



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Public Health and Risk Assessment
Risk assessment

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS (SCHER)
6TH PLENARY MEETING**

*Held on 24 March 2010
in Brussels*

Minutes

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

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

Apologies: Prof J Tarazona

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The draft agenda was adopted as proposed

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

No new declarations of interest

4. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 5TH SCHER PLENARY MEETING

The minutes of the 5th SCHER plenary meeting were adopted.

5. Chair and Commission report

5.1. Position of experts on sensitive subjects

In the previous plenary one member expressed concerns in relation to the possible ethical/moral interpretation of the presence of the members' name in scientific opinion related to particular topics. In particular, the concern was expressed in relation to the scientific opinion on depleted uranium and the position of the members in relation to the use of radioactive material in arms. After some exchanges among members and discussion at level of the Commission, it was proposed that a general disclaimer would be put at the beginning of all the opinions adopted by the three SCs. The disclaimer would be prepared and proposed for approval at the following ICCG group and would clarify that the scientific opinion express only the scientific view on the topics without any reference to the ethical and moral beliefs of the single experts.

5.2. ICGG meeting

5.2.1 Indemnities

The Commission informed the group about the modification of Commission Decision 2008/721/EC as regards indemnities paid to members of Scientific Committees and experts in the field of consumer safety, public health and the environment. The modified text will include provisions with regard to participation in meetings from distance by electronic means

5.2.2 2nd International Risk Assessment Conference and related activities

The ongoing activities on the three projects on terminology harmonization, emerging risks, and exposure assessment will be concluded in the next months and will culminate at the RA Conference in January 2011.

5.2.3 Research priority on low dose effects of genotoxic carcinogens

DG SANCO replied to a request of SCHER to bring the attention of the appropriate Commission services on the need for research in the area of low dose effects of genotoxic carcinogens. The issue will be brought to the attention of the DG Research as possible subject to be included in strategy and priority of the upcoming 8th framework programme for research.

5.2.4 Communication of two adoptions

The Chair informed the committee on the results of the two opinions adopted by written procedure namely the opinion on lead in jewellery and the pre-consultation opinion on depleted uranium.

5.2.5 SCENIHR proposal: Definition of independence, categorization of interests and experts' involvement in Working Groups.

SCENIHR produced a document on independence which outlined different potential mechanisms for involving external experts in WGs and the meaning of independent advice. The document will be circulated to the three scientific committees for comments. SCHER members will send their comments by e-mail on the following Friday at the latest.

5.2.6 Results survey

The secretariat reported back on the results of the Committee satisfaction survey promoted by DG SANCO. All the 51 members of the Committees were invited to participate in the satisfaction survey. All the replies were anonymous.

Overall, the picture emerging from the survey was that most members are satisfied with the content and the scientific level of the Committees, the organisation of meetings, the conduct by Chairs and the assistance by the Secretariat.

Nevertheless, there are areas for improvement.

6. NEW REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS BY COMMISSION SERVICES ON:

6.1 Combination Effects of Chemicals

In the Council conclusions from 22nd December 2009, the Commission was invited, drawing on existing and future research and paying appropriate attention to the costs and benefits, to assess how and whether relevant existing Community

legislation adequately addresses risks from exposure to multiple chemicals. The Council requested the Commission to report back by early 2012 at the latest. DG ENV submitted a mandate to SCHER for a joint opinion of the three DG SANCO Scientific Committees on the risk health and environmental risk due to the combination of effects of chemicals.

The Commission (DG ENV) asked the Committee to provide its final opinion by March 2011 at the latest. The WG was set up and additional members from SCCS and SCENIHR would be contacted asking for their participation. EU agencies would be contacted from DG SANCO asking for experts to participate in the WG.

6.2 Water Framework Directive – Technical Guidance for Environmental Quality Standards

Article 16 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD, 2000/60/EC) requires the Commission to identify priority substances among those presenting significant risk to or via the aquatic environment, and to set EU Environmental Quality Standards (EQSs) for those substances in water, sediment, and/or biota.

A Technical Guidance has been developed to support the derivation of EQSs for priority substances and for river-basin-specific pollutants that need to be regulated by Member States according to the provisions of the WFD. The Technical Guidance will be used to derive the EQSs for newly identified priority substances and to review the EQSs for existing substances.

The Commission (DG ENV) asked SCHER for an opinion on general and specific questions related to the guidance document

The WG including SCHER member was set up. Participation of possible external members will be decided at the first WG meeting.

The mandate is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_q_093.pdf

6.3 Derogation for drinking water

Following the transposition of Directive 98/83/EC, Italy has recently requested third derogations for a large number of water supply zones. The derogations refer to parameter values for three substances of geogenic origin: arsenic (As), boron (B) and fluoride (F) exceeding the maxima laid down in the Directive.

The Commission (DG ENV) asked SCHER for an opinion on this request with urgent procedure. The deadline as agreed between SCHER and DG ENV was fixed as 16 April. The WG was set up and it was decided that, due to the time constraints, they would work via e-mail or telephone conference.

The opinion was adopted by written procedure on 16 April and is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_o_120.pdf

7. ONGOING REQUESTS FOR OPINIONS BY COMMISSION services on:

7.1 CMR in toys

The draft was proposed for final discussion. Some rewarding and amendments were proposed and will be discussed at the next WG meeting in April. The final draft will be proposed at the next plenary for adoption.

The mandate of the request on CMR in toys is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_q_088.pdf

7.2 Fluoridation of drinking water

The Chairperson reported back from the last WG meeting and proposed the document as final draft opinion. A few rewarding and amendments were proposed by SCHER. An updated version will be circulated to the Committee and proposed for adoption as pre-consultation opinion at the next plenary.

The mandate is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_q_084.pdf

7.3 Hg in energy saving light bulbs

The Committee discussed the draft opinion presented by the Rapporteur. The Committee mostly agreed on the environmental part while the human health part still needed some work, which would be concluded before the next WO meeting when the whole draft would be finalised. The final version will then be circulated to SCHER for approval by written procedure since the deadline was end of April.

The mandate is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/docs/scher_q_087.pdf

8. Participation of the SCHER in activities/working groups of other Scientific Committees of the Commission or bodies

8.1 SCCS - Opinion on triclosan: Anti-microbial Resistance

The representative of SCHER participating in the WG prepared a summary of the adopted pre-consultation opinion and presented the main points of the discussion and conclusions. The document will be available on the net for a public consultation that will run until 26 May 2010

Further information on the opinion and the public consultation is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consultations/public_consultations/sccs_cons_01_en.htm

8.2 SCENIHR - Research strategy to address the knowledge gaps on the antimicrobial resistance effects of biocides

The representative of SCHER participating in the WG prepared a summary of the adopted opinion and presented the main points of the discussion and conclusions.

The opinion is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/opinions/scenihr_o_026.pdf

8.3 SCCS - Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC) Approach for Safety Assessment of Chemical Substances

The draft including the requested amendments by SCHER was sent to the Chair of the TTC WG. The next WG meeting was fixed as beginning of June.

The joint mandate is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/documents/ttc_mandate.pdf

9. Emerging Issues

No emerging issues

10. Next plenary meeting

The date of the next SCHER plenary meeting was confirmed as 18 May 2010.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 EFSA guidance on carcass decontamination

The EFSA BIOHAZ Panel adopted the guidance document on carcass decontamination. Two representatives of SCENIHR and SCHER participated in the WG. The adopted guidance document was circulated to SCHER and SCENIHR for endorsement. The guidance was circulated to SCHER members during the plenary and they decided that they will reply by the end of the week by written procedure.

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBERS OF SCHER:

Prof. U. ACKERMANN-LIEBRICH, Prof H AUTRUP (*Vice Chair*), Prof. D. BARD, Prof. P. CALOW, Prof. S.CANNA-MICHAELIDOU, Prof. J. DAVISON, Prof. P. DE VOOGT, Prof. W. DEKANT, Prof. A. GARD, Prof. H. GREIM (*Chair*), Dr. A. HIRVONEN, Prof. C. JANSSEN, Prof. J. LINDERS, Prof. B. PETERLIN, Dr. J. TARAZONA, Dr. E. TESTAI, Prof. M. VIGHI.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

SCHER Secretariat (DG SANCO):

Mrs. G. FONTANESI, Mr. V. GARKOV, Mrs. C. DEKINDT

Other Commission staff:

Mr. J. CORTVRIEND (ENV); Mrs K. GRODZKI (DG ENTR); Mrs G. LUVARA' (DG ENTR); Mr. P. MURPHY (DG ENV); Mrs. F. PANTAZI (DG ENTR); Mr S. PICKERING (DG ENTR); Mr. J. ROMERO (DG ENV); Mr J VOGELGESANG (DG SANCO)