



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON EMERGING AND NEWLY IDENTIFIED HEALTH RISKS  
8<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY MEETING**

*Held on 24 November 2005  
in Brussels*

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair, Prof. Bridges welcomed the participants.

No apologies were received

**2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA**

It was decided that under item 6.2. Nanotechnologies would be discussed first. The draft agenda was adopted with this change.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA**

None.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PLENARY MEETING**

The draft minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting were amended taking account of the remarks in the declarations of interest and the Committee's conclusion that there were no conflicts of interest. The minutes are available at:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_risk/committees/04\\_scenihr/docs/scenihr\\_mi\\_007.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_mi_007.pdf)

**5. CHAIR'S REPORT**

**5.1. Inter-Committee Coordination Group (ICCG) 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2005**

The Chair informed the Committee of the ICCG's decision to present the Committee members and the external experts separately in the opinions of the Scientific Committees. The latter would be presented with their affiliations. The affiliations of the Committee members were already on the Public Health website. In case an expert declared an interest, it would be indicated by a footnote in the Committee's opinion, with a reference to the respective minutes of the Plenary meeting.

The Chair also informed the Committee about the first Meeting of the Chairs of the Scientific Committees on 7-8 December 2005 as well as the activities of the Joint Research Centre in Ispra on physical and chemical risks.

The ICG also decided to send the C7 Risk Watch<sup>1</sup> to all members of the Scientific Committees for a trial period of one month. The Secretariat would welcome feedback on Risk Watch.

The Committee was informed that Ms. Katja Bromen would take over as the Scientific Secretary of the SCENIHR on 1 December 2005.

## **6. ONGOING REQUESTS**

### **6.1. Nanotechnology**

The Secretariat reported that there had been about 12,000 hits on the Public Health website for the nanotechnology opinion. Comments from members, on the ILSI report on the screening strategy of nanomaterials that would be discussed in the OECD meeting on nanotechnology on 7-9 December 2005, would be welcomed. The DG ENTR representative described the Strategic Research Agendas of the European Technology Platforms of Industrial Safety and Sustainable Chemistry.

The Committee decided that the Chair of the SCENIHR and the Chair of the Nanotechnology working group would assess the comments from the public consultation. They would be discussed in the next Plenary meeting in January 2006. The Secretariat would inform the Committee about the on-going developments in nanotechnology issues.

### **6.2. Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD)**

The Chair of the working group informed the Committee that the public consultation on the vCJD opinion would soon be launched. The information on the consultation would be circulated to the expert networks.

### **6.3. Electromagnetic fields (EMF)**

The Chair of the working group informed the Committee that the work was well advanced and the group expected the opinion to be finalised during the first half of 2006. Accordingly, the public consultation on the EMF opinion might be possible during summer 2006.

## **7. NEW REQUESTS**

### **7.1. DEHP**

The DG ENTR representative informed the Committee about the background of the forthcoming request for a scientific opinion for di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP) and its alternatives. It would be necessary to update the earlier opinion from 2002 in the light of new scientific evidence. As the exact wording of the request had not yet been decided, it would take a few weeks before the request was sent to the SCENIHR.

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<sup>1</sup> An electronic newsletter with hyperlinks to emerging science issues relevant for the work in C7 and in the non-food Scientific Committees.

In the request, the safety assessment of alternatives would be crucial as it would restrict the risk management options. The DEHP issue was discussed with the Member States in the PVC Working Group meeting on October 2005. The group recommended that the Commission should request the SCENIHR to make a risk assessment on the safety of DEHP as well as the alternative plasticizers for DEHP and alternatives for PVC plastics in medical devices. The SCENIHR opinion would be a useful input to the PVC working group as it would compile a Guidance Document on DEHP in medical devices.

The Committee decided to make the necessary arrangements to allow the working group to start work as soon as the request was received from the Commission. A Chairperson was appointed to the working group.

The Secretariat encouraged the members of the working group to consider carefully potential external experts for the forthcoming work.

## **7.2. Smokeless tobacco**

Representatives from DG SANCO reported on the background of the forthcoming request for a scientific opinion on smokeless tobacco products. At this stage the SCENIHR's work related to the emerging health effects and the addiction potential of the smokeless tobacco.

The Committee made the necessary arrangements to allow the working group to start work as soon as the request was received from the Commission. A Chairperson was appointed for this group.

The Secretariat encouraged the members of the working group to consider carefully potential external experts for the forthcoming work.

## **7.3. Other issues**

A Committee member presented his paper on biocide resistance which has a tendency to strengthen the overall bacterial resistance. The issue was well known, but there had not been a real investigation of the overall situation although the use of various biocides was very high and resistance might develop in some situations rather quickly. Some biocides were also known allergens.

The Committee decided that the Secretariat would investigate whether the Commission services had an interest in this area.

As the Committee had discussed the health risks of climate change in autumn 2004, the Secretariat briefly presented the newest report, Climate Change Futures. The report provided one of the few comprehensive assessments on emerging health risks associated to the changing climatic conditions. This could be relevant area for the SCENIHR work.

The Committee considered the issue to be very vast and the interlinkages of climatic changes and disease patterns too uncertain. Therefore the SCENIHR work would possibly be focussed on very specific issues only.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **8.1. Emerging issues**

The Chair of the Committee presented a draft document on the identification of potentially emerging issues. A priority for the SCENIHR was to assess annually what were the emerging issues. A short discussion on the definition of emerging issues took place. It was recognised that the lack of appropriate data was common to emerging issues in general and especially for those escalating rapidly. A special effort and networking by Committee members was therefore necessary when reacting to enquiries at short notice.

### **8.2. Meetings in 2006**

The Committee would meet on 25 January, 10 March, 11-12 May, 20 June, 28-29 September and 28 November.

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**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

**MEMBERS OF THE SCENIHR:**

Prof. J. BRIDGES (Chair), Dr. A. AHLBOM, Dr. P. HARTEMANN (Vice chair), Prof. J. HAJŠLOVA, Dr. W.H. DE JONG (Vice Chair), Dr. T JUNG, Prof. M-O. MATTSSON, Dr. J.M PAGES, PD.Dr. D. STAHL, Prof. K. RYDZYNSKI, Dr. M. THOMSEN, Prof D. WILLIAMS

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**SCENIHR SECRETARIAT (DG SANCO)**

M. PUOLAMAA

**OTHER COMMISSION STAFF:**

Mr. A. BOENKE (ENTR)

Ms I. DEMADE (ENTR)