



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

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS
1ST PLENARY MEETING**

Held on 27 March 2009 in Brussels

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION

The meeting was opened by Mrs Fontanesi who welcomed the members and introduced the points of the agenda.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Mrs Fontanesi asked whether there were possible conflicts of interest related to the agenda. She informed the Committee that the forms for the annual Declarations of Interest to be published on the web site would be sent to the members and should be returned filled in and signed.

3. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

The members introduced themselves briefly regarding their professional background, affiliations and areas of scientific expertise.

4. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE COMMITTEE

Mrs Fontanesi explained that, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure as required by Article 10 of Commission Decision 2008/721/EC of 10 September 2008 setting up Scientific Committees in the field of consumer safety, public health and the environment, the Committee should elect a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen by simple majority of the members that make up the Committee.

She said that candidates could either nominate themselves for consideration or be nominated by another member of the Committee. A record of the election procedure is included in Annex II.

Chairman

Prof. Helmut Greim was elected as Chairman.

Vice-chairman

Prof. Herman Autrup and Prof. José Tarazona were elected as vice-Chairman.

5. PRESENTATION OF THE WORKING PROCEDURES AND FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

In his inaugural speech, the Chairman, Prof Greim, thanked the members for their confidence and briefly illustrated the principal areas of activity of the Committee.

5.1. Working procedures

Mrs Fontanesi illustrated the different stages in the development of scientific advice given by the SANCO Scientific Committees and the Scientific Committees Working Procedures. In particular she explained:

- the mandate
- the structure and content of an opinion
- public consultation and joint opinions
- the setting up of Working Groups (WG) and assignment of rapporteurs
- the role of the secretariat, chairman of the SC and chairman of the WG and rapporteur

5.2. Preliminary work programme of the SCHER

Mrs Fontanesi presented the preliminary work programme, and in particular:

- the mandates already received
- the planned submission of mandates on other topics
- Other activities involving SCHER

5.3. Mission expenses and indemnities

Mrs Lok outlined the modalities for reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs. Members, scientific advisors from the Pool and external experts are entitled to a special indemnity for attendance at meetings as set out in Annex III of Commission Decision 2008/721/EC.

Rapporteurs are entitled to an indemnity as set out in Annex III of Commission Decision 2008/721/EC.

6. REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS BY COMMISSION SERVICES ON:

6.1. Fluoridation in drinking water (SANCO C7)

The debate over water fluoridation has prompted several questions from the European Parliament from Ireland and the United Kingdom where intentional water fluoridation is still practiced.

In order to obtain an updated advice, the Commission has asked SCHER for an opinion on this issue.

The mandate recommended the close collaboration with the Scientific Committee on consumer Safety (SCCS) and the EFSA NDA and CONTAM panels who have previously delivered opinions on fluoride.

A public consultation on the working mandate was already published by DG SANCO on the SCHER web site and would run from 16 March to 8 April. A call for information was also published in parallel and would run until 26 April.

The working group was set up and the Chairman was nominated. The need for possible advisors or external experts would be discussed in the first WG meeting.

The mandate is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_g_081.pdf

6.2. Model implementation and quantification of the eutrophication risk associated to the use of phosphates in detergents (INIA/Green planet updated report; DG ENTR)

DG Enterprise asked for an updated opinion of SCHER, based on the recent validation exercise of INIA on the developed risk assessment model for eutrophication.

In November 2007, SCHER adopted an opinion on the INIA/Green planet study entitled: "Development of a European quantitative eutrophication risk assessment of polyphosphates in detergents".

In its conclusions SCHER said that the scientific quality of the report was diminished due to a number of key points which were not adequately addressed. Following that opinion, in line with SCHER recommendation, the INIA model was updated and resubmitted to the Commission for further evaluation.

The SCHER working group was set up and the Chairman was nominated. The need for possible advisors or external experts would be discussed in the first WG meeting.

The mandate is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_q_082.pdf

6.3. Updated HERA report on polycarboxylates in detergents

In November 2008, SCHER adopted a scientific opinion concerning its environmental risks of polycarboxylates, its homo- & copolymers P-AA/MA (a copolymer of acrylic and maleic acids or its sodium salt. The SCHER opinion concluded that additional information was required before it can be concluded that these chemicals are of low environmental concern.

The 2007 HERA report on polycarboxylates was then updated by inserting new data regarding the terrestrial toxicity of polycarboxylates and sent to the Commission for further evaluation. DG ENTR forwarded the revised HERA report to SCHER asking for an opinion as to whether the identified uncertainties were clarified.

The working group was set up and the Chairman was nominated. The need for possible advisors or external experts would be discussed in the first WG meeting.

The mandate is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_q_083.pdf

6.4. Guidance on decontamination (EFSA)

EFSA asked for one environmental expert to participate in the working groups of their BIOHAZ panel as representative of SCHER. The appropriate member was nominated.

7. NEXT PLENARY MEETING

The next plenary meetings were agreed as follow:

20 May 2009

10 July 2009

18 September 2009

9 November 2009

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1. Review of risk assessment

A member of SCHER made a proposal for a review of risk assessment practice via a possible future Thematic Workshop. The committee agreed and invited the member to produce a short briefing document to be circulated to SCHER.

Since the proposal was foreseen as a cross-committee work, it was agreed that the briefing would also be submitted to the attention of DG SANCO for a possible presentation at the first ICCG meeting.

Annex I: List of Participants.

Annex II: Election of Chair and Vice-chairs

Annex I

List of Participants

Members of SCHER

Prof. U. Ackermann-Liebrich, Prof. H. Autrup, Prof. D. Bard, Prof.P. Calow, Dr. S. Canna Michaelidou, Dr. J. Davison, Prof. P. De Voogt, Prof. W. Dekant, Prof. A. Gard, Prof. H. Greim, Dr. A. Hirvonen, Prof. C. Janssen, Dr. J. Tarzona, Dr. E. Testai

Apologies

Dr. J. Linders, Prof. B. Peterlin, Prof. M. Vighi

SCHER Secretariat (DG SANCO)

Mrs. G. Fontanesi, Mrs. Y. Lok, Mrs. O. Ziane

Annex II

Election of Chair and Vice-chairs

Appointed members of the Committee were asked to express an interest of candidature for (vice) chairmanship in writing prior to the meeting. In addition, during the meeting members were given an opportunity to announce their candidature or to nominate other members.

The chair and two vice-chairs were elected in separate, secret, votes. The members voted by ballot.

Chairman

Prof. Helmut Greim was the only candidate for chairmanship. He was unanimously elected as the Chairman.

Vice-chairpersons

Prof. Herman Autrup and Prof. José Tarazona expressed their interest in vice-chairmanship. They were elected as vice-Chairpersons in two separate votes by the majority of SCHER members.