



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

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS (SCHER)
4TH PLENARY MEETING**

*Held on 18 March 2005
in Brussels*

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Prof. Greim, Chair of the Committee, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

Apologies: Prof. Janssen, Prof. Sokal and Prof. Vos

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The draft [agenda](#) was adopted.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

Dr. Mangelsdorf declared a conflict of interest in relation to point 8.3, Air pollution. Prof. Calow declared a conflict of interest in relation to point 8.4, detergent surfactants.

The Committee concluded, after taking into consideration the nature of the conflict, that both Dr. Mangelsdorf and Prof. Calow had no substantial conflict and could participate in the related discussions.

No other interests were declared.

4. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 3RD SCHER PLENARY MEETING

The draft minutes of the 3rd SCHER plenary meeting were adopted and are available at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_mi_003.pdf

5. CHAIR'S REPORT: UPDATE ON THE COORDINATION MEETING OF 16 FEBRUARY 2004 ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE SCHER

5.1. EFSA draft opinion on GENTOX

Members of the Committees were encouraged not to send comments directly to EFSA but to convey individual opinions through the Joint Working Group (with representatives of the three Committees and led by SCHER). The working group would produce a paper as a contribution to EFSA's draft document. After the adoption of the final document by EFSA, a scientific opinion would be adopted by SCHER acting as lead Committee. DG SANCO/C7 would prepare a formal request for that opinion.

5.2. Exchange of information with other SANCO units

A SANCO/B3 representative attended the Coordination meeting. After a fruitful discussion, it was agreed that topics to be examined further included: TTC, excess cancer risk assessment, chemical mixtures assessment and non-food related allergens.

5.3. Relations with other risk assessment bodies

DG SANCO was considering the organisation of a meeting of chairs of Scientific Committees (EMEA, EFSA, EEA, SCOEL and possibly the ECDC) which was foreseen for the second half of the year.

5.4. Collaboration with the JRC

A member of the Unit "Physical and Chemical Exposures" of the Joint Research Centre would be invited to attend the next coordination meeting for an exchange of information with the ICG members and information on the activities of this Unit.

6. ONGOING REQUESTS ON REGULATION 793/93 EXISTING SUBSTANCES (ESR): (HUMAN HEALTH AND/OR ENVIRONMENT)

6.1. DecaBDE (ENV)

The opinion on the environmental part of the RAR was adopted after agreement on a few corrections. It is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_o_012.pdf

6.2. 2-methoxy-2-methylbutane (ENV, TAME)

The rapporteur presented a draft opinion on the results of the environmental risk assessment of TAME. Comments concerning conclusions on ground water and secondary poisoning made at the previous meeting had been taken into account in the updated version. The opinion was adopted and is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_o_010.pdf

7. ONGOING REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS BY COMMISSION SERVICES ON:

7.1. Effectiveness of vapour retardants in reducing risk to human health from paint strippers containing dichloromethane

An ETVAREAD study was launched by the Commission to evaluate the existing scientific information on the effectiveness of vapour retardants in reducing risk to human health from paint strippers containing DCM. The SCHER was requested to assess the overall scientific quality of the ETVAREAD report.

In its opinion the Committee concluded that since in the report the composition of the tested products had not been given and the uncertainty in the measurements had not been properly determined it was difficult to judge the influence of vapour retardants in paint strippers. A major concern on the toxicity of DCM related to the especially susceptible populations like children and persons with unfavourable genotypes of the enzymes involved in the biotransformation of DCM.

Moreover, the SCHER was not able to assess substances used as alternatives to DCM and listed in the ETVAREAD study due to the lack of information on their toxicological properties and their release from paint strippers.

With a few minor changes the opinion was adopted and is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_o_006.pdf

7.2. RPA's report "Perfluorooctane Sulphonate - Risk reduction strategy and analysis of advantages and drawbacks"

The SCHER had been requested to examine the overall scientific quality of the RPA report on PFOS and to evaluate the contribution of the ongoing uses to the overall risks for the environment and human health.

The Committee agreed that a scientific risk assessment was necessary before taking reduction measures on PFOS uses.

In its conclusion the SCHER agreed that the contribution of the on-going industrial/professional uses to the overall risks was probably negligible with regard to the photographic industry, semiconductor industry, and aviation industry.

On the contrary, emissions from the plating industry should be restricted.

With regard to the fire-fighting foams, the SCHER concluded that a risk assessment of the proposed substitutes should be conducted before taking decisions.

The opinion was adopted and is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_o_014.pdf

7.3. New evidence of air pollution effects on human health and the environment

In the framework of the revision of the Community air quality legislation the Commission asked the SCHER to give an opinion on a number of key questions based on the new evidence of air

pollution effects on health and environment. The SCHER was asked to adopt its opinion by the deadline of 18 March 2005.

The rapporteur presented the draft to the Committee. The opinion was adopted with some amendments.

In the opinion the SCHER agreed that there was increasing epidemiological evidence that acute PM2.5 exposure was related to adverse health effects, especially in susceptible and vulnerable groups. However, the current lack of knowledge on the exposure-response function for health effects did not allow air quality standards based upon PM2.5 to be established without a certain level of uncertainty.

The SCHER agreed that there were strong reasons to assume a source-dependence for some effects on human health due to PMs from various sources and with different toxicological profiles.

With regard to the harmful effect of ozone on forests, the Committee agreed that a lower accumulated exposure over threshold (AOT) should be recommended to better protect forests.

Finally, the Committee also identified some gaps of knowledge that should be filled.

The Commission representatives (DG ENV) asked whether the opinion could be understood to mean that there might be no risk associated with PM2.5. The SCHER made it clear that such a reading would be a misinterpretation of the opinion and that there is a hazard, but the extent of risk cannot be evaluated at present since the US-studies may not represent the European exposure situation. The answer to question 1a should be understood in the context of the answers to the other questions and of the conclusions.

The adopted opinion is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_o_009.pdf

7.4. Environmental risk assessment of non biodegradable detergent surfactants under anaerobic condition

The chairman of the working group reported back on the discussion of the last working group meeting and a draft opinion was presented to the Committee.

A final draft opinion would be proposed for possible adoption at the next plenary.

8. ISSUES FOR WHICH THE SCHER IS THE LEADING COMMITTEE:

8.1. Indoor air quality

An informal mandate on indoor air was presented to the SCHER to allow practical planning to begin the work. The working group was also set up.

8.2. Working group on genotoxic and carcinogenic substances

The Joint Working Group comprised three members from SCHER, three from SCCP and two from SCENIHR.

The first working group meeting would be held in April.

9. PARTICIPATION OF THE SCHER IN ACTIVITIES/WORKING GROUPS OF OTHER SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES OF THE COMMISSION OR EFSA

- The first EFSA working group meeting on PFOS was held at the beginning of March. The group discussed the main points to be addressed in the opinion, fixed the timetable for meetings and decided the distribution of tasks among members.
- The first SCENIHR working group on nanotechnology was held in mid-March. The next meeting had been fixed mid April.

10. NEXT (5TH) PLENARY MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the SCHER was confirmed as 3 May 2005.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business

Annex 1: List of participants

Annex I

<p>SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS (SCHER) 4TH PLENARY MEETING</p>
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Held on 18 March 2005

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBERS OF THE SCHER:

Prof. AUTRUP, Prof. P. CALOW, Prof. W. DEKANT, Prof. Dr. H. GREIM (Chair), Prof. W. HANKE, , Prof. Bo JANSSON (Vice Chair), Prof. H. KOMULAINEN, Prof. O. LADEFOGED, Prof. I.A. MANGELSDORF, Prof. M. NUTI, Prof. A. STEENHOUT, Prof. J. TARAZONA (Vice Chair), Dr TESTAI, Prof. M. VIGHI and Prof. M. VILUKSELA.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

SCHER Secretariat (DG SANCO):

Ms. G. FONTANESI, Ms. M. PHILIPPÉ

Other Commission staff:

Mr. S. BRION (DG ENTR), Mr D. HADRICH (DG ENTR), Mr P. GAMMELTOFT (DG ENV), Mr. S. PICKERING (DG ENTR), Mr A. ZUBER (DG ENV)