They represent EBSA in specialist for a provide information to the EBSA membership. EBSA, to date, maintains the following focal points:

- *Transport of hazardous biological materials:* advise EBSA members on changes in regulations in the transport of infectious substances, clinical specimens, GMO's
- *Biological Toxin and Weapons Convention (BTWC)/European Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) protection*
- *Liason World Health Organisation*
- *Liason World Organisation for Animal Health*
- *Diversity and Inclusion:* advise EBSA on issues of diversity and inclusion, promote EBSA in new areas and regions and monitor diversity at EBSA
- *Containment of arthropods:* provides information on how to handle infected and exotic arthropods under biosafety containment

Projects

EBSA closely observes the development of biosafety-relevant legislation in the European Union. Recently, there have been several regulatory developments that have been introduced where EBSA sees a need to emphasize regulatory issues that may affect biosafety procedures in diagnostic research laboratories or production facilities.

Therefore, working group for each issue/regulatory document(s) have been constituted and position paper have been issued. This is related to :

- Consequences of the EU legislation on Animal By-Products for the scientific research sector
- Revision of the EU biological agents directive 2000/54/EC, the EU directive 2019/1833
- Biocide product regulation (work in progress)
- **Cooperation and partner organizations**
- EBSA maintains numerous ties to its 19 national and regional partner organizations throughout the world. All EBSA resources can be found on the website: <https://www.ebsaweb.eu/>

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author thanks Gijsbert van Willigen for critically reading the manuscript.