



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

1st plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER)

Meeting date: 7/8 September 2004

Minutes

7 September 2004 Joint session

Mr Robert Madelin welcomed members to the first joint meeting of the Scientific Committees and congratulated them on their appointment to the Committees. He stressed the importance of scientific advice in the policy making of the Commission. Excellence, transparency and independency were highlighted as key points in the work of the Committees. Mr Madelin drew particular attention to the importance of the clarity of their opinions and the role of the Committees in establishing confidence with stakeholders. The full presentation is available at: [The importance of scientific advice in the Community decision making process](#)

The Chair explained that, in accordance with Article 10 of Commission Decision 2004/210/EC setting up the Scientific Committees, the Committees are required to adopt common rules of procedure in consultation with the Commission. The draft rules were prepared taking into account the rules of the former scientific committees, the rules of the European Food Safety Authority and the need to improve clarity and transparency. The draft rules were presented to members for discussion.

The main innovation in relation to the co-ordination of the three new Scientific Committees is the introduction of an “inter-committee group”, involving the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the three Scientific Committees, which will be chaired by the Commission. The objective of this group is to ensure harmonised approaches in the risk assessment and ordinary tasks of the Committees, particularly in areas such as common questions, diverging scientific opinions, coherence and consistency, methodological approaches, and cooperation with other Community bodies.

Concerning transparency, additional information will now be published on the web site of DG Health and Consumer Protection, in particular regarding members’ declarations of interests and commitment, as well as the requests received by each of the scientific committees.

The rules have also included a chapter on diverging opinions, in line with Commission Decision 2004/210/EC and the Food Safety Authority’s Regulation. Minority opinions, although already included in the previous rules of procedure, will now have to be attributed together with supporting argumentation, to members or associated members concerned.

Finally attention has been paid to relations with stakeholders. A section has been added to cover both needs, e.g. request for additional information from the Scientific Committee or a request for hearings from stakeholders.

The draft rules of procedures were unanimously adopted with very minor editorial changes. Additional administrative information was provided to the members of the Committees.

7 September 2004: SCHER separate session

The Commission representative welcomed members to the new Committee. Apologies were received from Prof Calow.

Members and Secretariat introduced themselves. Election procedures were explained and nominations of candidates for Chairs and Vice Chairs were proposed. A short CV of each of the nominees was distributed to all members to provide them with the background of the candidates.

8 September 2004: SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES JOINT SESSION

Welcoming address to the Members by Commissioner David Byrne

Commissioner David Byrne addressed the members of the Committees urging them to work together to provide the Commission with unambiguous scientific advice that would enable the risk managers to take the adequate and required actions in order to guarantee consumer protection. He stressed the importance of independent scientific advice not only within the EU but in the international arena. The full speech is available at:

[Inaugural joint meeting of the members of the non-food scientific committees](#)

8 September 2004: SCHER SEPARATE SESSION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Commission representative chaired this part of the meeting and welcomed Prof Calow who could not attend the first day's meeting.

Apologies: Prof Jansson.

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The draft [agenda](#) was adopted.

3. ELECTION PROCESS

The Commission representative chaired the election procedure for the Chair.

Prof H. Greim was unanimously elected Chair of the SCHER.

After three secret ballots, Prof. Tarazona and Prof Jansson were unanimously elected as Vice Chairs.

Prof. Greim subsequently chaired the meeting and welcomed the participants to the first meeting of the new Committee.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

One of the members declared a conflict of interest concerning a request on “non biodegradable detergent surfactants”. The Committee agreed that he can contribute to the discussion but he can neither be rapporteur for the related working group nor vote the adoption of the opinion.

The Committee agreed the same approach for a member who declared a conflict of interest on a request related to Regulation 793/93 on benzyl butyl phthalate.

5. ORGANISATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Members were reminded to fill in and send the annual declarations of interests, of commitment and confidentiality.

It was agreed to circulate templates to harmonise the members' CVs that will be published on the Public Health website.

The complete CVs of the scientists on the reserve list as well as those of the elected members will be made available to the members of the three Committees on a restricted basis, through the CIRCA website. This will help to identify suitable candidates for external experts who can contribute to working groups. Other documents will also be available via CIRCA. Members will be provided with the necessary rights and passwords.

6. ADOPTION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

- The draft work programme for SCHER was presented; working group composition and rapporteurs were fixed. The Committee was also informed of some possible requests for the near future.
- It was noted that the composition of the SCHER in terms of expertise is not well balanced in regard to the human health/environmental ratio which is 2/1. Since the SCHER is lacking one member, it was proposed that this post could be replaced with an environmental expert.
- It was agreed to provide members with basic documents prepared by the former scientific committees and that the secretariat will compile a list for the SCHER.
- Some members of the committee expressed concern about self initiated questions. The Committee highlighted the importance of proposing initiatives on specific problems, addressing them and coming up with statements. The procedure to follow for this kind of initiative should be a matter for discussion and decision case by case. It was also mentioned that the outcome of those initiatives could be published and made available to the public. Those views will be discussed again in future SCHER meetings.

7. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Dates for plenary meetings until the end 2004 and 2005 were agreed as follows:

2004 - 14 December

2005 - 28 January

18 March

3 or 4 May (to be confirmed)

8 July

22 or 23 September (to be confirmed)

25 November

Some dates for working group meetings were also decided.

An information meeting related to the Regulation 793/93 has been fixed on 18 November 2004. The aim of the meeting is to inform new members about the Regulation, related opinions and to discuss a possible new format of the SCHER opinions concerning Risk Assessment Reports on existing substances.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee was informed of a forthcoming meeting in the Netherlands in relation to the European Environmental and Health Action Plan. In view of the common interests between the SCHER and the EU group of experts working on the action plan, it was suggested that the Committee could make a valuable contribution.

Annex 1: List of participants

Annex I

<p>SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS (SCHER) 1ST PLENARY MEETING</p>
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*Held on 7/8 September 2004
in Brussels*

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBERS OF THE SCHER:

Prof. H. AUTRUP , Prof. P. CALOW (8 September), Prof. W. DEKANT, Prof. W. HANKE., Prof., Prof. Dr. H. GREIM, Prof. C. JANSSEN, Prof. Bo JANSSON (7 September), Prof. J. SOKAL, Prof. H. KUMULAINEN, Prof. O. LADEFOGED, Prof. I.A. MANGELSDORF, Prof. M. NUTI, Prof. A. STEENHOUT, Prof. J. TARAZONA, Dr E. TESTAI, Prof. M. VIGHI, Prof. M. VILUKSELA and Prof. J. VOS.

Apologies: Prof. P. CALOW (7 September) and Prof. B. JANSSON (8 September)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

SCHER Secretariat (DG Health & Consumer Protection):

Ms. G. FONTANESI, Ms. M. PHILIPPÉ

SANCO C7:

Mr. P. WAGSTAFFE (Chair for joint sessions), Ms. P. AGUAR, Ms M. MARINI, Mr. P. MARTIN, Ms T. PEETSO, Mr. A. VAN ELST, Ms M. BRANDIMARTE, Ms B. GIANFREDA-REITER, Ms B. PRENDERGAST, Ms C. HUMPHREY-WRIGHT

Other Commission staff: Mr P. DASKALEROS (*DG Health & Consumer Protection*)