



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
Directorate C - Public Health and Risk Assessment
C7 - Risk assessment

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON EMERGING AND NEWLY IDENTIFIED HEALTH RISKS
24TH PLENARY MEETING**

*Held on 21 May 2008
in Brussels*

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman, Prof. J. Bridges, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Prof. D. Williams, Prof. K. Rydzynski and Prof. D. Stahl.

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The draft agenda was adopted, with changes in the order and the addition of the issue of the opinion on Noise at the points under discussion.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

No interest was declared.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PLENARY MEETING

The draft minutes of the 23rd plenary meeting were adopted with minor modifications. The minutes are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihhr/docs/scenihhr_mi_023.pdf

5. CHAIR'S/MEMBERS' REPORT

The Vice-chair informed about the work on the EFSA Working Group (WG) on the Risks arising from nanoscience and nanotechnologies on food and feed safety and the environment.

6. ONGOING REQUESTS

6.1. Biocides – antibiotic resistance (for discussion)

The Chairman of the WG informed the Committee about the ongoing work. While the WG has made good progress on hazard characterisation, the lack of tonnage data on the use of biocides, even after the recent call for information and the several attempts of the Secretariat to gather this information, remains an important limitation to make an attempt at quantitative risk assessment. Other possible ways of getting data regarding the production and use of biocides were examined.

6.2. Noise (for discussion)

A member of the WG presented to the Committee the latest draft of the preliminary report prepared by the relevant working group. SCENIHR has noted the progress of the preliminary report, but concluded that it was not ready yet for public consultation. Further comments were made by members, which the WG would have to integrate to the report before the launch of the Public Consultation.

6.3. EMF (for discussion)

The Chair of the WG explained to the Committee the reservations of the members of the WG regarding the second question of the mandate given by the Commission. It was decided that SCENIHR will ask the Commission whether it would be possible to change the mandate, proposing an alternative phrasing of the questions.

6.4. Light Sensitivity (for discussion)

Further procedures regarding the work plan for this issue, as well as additional external experts to be contacted were discussed.

6.5. Nanotechnology (for discussion)

The group was informed about the publication of a scientific paper on Carbon nanotubes and asbestos-like pathogenicity and has been asked by the Commission to provide a statement regarding this study (see Annex II).

7. NEW REQUESTS

none

8. EMERGING ISSUES

There were no emerging issues.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Prof. D Williams has resigned from being a member of SCENIHR. Members have expressed their regret about this development, since Prof Williams has been involved and provided excellent input in many of the mandates attributed to SCENIHR.

9.1. Discussion on reimbursement issues of SCENIHR members and Experts

SCENIHR members expressed their concerns about problems regarding their reimbursement for their work at SCENIHR. In particular, the members complained about the delay in payments, the amount received *per se* and also the mistakes made in the reimbursement received. The secretariat acknowledged the existing problems and explained the steps already made in order to resolve them as soon as possible. It was suggested that SCENIHR would write directly of the Director General of DG SANCO, in order to complain about the current situation. In addition, members have made other suggestions regarding the proper functioning of the Committee, which were welcomed in view of the forthcoming revision of the Scientific Committees.

Annex I

<p>SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON EMERGING AND NEWLY IDENTIFIED HEALTH RISKS 24TH PLENARY MEETING</p>

*Held on 21 May 2008
in Brussels*

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. T. JUNG, Prof. M.-O. MATTSSON, Dr. J.-M. PAGÈS, Dr. M. THOMSEN

EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

SCENIHR Secretariat (DG SANCO):

Mr. L. BONTOUX, Mr. V. GARKOV, Ms. A. KANELLOPOULOU, Ms. N. FOUVEZ, Mr P. MARTIN.

Other Commission staff:

Mr A. BOENKE (DG ENTR), Mr A. TOTH (DG TREN)

Annex II

SCENIHR¹ statement on the publication by Nature Nanotechnology "*Carbon nanotubes introduced into the abdominal cavity of mice show asbestos like pathogenicity in a pilot study*" by Craig A. Poland et al.

The SCENIHR was well aware of the work by Poland et al. prior to its publication. Indeed, the senior author, Professor Ken Donaldson, is a member of the SCENIHR Working Group on the health and environment risk assessment of nanomaterials.

In interpreting the significance of this new paper, the SCENIHR wishes to draw attention to the following:

- Nanomaterials have many properties that are common with materials in other forms.
- Nanotubes are fibre-like structures at the nanoscale generally composed of carbon. Some carbon nanotubes have similar properties with respect to shape, size, stiffness and persistence to the hazardous forms of asbestos. Therefore, it has been suspected that they would constitute a similar health hazard. The paper by Poland et al., which uses a mouse model, indicates that it is indeed so. This animal model is considered predictive for the carcinogenic properties of fibres.
- It has been established for many years that certain asbestos fibres, that have the physical properties of a high length to diameter ratio and that are persistent in the lung, can cause chronic inflammation resulting in mesothelioma.
- This new information fits with existing SCENIHR opinions that each new nanomaterial should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The SCENIHR is continuing its ongoing work on the updating of its opinions on the risk assessment of nanomaterials.

¹ The Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) is one of the three independent non-food Scientific Committees managed by Directorate Health and Consumers (SANCO) of the European Commission. The Scientific Committees provide the Commission with the sound scientific advice it needs when preparing policy and proposals relating to consumer safety, public health and the environment. Community scientific advisory procedures are based on the principles of scientific excellence, independence and transparency. The SCENIHR currently has 12 members, selected for their high scientific expertise and use external experts on specific questions. Detailed information on the composition of the committee and its mandates, adopted opinions and current activities can be found at:

SCENIHR: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihhr/04_scenihhr_en.htm