



13th Plenary Meeting of the

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS (SCHER)

25 September 2015

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

The Deputy HoU (DHoU) welcomed the participants. One apology received. The Chair of the SCENIHR also attended the plenary meeting.

Representatives of DG JRC and DG ENV attended the meeting by audio.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declaration of interests on matters in the agenda

The Chair requested participants to declare any conflict of interest regarding matters on the agenda.

One SCHER member declared, in the context of the new mandate on water reuse, to be a member of a national public-private partnership project on water reuse. This interest was not considered being a conflict of interest as the private funding goes to his institute and the amount is lower than 25 % of the overall income of the institute.

4. Chair's / member's report

The SCHER members who attended various events reported on the events:

- Methodology Working Group of SCCS
- SCCS plenary
- SCENIHR WG on UVC lamps
- SCENIHR WG on sunbeds

The secretariat informed that the preliminary Opinion on SynBio was published for public consultation between 15 July and 16 September. 61 comments were received from 12 different organisations - NGOs/universities/public institutions. The next meeting (audio) takes place on 16/10/2015.

5. Communication by Commission Departments

The Chair gave the floor to DHoU for an update on the state of play of the following issues:

- New Commission Decision C(2015)5383 on establishing Scientific Committees in the field of public health, consumer safety and the environment¹ adopted on 7th August 2015.

The major changes compared to the previous organisation of the Committees consist in the merge of SCHER and SCENIHR Committees to constitute the SCHEER

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/docs/call_2015_5383_decision_with_annexes_en.pdf

(Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks), the abolition of the pool of advisors and the creation of a reserve list of members, the prolongation of the duration of the term (from 3 to 5 years) and the transposition of Commission Decision on expert groups rules concerning special allowances.

- As the terms of office of the current Committees expire beginning of April 2016 a call for membership was published on 14th August 2015 on DG SANTE and Scientific Committees websites². The deadline for applications is 2nd of November 2015.

Members of the new Committees will be appointed by the Director General of the DG SANTE from a list of suitable candidates. Candidates not appointed as members will stay on the list as a reserve, to replace members who resign.

- Ongoing external evaluation of the Scientific Committees (2009-2014): The functioning of the scientific committees is to be evaluated in order to assess the value of their advice in the Commission decision-making process. This evaluation will also guide the services for the renewal of the mandate of the Scientific Committees in 2016 in support of the update of the Commission Decision. Members and experts may be contacted by the external contractor managing the evaluation.
- Feedback from Secretariat on JRC/EFSA visits, including public consultation of EFSA on Guidance on Uncertainty (deadline 10 September). ICCG prepared a common answer for all three committees
- New opinions/mandates from other Scientific Committees adopted during the period April-September 2015: printed lists have been distributed during the meeting.
- Follow-up of work with scientific journals to promote the dissemination of the SCs opinion. The committee was informed about the articles published
- The committee was informed about the forthcoming meetings, as follows:
 - **7-8 October 2015**: ECHA soil workshop Helsinki
 - **10 December 2015: Workshop on synthetic biology** – From Science to Policy and Societal Challenges organised by Commission

6. On-going work:

Update on public consultations and finalization of the opinions

➤ **Opinion on cadmium in arable soils**

The Opinion was published for comments (deadline 29 July 2015): 7 comments were received. The overview table with the comments and draft replies are under preparation.

The WG will meet on 16 November to finalise the Opinion and prepare replies to the comments. The Opinion is planned to be submitted for adoption in the next SCHER plenary on 27 November.

➤ **Preliminary opinion on calcium cyanamide**

The WG met the day before the plenary meeting and finalised the abstract, executive summary and replies to questions. Some calculations and minor revisions still need to be done.

The preliminary Opinion will be finalised and will be circulated for written adoption, expected publication in November.

² http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/docs/call_experts_2015_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/call_experts/call_exp_2015_en.htm

➤ **Preliminary opinion on the amount of toy materials ingested by children**

The WG hold its 2nd meeting the day before the SCHER plenary. The task of the WG is to review scientific data on how much toy material and at what frequency is ingested by children. The basis for the opinion is the Erratum to the 2008 RIVM report on Chemicals in toys issued in 2015. There is however not much information which would support either the old (daily ingestion) or the new approach (weekly ingestion) of RIVM on the amount/frequency of toys' ingestions. The WG therefore looks also at other sources of information, e.g. on soil ingestion.

Next meeting of the WG is scheduled on 30 October 2015. It is planned to submit the preliminary Opinion for adoption at the next SCHER plenary on 27 November.

7. New mandates

DG JRC presented a draft mandate on minimum quality requirements for water reuse in agricultural irrigation and aquifer recharge. In the mandate, the SCHER is asked to provide an advice concerning the methodology which should lead to the development of the quality requirements.

The SCHER concluded to accept the mandate and set up a working group to review some parts of the mandate. The secretariat will then discuss the changes with JRC and the revised mandate will be sent to the SCHER for final approval by written procedure.

8. Rapid risk assessment and Quicksilver Plus exercise

The SCHER discussed its participation in the Quicksilver plus exercise taking place on 30 September and 1 October. The report on the exercise will be discussed in the next plenary meeting. Lessons learned from the exercise will be drawn and will help to finalise the future procedure for RRA.

9. Lessons learnt

Members were asked to share their suggestions based on experience gained during the term 2013-2016 concerning the functioning of the Scientific Committees. A set of questions was provided to help the reflection process. It consists of three parts:

- Brainstorming on positive, negative aspects and improvement needed.
- Specific questions mirroring those used in the evaluation on the Scientific Committees. In this way all members have the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation.
- Contributions concerning working methods which will be reflected in the Rules of Procedure.

The SCHER started with the brainstorming part and addressed most of the questions of the second part.

The discussion will continue in the next plenary meetings.

Any other business

Next meeting: 27 November 2015

Meeting(s) in 2016:

21/22 January 2016

17/18 March 2016

Annex 1

List of Participants

Members of the SCHER

Alena Bartonova, Maria José Carroquino, Raquel Duarte-Davidson, Jadwiga Gzyl, Renate Krätke, Greet Schoeters, Colin Janssen, Claire Beausoleil, Jan Linders, Teresa Fernandes, Pim de Voogt

Chair of the SCENIHR

SCHER Secretariat (DG SANTE)

DG JRC

DG ENV