



SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON EMERGING AND NEWLY IDENTIFIED HEALTH RISKS
14TH PLENARY MEETING

Held on 28 November 2006
in Brussels

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman, Prof. J. Bridges, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants, in particular A. Kanellopoulou, a stagiaire in unit C7 until February 2007. Apologies were received from Prof. J. Hajslová, Dr. T. Jung, Prof. M.-O. Mattsson, and Prof. K. Rydzynski.

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

It was decided to discuss the ongoing requests in a slightly revised order (6.2, 6.4, 6.1, 6.3). Draft requests on biocides and dental amalgam were received before the meeting and would be discussed in point 7 of the agenda.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

Prof. A. Ahlbom declared that for a few years, until 1996, he was a member of the Swedish Tobacco Company's Medical Research Council. The Chair of the SCENIHR Working Group (WG) on Smokeless Tobacco Products (STP) informed the Committee that one new external expert had declared an interest in view of his affiliations.

Taking into account the nature of the two declarations, the Committee decided that they did not constitute a conflict and that the experts could participate in the discussions on those matters.

Declarations made by one expert in the STP WG were not in line with the declarations in some publications. The expert had approached the journals for clarification and revision but could not yet fully clarify the matter. It was therefore decided that he would need to provide appropriate documentation supporting his efforts to seek clarification from the journals.

Following a general discussion on the challenge to identify and select independent expertise, members reconfirmed the importance of having balanced viewpoints and expertise represented in the working groups and of obtaining detailed declarations of interests (DoI) from working group members to ensure transparency. Members

discussed the use of a time-limit for the declaration of interests and suggested discussing this in the next meeting of the Inter-Committee Coordination Group (ICCG). They also discussed the possibility for different ways to select external experts in the future.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PLENARY MEETING

The draft minutes of the 13th plenary meeting were adopted without modifications. The minutes are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihhr/docs/scenihhr_mi_013.pdf

5. CHAIR'S/MEMBERS' REPORT

5.1. 2nd Meeting of Chairs of Scientific Committees/Panels, 24-25 October 2006

The Chairman and Secretariat informed members about the 2nd Meeting of Chairs. In particular, the outcome of the two discussion groups on Nanotechnologies and Emerging Risks was presented.

The roadmap on Safety and Competitiveness in Nanotechnologies agreed at the Finnish Presidency Conference Nanotechnologies – Safety for Success¹ had been discussed in the Meeting of Chairs. It was agreed at that meeting that EC and SCENIHR would coordinate the efforts of the Committees and Panels to ensure a coherent approach on risk assessment on nanotechnologies. The first step would be to request comments from other Committees and Panels on the first SCENIHR opinion² and to draft a Check List for Risk Assessment on Nanomaterials. One member of SCENIHR expressed a strong interest in collaborating on related activities.

For the discussion group on Emerging Risks it was proposed to draft a "common paper", as a first step for better cooperation on emerging issues. This would be done in coordination with the Chair of the Scientific Committee (SC) of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the participants of the discussion group.

In addition there was a discussion on how to better exchange information with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). It had been suggested to explore the possibility of a videoconference on issues of common interest when there is a concrete need for exchange of information. The Committee expressed its wish to invite the Chair of the EFSA SC to its plenary meetings. This would be discussed in the next ICCG-meeting.

5.2. Other

The Chairman informed the Committee about his participation in a meeting on electromagnetic fields (EMF) organized by DG Enterprise and Industry (ENTR).

¹ <http://www.fmnt.fi/ntss/>

² http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihhr/docs/scenihhr_o_003b.pdf

6. ONGOING REQUESTS

6.1. EMF (public consultation)

The members were informed about the results of the public consultation. About 400 contributions were received. However, only about 15% were within the remit of the public consultation. An additional WG meeting was foreseen to discuss the contributions and the procedure for responding to the comments and for finalising the opinion. The Chairman of the WG offered to screen the contributions and to prepare, if needed, a revised version of the opinion in preparation for that meeting. Members discussed the added value of public consultations and suggested only using this procedure for selected topics.

6.2. Nanotechnologies (for discussion)

The Chair of the WG reported about the ongoing work. In view of the size of the task, the need for coordination of the work with the simultaneous work on Nanocosmetics in the Scientific Committee on Consumer Products (SCCP) and the very wide interest in the forthcoming opinion, the WG would need more time to finalise its opinion. Therefore, the adoption of the Committee opinion is foreseen for March 2007.

6.3. Smokeless Tobacco Products (for discussion)

The Chair of the WG informed the Committee of the ongoing work. There had been a change in membership as one external expert had resigned and had been replaced. It would remain to be seen whether the schedule for adoption of the opinion could be kept. A section of the draft opinion was discussed. The Committee advised shortening the section and focussing on the terms of reference.

6.4. DEHP (for discussion)

The Chair of the WG reported on the ongoing work. In view of the extent of the dossiers and the additional request for information on the earlier submissions, the adoption of the opinion is foreseen for March 2007.

7. NEW REQUESTS

7.1. Dental Amalgam

The Committee received a draft request on the safety of dental amalgam and potential alternatives. A representative of DG ENTR provided information on the background of the request.

Dental amalgam and their substitutes are regulated under Council Directive 93/42/EEC concerning medical devices and must comply with the health and safety of patients. The use of alternative materials is increasing but relatively little is known about their safety. Pursuant to Action 6 of the *Community Strategy Concerning Mercury*³ aiming at the reduction of mercury in the environment and human exposure, the use of dental amalgam should be evaluated to assess whether

³ COM (2005) 20 final, see <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l28155.htm> and http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0020en01.pdf

additional regulatory measures are appropriate. Therefore, the SCENIHR would be asked to review the safety and performance of dental amalgam and their substitutes.

A separate request, related to the environmental risks of mercury in dental amalgam would be submitted to the SCHER.

The SCENIHR made the necessary arrangements to allow a working group to start its 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 SCENIHR to suggest potential external experts for the forthcoming work. The two requests on dental amalgam would also be discussed in the next meeting of the ICCG.

7.2. Biocides

The Secretariat had received a draft request on the assessment of the antibiotic resistance effects of biocides. This request would still need to be finalised as it touches on a broad range of applications. The SCENIHR made the necessary arrangements to set up a working group and appointed a Chairperson. The Secretariat encouraged the members of the SCENIHR to suggest potential external experts for the forthcoming work. The request would also be discussed in the next meeting of the ICCG.

8. EMERGING ISSUES

Additional contributions to the discussion paper on new and emerging health risks have been received. Members were asked to continuously update the paper.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will take place on 24 January 2007.

The following meeting dates have been agreed for 2007: 24 January, 21 March (before the Risk Assessment event, see below), 29 March, 10 May, 21 June, 27 September, and 29 November. All meetings are foreseen as one day events but in exceptional cases a subsequent second day may be scheduled. Members were asked to consider this in their planning.

The Secretariat informed the Committee of a possible extension of term of office of the current SCs until 2008. This was due to new developments in REACH and the establishment of the European Chemicals Agency in Helsinki. In that case, the Commission would amend Commission Decision 2004/210/EC⁴ and would invite the experts to remain in office. Should resignation of members occur, a limited call for new experts could be launched. An increase in membership of the SCENIHR would in principle be possible by the same means.

The Secretariat also informed members about the event on Risk Assessment on 21-22 March 2007. Various joint meetings and sessions including the European Parliament and relevant stakeholders are foreseen.

⁴ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/l_066/l_06620040304en00450050.pdf

Annex I

<p style="text-align: center;">SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON EMERGING AND NEWLY IDENTIFIED HEALTH RISKS 14TH PLENARY MEETING</p>

*Held on 28 November 2006
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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBERS OF THE SCENIHR:

Prof. A. AHLBOM, Prof. J. BRIDGES (Chair), Dr. W. DE JONG (Vice Chair), Prof. P. HARTEMANN (Vice Chair), Dr. J.-M. PAGÈS, Prof. D. STAHL, Dr. M. THOMSEN, Prof. D. WILLIAMS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

SCENIHR Secretariat (DG SANCO):

Ms. K. BROMEN, Mr. B. DELOGU, Ms. N. FOUVEZ, Ms. A. KANELLOPOULOU, Mr. P. MARTIN, Ms. M. PUOLAMAA

Other Commission staff:

Mr. A. BOENKE (DG ENTR)

Ms. I. DEMADE (DG ENTR)